

ILO STAFF UNION

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Annual Report of the ILO Staff Union Committee
for the year 2016

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for the year 2016



Staff Union
of the International Labour Organization
Syndicat du personnel
de l'Organisation internationale du Travail
Sindicato del personal
de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo

ILO Staff Union Committee Annual Report for the year 2016

INTRODUCTION

The Staff Union Committee is pleased to present the following summary of its activities in 2015-2016.

Following the success of the five-yearly global meeting of its representatives, the ILO Staff Union – whose mission has been updated and strengthened with an eye on the hundredth anniversary that looms on the horizon – has made every effort this year to achieve the objectives it had set itself, namely:

To improve working relations inside the ILO and to make the best possible use of social dialogue in order to wage an effective fight against precarious employment, maintain - and if possible improve - existing conditions of employment and of work, effectively promote transparent and equitable career prospects based on quantifiable criteria and uphold the fundamental principles on which the international civil service is founded.

The Staff Union Committee would like you to read this report very carefully so that you can appreciate the effort your representatives have been making in every area where they can legitimately defend (and where possible enhance) your rights and acquired benefits

The achievements the report described may at times seem relatively insignificant or to concern only a small portion of the staff; at times, too, they may appear to be a reflection of an internal Union strategy that on the surface does not have anything much to do with the "realities" of day-to-day professional life. But don't be fooled! Every minute that your representatives spend with the Administration discussing the minutiae of the employment conditions of a group of people or even a single individual, every agreement reached in the nick of time to save a staff member from dismissal, is one more small but important contribution to the complex structure that constitutes the overall conditions of employment and of work of the ILO staff as a whole. And the Staff Union Committee is just the visible part of the iceberg. The successes highlighted in this report would not have been possible without the active support of all the Union's members, without the commitment of all our shop stewards (to whom we extend our warmest thanks), or without the courage of completely isolated representatives working on technical cooperation projects, often enough based in countries where there is not even any official ILO representation. Yet, vulnerable as they are, they don't hesitate for a moment when it comes to entering the fray to defend the interests of their colleagues, for the simple reason that they are proud to be working for the ILO.

Strength and, even more so, solidarity are still the cornerstones of the ILO Staff Union, not least because many of our colleagues who enjoy greater employment security today were working under precarious contracts yesterday ... and so we come full circle. This solidarity has been present now for nigh on 100 years. Long may it last! We are relying on you

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME AND STRATEGY

SECTION 1 – Objectives and priority areas of action

Objective No. 1: Improve industrial relations

- ✓ *Ensure effective implementation of the 2000 Recognition and Procedural Agreement,*
- ✓ *Improve the existing institutional framework to promote healthy and effective negotiations, and in transparency.*

Objective No. 2: Job security

- ✓ *End precarious work,*
- ✓ *A fair contracts policy, including a redeployment mechanism.*

Objective No. 3: Full social protection

- ✓ *Effective and efficient health care and pension funds,*
- ✓ *Unemployment insurance.*

Objective No. 4: Fair and equal conditions of employment for all staff, *without discrimination based on gender, type of contracts, grades, personal and/or family status and duty station.*

Objective No. 5: A career development path for all:

- ✓ *A fair and transparent performance appraisal system,*
- ✓ *A negotiated and adequate job classification process,*
- ✓ *A fair recruitment and mobility system,*
- ✓ *A transparent rewarding mechanism.*

Objective No. 6: An even stronger Union:

- ✓ *Maintaining and expanding our membership,*
- ✓ *Strengthening solidarity,*
- ✓ *Strengthening capacities,*
- ✓ *Improving operations, communication and coherence,*
- ✓ *Strengthening existing alliances with the international trade union federations.*

Objective No. 7: Enhancing staff security, safety and health:

- ✓ *Enhancing staff security, safety and health with particular focus on crisis response and conflict-affected countries.*

SECTION 2 – Staff Union Means of Action

I. Improve industrial relations

Objective: Restore the framework for maintaining sound industrial relations.

Means of action

- Ensuring, from within the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC), that every decision or proposal presented by the Administration is backed by the relevant data and has been the subject of consultation and/or negotiation.
- Appointment of a neutral, independent Chair for the Joint Negotiating Committee.
- Upgrading the negotiating skills of the staff's representative.

Co-Chair of the Joint Negotiating Committee: Catherine Comte-Tiberghien

Co-Secretary: Katerina Tsotroudi

Members: Thierry Bousquet, Carlos Carrión-Crespo, Dan Cork, Elisabeth Fombuena, Yvan Poulin

Technical Advisers: Enrico Cairola, Manuel Cespedes Ocampo, Graciela Jolidon, Maria-Marta Travieso, Christiane Wiskow

Even at the ILO maintaining peaceful industrial relations has never been a walk in the park. And although the general direction should be pretty clear, given the arsenal of agreements and statutory provisions that we can call on, there is always the occasional pitfall or unexpected obstacle. Does that mean that the Staff Union and the Administration are on bad terms? Does it mean that there is no dialogue? No, far from it. In fact, there is constant discussion of every issue that crops up, and HRD and the Union hold anything from 5 to 10 meetings for the purpose every week. It is at those meetings that all kinds of disagreements are cleared up and that most of the concerns of individual staff members are resolved on an ad hoc basis. If difficulties do arise it is in the course of important negotiations in the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC), where we come up against problems of equal access to information on the implementation of agreements. All too often the process is hampered by differences of opinion between the two parties as to what is negotiable and what isn't, and when an atmosphere develops that is not conducive to constructive dialogue.

To offset these difficulties the Staff Union has finally succeeded in having an independent Chair elected to conduct the discussions in the JNC, and the last two sessions held under that arrangement have been encouraging. But it is important that our members realize that we still face some serious challenges. Negotiating the reform of the ILO's contracts policy, for example, is most likely to take longer and be more complicated than we thought, because we are a long way from reaching an agreement because of doubts about the Administration's commitment.

To be in a position to negotiate on an equal footing with the Administration, the Staff Union Committee is always encouraging new recruits to attend courses on negotiating techniques. The federations to which the Union belongs either organize such courses in the field themselves or take advantage of regional trade union meetings to train union representatives.

II. Job security

A. Recruitment and Selection

Objective: Take stock of the implementation of the collective agreement on recruitment and selection. If necessary, propose adjustments to the procedures to the RAMC. They would aim at safeguarding the spirit and the letter of the Agreement, which seeks to promote mobility and career development, as well as motivation and job satisfaction of staff.

Means of action

- The SUC will continue to play an important role in the review of vacancy announcements. The SUC aims at ensuring fair job descriptions and real opportunities of career development.
- The role of the independent members of the technical panels is key for the success and equity of the recruitment procedures. Relationships with them have the purpose of sharing the working group's experience, providing practical guidance and developing materials to support fulfilling their responsibility. Independent members' feedback on their experience during 2015 would be of a great help. The Staff Union will reinforce the role of these independent members as it was foreseen in the collective agreement by filing complaints against the procedural flaws dealing with the composition of the selection panels.
- The SUC representatives will continue performing their role in the RAMC on the basis of a sound implementation of the recruitment and selection procedure and the principles of transparency, due process, fairness and equity.
- The SUC also aims at ensuring a good communication to staff on matters related to the new agreement on recruitment and selection procedures.

Member of the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC): Catherine Comte-Tiberghien

Technical Advisers: Manuel Cespedes Ocampo and Graciela Jolidon

Substitute: Katerina Tsotroudi

Coordinator of the working group on recruitment and selection: Manuel Cespedes Ocampo

Members: Thierry Bousquet, Carlos Carrión-Crespo, Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, Elisabeth Fombuena, Graciela Jolidon, Craig Russon, Maria-Marta Travieso, Katerina Tsotroudi.

Achievements

At the request of the Staff Union, an evaluation of the first year of the RAPS took place at the very beginning of 2016 where some proposed adjustments were made by the Staff Union concerning stage 2 of the procedure and the role of independent members. Unfortunately, to date, these adjustments were not yet discussed despite regular requests made to HRD and constitute a serious obstacle to the process. Nevertheless, in its second year, the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC) has met 11 times in connection with vacant positions and RAPS sessions. Since January 2016, and at the time of this writing, two RAPS sessions have taken place and RAPS 3 was in preparation by HRD.

The Staff Union representatives at the RAMC are extremely vigilant at each of the three (3) procedural stages in the filling of vacancies (see also Annex I of the Staff Regulations):

Request for the opening and examining of vacancy announcements

The SUC actively participates in the recruitment process, starting with the review of Job descriptions (JDs) for the RAPS and for General Service (GS) competitions – the above means that around 70 JDs have been reviewed by the Union so far. The SUC aims at ensuring that vacant positions are real career opportunities for qualified colleagues. The main trend noted at this stage by the Staff Union is directly linked to the new

change concerning the cost of a post. As these posts are budgeted now at real cost, directors and managers are very tempted to downgrade the vacant post while maintaining the tasks of the upper level – what we call low-cost employment.

Stage 1. In the RAMC context, the SUC reviews and participates in recommendations on proposals to transfer colleagues without competition; due to humanitarian and medical reasons, legal obligation of the Office, an abolished position, etc.

In a growing context of harassment, bullying and burn outs, the SUC continues in its efforts to protect the interest of staff at this stage 1 of the process.

Stage 2. Transfers in the same grade or through mobility

The RAMC reviews the evaluations by HRD and by the responsible chief of suitable internal candidates, and makes recommendations to the Director-General for filling vacancies.

2015 was a year where geographical mobility was a priority. Apparent frustration was noticed because of this second stage, as some colleagues considered it as a brake to career development. Nevertheless, we noticed this year that the reassignments for mobility have meant the creation of vacant positions for which colleagues will have a chance to further their career through competition. The statistics also show clearly that this stage 2 allow an increased number of integration of TC + 5 colleagues (around 25%)

Stage 3. Filling vacant positions by competition

If no selection of candidates was possible at the first and second stage of filling vacancies, the competition is at the third stage.

HRD provides the responsible chief with a list of candidates meeting the minimum requirements as specified in the vacancy announcement. Subsequently, the responsible chief and HRD will establish a shortlist of candidates in consultation with the technical panel.

The technical panel comprises the responsible chief, an HRD representative and **a third independent member selected from a list of staff established in agreement with the Staff Union** which is a full member of the panel and has a full right to look at the file, and to make comments on the short list.

The role of the Independent member of the panel is key in this third stage of the selection process; that is why the Staff Union plans to organize further sessions to share experiences, and guidance with the independent members.

In addition, the Staff Union through its representatives in the RAMC continues to defend the interests of colleagues vigorously, when reviewing the competition files, drawing attention to irregularities in short-lists.

Challenges ahead

The SUC takes very seriously the complaints from colleagues who were unsuccessful applicants for positions filled at the three stages of the recruitment process. The SUC has shared staff concerns in communications with HRD and has noticed some improvements.

The RAMC itself still is a great challenge. When discussing recruitment and selection matters at the meetings with other RAMC members, the SUC representatives do their best to reach a consensus on the basis of SUC views. When consensus is not possible, a separate recommendation by the SUC is made. The latter is capital when colleagues decide to appeal, as the Joint Advisory Appeals Board (JAAB) will be able to know the Staff Union's position as regards a competition.

B. Contracts and Employment security

Objectives

After having succeeded in meeting most of its objectives last year the group will focus this year on:

- obtaining tangible improvements for precarious staff. In particular, obtaining the implementation of short- and medium-term findings of the joint SUC-HRD Survey on TC staff;
- ensuring the regularization of as many precarious staff as possible;
- raising awareness of precarious staff on their basic rights and entitlements, based on the premise that the ILO Staff Regulations apply on an equal basis to all staff;
- defending the eligibility of staff in the titularization process and defending the latter as a permanent feature of the Organization;
- supporting the claims of interns: extend the representation of ILO interns in the field, provision of regular performance feedback throughout the internship cycle and periodical revision of the stipend.

Means of action

- Strategic use will continue to be made of legal action to ensure equal conditions of employment for all staff and managerial accountability, as well as the integration of different types of contracts in the ILO Regular Budget.
- Concrete data to be obtained from the Administration on the types of contracts given to ILO staff broken down by gender, grades and source of funding.
- Encourage the Administration in the publication of leaflets and organization of workshops, seminars and information sessions on the rights of TC staff.
- Strengthen coordination with other thematic groups on cross-cutting subjects such as: rehiring of retired officials and intergenerational solidarity; security of employment and performance management; regularization of staff through recruitment and selection and the impact of the new mobility policy on the above.

Coordinator: Katerina Tsotroudi

Members: Enrico Cairola, Dan Cork, Elisabeth Fombuena, Graciela Jolidon, Yvan Poulin, Gurchaten Sandhu, Maria-Marta Travieso, Faustina Van Aperen.

Achievements

This year, contracts policy has been at the centre of negotiations with the Administration within the framework of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC). In total, more than six meetings took place adding up to 12 hours of negotiations on contracts. At the time of writing of this report, a retreat is to be organized in the first half of October with a wide representation of stakeholders on both sides given the fact that the question of contracts has an impact on a number of related fields (recruitment and selection, social security, programme and budget, finance, development cooperation, etc.).

A well-attended information session was organized for staff on 7 June 2016 in order to provide up-to-date information on the issues under negotiation and the prospects ahead. A summary of the information session has been posted on the Staff Union's website so that the field can draw on it as well.

Developments in units where the majority of staff are on TC contracts have demonstrated the urgency of the matter. The Staff Unions spared no efforts to defend the security of employment of staff on TC through discussions with the Administration in order to ensure that all alternatives have been explored and that transparency is maintained throughout the process.

Challenges ahead

While negotiations have been intensive, tangible improvements have not been produced yet for precarious staff. The Staff Union is aware of the urgency of this matter and spares no effort to ensure that the issue stays high on the agenda of the Administration.

III. Full social protection

Objective. Effective and efficient health care and pension funds

Staff Health Insurance Fund (SHIF)

Means of action

- Requesting and insisting upon publication of the report of the working group on the SHIF.
- Monitoring the referendum on the changes in SHIF contribution rates.
- Monitoring and ensuring implementation of the measures announced by the Director-General to help the Fund carry out its duties.
- Maintaining close contact with the insured persons and with the Former Officials' Section on every issue relating to the Fund.

Pension Fund (UNJSPF)

Means of action

- Ensuring that participants' recommendations are taken into account in relevant decisions.
- Putting pressure on the Administrations (ILO, UNJSPF) to ensure that the payment of pensions is assured from the date of retirement (delays of more than five months have occurred in the payment of some pensions).
- Monitoring closely the implementation of the UN General Assembly's decision regarding the age of retirement.

Coordinator: Elisabeth Fombuena

Members: Graciela Jolidon, Yvan Poulin, José Tossa, Faustina Van Aperen

Technical Advisers: François Kientzler (Anciens), Samir Koufane, Christopher Land-Kazlauskas, Rosinda Silva

Member of the Compensation Committee: Graciela Jolidon assisted by Elisabeth Fombuena and Yvan Poulin

Achievements

Social protection has had some difficult moments this past year and our objectives have had to be modified accordingly.

Staff Health Insurance Fund (SHIF)

By a very small margin the referendum on increasing contribution rates to the Staff Health Insurance Fund went the Administration's way, and the higher rates will therefore unfortunately be introduced. That said, members of the Fund as a whole are to be congratulated on their extensive mobilization at headquarters and in the field, where the level of participation was unprecedented.

At a meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) after the referendum, the Staff Union asked whether the increase, originally scheduled for 1 January 2016, was to be retroactive or not. Responding to

the convincing arguments presented by the Staff Union regarding the Fund's healthy financial situation and the current level of the Guarantee Fund, the Administration announced that the increase would not be retroactive but would instead enter into force on 1 January 2017.

The Staff Union also raised the matter of improved governance and of the backlog in the reimbursement of claims, noting in particular that the Fund was too short-staffed to cope with demand. Since then the Fund has received assistance and the situation has improved.

With regard to after-service health insurance (ASHI), the Union informed the staff of the impact of document GB.326/PFA/4 on future social benefits following its discussion by the Governing Body. Paragraph 39(b) of the document was unfortunately adopted as it stands, but only after the Administration assured the Staff Union that it would be consulted should any other documents on the subject come before the GB. The situation as a whole was summed up very well in the statement that the Chairperson delivered at the end of the discussion.

Pension Fund (UNJSPF)

Because of the delay in the payment of pensions to new beneficiaries, the Staff Union has been working with the unit concerned to speed things up as much as possible. Thanks to our colleagues in PENSION the ILO is continuing to process completed files rapidly, but the new computerized system in New York has encountered a number of serious bugs.

The Union has also been in touch with representatives of participants in the Pension Fund about their various concerns and has been keeping a close eye on the way the Fund is managing both benefits and investments.

Age of retirement. The idea that as of 1 January 2017 ILO staff should retire at the age of 65 has the backing of the Staff Union. This age limit already applies to newly recruited staff members and for the sake of equity the Union has asked that it also apply to staff due to retire in 2017. When it raised this point in the JNC, the Union asked HRD to supply a list of staff members retiring as from August 2016, but HRD has not provided the information and so further discussion of the situation has not been possible. Meanwhile, some of our colleagues are leaving on retirement without the option to have their contract extended to the age of 65, which would have put them on an equal footing with new recruits. The Staff Union has been very insistent that HRD should provide the information it requested and that transitional measures be introduced with immediate effect so long as no final conclusion is reached within the JNC. It is particularly concerned for staff who have not contributed to the Pension Fund long enough for a decent pension. The Administration's delay in dealing with the issue undermines the whole point of negotiating in the JNC.

Compensation Committee

Concerning the various cases under examination by the Committee, one of the principles defended by the Staff Union is that, although compensation is determined on a case-by-case basis, the general principles that are applied in one instance must also be applicable to similar instances. It also maintains that, where there is any doubt, the ultimate objective must be to ensure maximum protection for the worker.

In more general terms, the Union believes that there is an urgent need to draw up procedural rules on the mandate, composition and functioning of the Committee through the Internal Governance Document System (IGDS). The Staff Union has accordingly proposed that the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) set up a working group on the subject. Among other things, the Union believes that the composition of the Compensation Committee and the functions of its members need to be clarified so that everyone has access to the same information, and that the rules governing the compensation to which the staff are entitled should be published along with the applicable procedure. In other words, it considers that the "case law" regarding compensation should be available to Committee members so that they can see how similar cases have been dealt with, as is the case in the Joint Advisory Appeals Board (JAAB). The

relationship between the compensation scheme and the social security scheme and between the Committee and other bodies such as the Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (COSH) has to be determined, the channels of appeal against Committee decisions have to be examined and reviewed, the possibility of a conflict of interest arising from the function of a Committee member has to be looked into and equal coverage has to be ensured for those recruited under short-term contracts (ST and SST).

The Staff Union is pushing for this working group to be set up as soon as possible, but it has not yet received any reply from the Administration to the proposals it has voiced in the JNC. By dragging its feet on this issue, the Administration is undermining the effectiveness of negotiations in the JNC.

Challenges ahead

Staff Health Insurance Fund (SHIF)

Following the instances of fraud that have come to light within the Staff Health Insurance Fund, the Director-General has called for an audit of the Fund to see how it can function efficiently. The Staff Union, which took part in the working group on the subject and in the drafting of its report and recommendations, will be paying close attention to the outcome of the audit to make sure it is both transparent and equitable. It has already had occasion to raise a number of concerns on the subject in the JNC.

Despite certain misgivings, the Staff Union intends to pursue its efforts to improve governance and reduce delays in the reimbursement of claims by maintaining open communications with the Fund's members and executive secretary.

As to after-service health insurance (ASHI), the Union will be carefully monitoring the Governing Body's compliance with the promises it made last March and expects to be consulted on any document on the subject that comes up for discussion at future GB meetings.

Pension Fund (UNJSPF)

The Staff Union will continue to provide assistance to colleagues affected by the delay in the payment of benefits.

IV. Fair and equal conditions of employment for all staff

Objective. To contribute to the improvement of the working environment for all ILO officials through combating discrimination and promoting equality and diversity whilst facilitating the pursuit of a healthy work-life balance

Means of action

- Work with the Administration to develop a diversity and work-life balance charter/strategy.
- Provide guidelines and training on gender and diversity mainstreaming within all SUC work groups; starting with the recruitment and selection committee to improve gender parity and inclusion of people with disabilities in the recruitment process.
- Improve information on entitlements and services available under parental leave and return to work, including child and other care responsibilities.
- Finalize guidelines on nursing at work and completing the preparation of the nursing room at headquarters
- Work with the team negotiating the new contracts policy to ensure that gender, equality and diversity issues are addressed.
- Develop a friendly "information pack" which will provide an overview of the work-life balance policy at the ILO.

Coordinator: Gurchaten Sandhu

Members: Elisabeth Fombuena, Entela Lula Vallat, Faustina Van Aperen

Technical Advisers: Laura Addati, Eric Carlson, Edward Lawton, Kroum Markov

Achievements

Diversity Month. The group supported the ILO Intern Board to develop and implement the month-long March for Diversity Campaign. The campaign ended with an action plan being developed to enhance diversity amongst ILO interns.

Recognition of all unions. At its annual meeting, the United Nations Pension Board has endorsed a new policy recognizing all unions according to the law of the country where the union took place, not the staff member's country of nationality. This means that all staff who are currently in a legal union will be able to designate their partners as the recipient of pension benefits when the staff member dies. This is an important change from the previous policy that only granted these benefits if the staff member's country of nationality recognized the union. This is one more step towards equality and inclusion in the UN system.

Training to mainstream diversity. In an effort to mainstream a gender and diversity perspective in the work of the SUC and its working groups, the ILO Staff collaborated with UN Care to develop a tailor-made half-day course on UN for All. The aim of the course is to promote dignity and equality in the UN and its specialized agencies. All members of the SUC will be invited to take the course.

Diversity charter. Discussions with HRD to develop a diversity charter and "information pack" on work-life balance also started during this period and will continue into next year.

Challenges ahead

- To keep up with the needs/requests in relation to the human resources and expertise available in the working group remains a key challenge and thus some working items are still pending.
- To make information on work-life balance issues accessible in a one-stop-shop.
- The work on ensuring follow-up with HRD on the establishment of a pool of independent investigators and negotiate a prevention strategy as stipulated in the collective agreement is still to be pursued.
- Shortage in time-commitment and a dedicated working group member to make progress in all of the work items.

V. A career development path for all

A. Personal promotions and upgrading review

Objective. Ensure that procedures are transparent and equitable.

Means of action. Obtain the information regarding the eligibility of staff who are being unlawfully excluded from the exercise, colleagues in the Tribunal, former precarious colleagues, and all others who, according to the applicable rules and GB decisions should be eligible.

Members: Carlos Carrión-Crespo (Professionals), Thierry Bousquet and Catherine Comte-Tiberghien (General Services)

Achievements

The Staff Union has initiated legal action to obtain recognitions of these colleagues in the titularization process.

The Staff Union has also participated in the personal promotion process; in 2016, we have processed the 2013 and 2014 exercises.

Challenges ahead

A Tribunal decision is expected in 2017. Afterwards, the Staff Union will participate in the implementation process through the titularization committee.

B. Training policy and performance management

Objective. To ensure that staff concerns are taken into account in the ILO training policy and in the performance management system of the ILO and that policies are implemented in a fair and transparent manner

Training policy

Specific objectives

- Request the Office to convene regular meetings of the Joint Training Council.
- Review and comment the ILO's training policy, the performance of the Staff Development Fund and the expenditure of the central training credits.
- Negotiate a training policy in line with the needs of staff.
- Strengthen mechanisms for the Staff Union to be consulted on the use of Staff Development Funds, regularly evaluating the impact of training expenditure, and promoting feedback from staff regarding implementation and assessing how proposed training programmes satisfy staff members' needs and requests.

Performance management

Specific objectives for performance management

- Have a clear feedback from staff regarding the implementation of the performance management system and assessing how the introduction of a new system has responded to the needs of staff.
- Negotiate changes that have been suggested as a result of a broad consultation process with the staff.
- Negotiate specific measures and a new procedure for staff working under TC programmes.

Co-chair of the Joint Training Council: Carlos Carrión-Crespo

Coordinator of the working group on career development: Carlos Carrión-Crespo

Members: Manuel Cespedes Ocampo, Entela Lula Vallat, Craig Russon, Maria-Marta Travieso

Achievements

The Staff Union and management have agreed on the new terms of reference for the Joint Advisory Training Council (JATC) and its composition. The JATC will reinitiate its work shortly.

Challenges ahead

The elaboration of a joint training policy, under the mandate of the Staff Regulations, will require agreement on the contents of the information that management is required to provide and on the issues that will be discussed in the JATC.

VI. An even stronger Union

A. Communication

Objective. To increase communication with staff on both current issues and progress achieved by the Staff Union, in close coordination with the thematic working groups

Means of action

- Issuing regular updates to staff via the website and social media and by other means.
- Using creative and inclusive channels of communication, such as the posting of weekly bulletins on latest developments.
- Updating and promoting the new Staff Union website.
- Developing new marketing materials for various campaigns, including member recruitment.

Coordinator: Yvan Poulin assisted by Thierry Bousquet and Elisabeth Fombuena

Achievements

The Staff Union is always very active in keeping in touch with its members. As in 2015 its website has had more than 6,000 visits, and more than 16,000 pages have been consulted; the average time spent per visit on the new site has also increased. The same applies to the number of "Likes" on Facebook (currently 950), while the number of visitors remained stable at 1,000 per issue. The weekly communications posted by the Staff Union are also popular and have received very positive feedback.

Union Magazine's editorial committee has been on the job since the beginning of the year and has successfully completed its second issue. In response to requests for contributions, the Magazine has benefited from the views of new contributors and from the addition of new columns.

Challenges ahead

Communication is a constant preoccupation of the Staff Union, which always does everything it can to see that the staff are fully informed of developments as they arise so that they are always aware of what is happening at the ILO and at the United Nations.

We are also looking into the question of new formats, media and techniques for keeping you up to date with our achievements and with the challenges facing us in our dealings with the Administration.

B. Membership, staff representation and training

Objectives

- Build an even stronger union, through recruitment of at least 200 new members in 2016 at headquarters and in the field.
- Support targeted recruitment and mobilization efforts in the field.
- Expand and renew the union steward network in ILO headquarters, through recruiting stewards in three new constituencies, and organize elections and strengthen the network of union stewards at ILO headquarters.
- Strengthen the capacity of staff representatives in the field and at headquarters to resolve problems and negotiate effectively with management.
- Advance the mission of the union steward network at headquarters, to promote, protect, and defend the interests of the staff at the constituency level, and to contribute toward building the ILO Staff Union.

Means of action

- Strengthen the capacity and relationships among the existing stewards in 19 constituencies at headquarters, through monthly meetings, both formal mini-trainings and informal coffee meetings, to boost the knowledge and confidence of stewards to represent staff at the constituency level.
- Maintain the Staff Union's systematic database that identifies gaps in membership, as a basis for a recruitment and internal organizing campaign.
- Support and deepen the Staff Union's engagement with staff at the constituency level, through organizing monthly café-croissant meetings in different ILO departments.
- Enhance the capacity of staff representatives in the field to recruit and communicate with members in a more systematic way, through establishing a strategic organizing plan in cooperation with the Titular Representatives in the field.
- Develop the leadership capacity of union stewards according to areas of interest, such as co-facilitating café-croissant awareness-raising meetings with staff, and holding labour-management discussions at the constituency level.
- Promote awareness and implementation of specific policies through bi-monthly mini-trainings including but not limited to Harassment Prevention in the ILO, the Occupational Safety and Health Referral System, and Flexitime Procedure.
- Develop a user-friendly guide to help union stewards in their duties, including through updating the Staff Representatives' Training Manual, following the conclusion of the negotiation of the new Contracts Policy.
- Organize elections for union stewards in September 2016.

Coordinator: Dan Cork assisted by Elisabeth Fombuena, Yvan Poulin, Craig Russon, Gurchaten Sandhu

Achievements

Union stewards organizing and training group

The Staff Union Committee maintained its active support for the Union Steward Network in ILO HQ in the past year, through a mentoring programme for current stewards, occasional coffee meetings, café-croissant meetings to support stewards in their roles, and preparation for new union steward elections.

The Coordinators for the Union Steward Network worked with stewards in FINANCA, ISSA, STATISTICS, and GED-ILO/AIDS to hold café croissant meetings, which enabled staff in each unit to share what was going well, and where improvements were needed in labour relations and the work environment. These

meetings were well received by the staff, as they allowed for open participation of the staff in expressing their own views.

Each of the café-croissants was followed by a meeting between the stewards and the department manager, supported by the SUC, in which the feedback from the meetings was shared, with agreement on specific actions to be taken at the unit level, as well as clarification on which issues were organization-wide issues for follow up by the Staff Union with the Administration.

The union steward network also continued its active support for departments in transition, including FUNDAMENTALS, GED-ILO/AIDS, and several units involved in the BPR process.

Colleagues in GED-ILO/IDS organized around the transition in the department, and identified priorities for action to support staff in the field and HQ. Staff elected two union stewards for the new branch, who met regularly with the staff, and with management, to ensure that the transition process was fair and transparent. Thanks to these efforts, the majority of ILO/AIDS contracts were extended until December, 2016, with agreement at the time of writing this report that clear criteria would be needed for considering changes to roles and potential reductions in staff in light of funding constraints after December.

The issue of a lack of Organizational commitment to the job security of staff on TC programmes and projects was a subject of the Staff Union's advocacy efforts with the Director-General, as well as a subject of key importance in the negotiations for the new contracts policy.

SHIF campaign and role of union stewards

The union stewards at HQ, along with staff representatives in the field, played an active role in the mobilization of staff and retirees to vote in the SHIF referendum. Stewards at HQ used the information provided by the Staff Union to help answer staff questions on the increase in the contribution rate. Stewards reported that this information was very helpful for their discussions in encouraging staff to vote in the referendum.

Organizing campaign

Following last year's global meeting, which included training for staff representatives from around the world, including union stewards at HQ, the Staff Union followed a more targeted union recruitment effort, to ensure an even stronger union. Significant membership gains were realized in Africa and Asia, as well as a steady expansion of membership rolls at HQ, and in other regions.

The Staff Union's 'Union Week' in October was the culmination of these efforts

Finally, in preparation for the October union steward elections, the coordinators of the network held individual meetings with current stewards, and also engaged with staff in other units throughout HQ to expand the network to new departments. An information-sharing session for new stewards was scheduled for September, as well as a training on communication and organizing skills for October.

VII. Enhancing staff security, safety and health

Objective. To strengthen the network of union representatives knowledgeable and equipped with the means to defend the rights of staff concerning safety and health and well-being in the ILO

Means of action

- Support the implementation of the occupational safety and health (OSH) policy and procedure through active participation in the Committee on Safety and Health (COSH), and contribute to the timely implementation of the COSH action plan.
- Expand and support the network of Staff Union representatives in the field offices and focal points with an interest in and knowledge of security, safety and health issues through information and advocacy activities and technical assistance.
- Contribute to capacity-building among SU representatives and focal points by developing user-friendly guidance for OSH representatives on how to fulfil their OSH duties, and by contributing to the development of training materials and implementation of training activities.
- Ensure a staff voice in the Steering Committee for the building renovation so that the highest standards on staff safety and health and well-being apply during the renovation of the headquarters building, in consultation with Staff Union representatives, union stewards and focal points. Ensure that staff are kept informed of developments through communications and/or information sessions. Promote and support active participation in security measures.

Titular member of the Committee on Occupational Safety and Health: Katerina Tsotroudi, Christiane Wiskow

Substitute members: José Tossa, Jim Windell

Coordinator of the working group on occupational safety and health and environmental issues: Christiane Wiskow

Members: Enrico Cairola, Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, José Tossa, Katerina Tsotroudi

Achievements:

The establishment of OSH committees in field offices increased significantly with a current coverage of 92 per cent. At the Regional Meeting of the Americas, an information session on the OSH policy and implementation procedure and the role of OSH committees was held with the Staff Union representatives. Advice regarding OSH concerns in individual field offices was provided to SU OSH representatives in collaboration with the OSH coordinator. Continued participation in COSH meetings and collaboration with the OSH Coordinator helped to follow through on OSH policy implementation. Basic instruments and guidelines for reporting have been developed and published on the COSH-website.

In the context of a joint working group on addressing stress at work, Staff Union members took part in the development of a report that was discussed and adopted at the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC). The COSH has the mandate to oversee the implementation of the report's recommendations, and accordingly established a joint working group on stress and mental health at work which took up its work in August with the development of an action plan. The working group will report annually to the JNC. Furthermore, the Staff Union organized a staff information session on the topic at the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, 28 April 2016, in collaboration with COSH, ACTRAV, LABADMIN/OSH and HRD.

In the context of the building renovation at headquarters, security and OSH concerns have been raised continuously with the Administration and in the Building Renovation Steering Committee. The Staff Union supported the call for volunteers to strengthen the security intervention teams, and was present at initial training sessions on fire security and evacuation protocols.

Challenges ahead

At headquarters, the multiplication of calls for volunteers regarding security, building renovation user representatives and other functions poses a challenge to attract more SU members with interest in volunteering as OSH representatives. Therefore, more advocacy activities will be organized. While the development of training materials is well advanced, the actual uptake of training OSH representatives and committees is slow. Creating a culture of security, safety and health is a long-term challenge. Improving collaboration and coordination at the interfaces of the respective units and responsibilities is a necessary and ongoing effort. As the second phase of the renovation will start, the Staff Union will continue to raise the concerns of the staff and will ensure that the move will be done according to the existing rules and agreements with the staff representatives.

Section 3 - Periodic and regular action

I. Resolving the problems facing non-headquarters staff

Objective. Continue and broaden information sharing and coordination between the various regions and headquarters, regarding:

- The continuation and development of information sharing.
- Coordination between the different regions and headquarters in the following areas:
 - the effective implementation of the new field structure;
 - recruitment and selection procedures through the implementation of the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC);
 - the recurring question of slow SHIF reimbursements and the mobilization for the upcoming referendum;
 - the reclassification of positions in the field;
 - the establishment and effectiveness of independent review groups (IRG) for use in the field reclassification;
 - career prospects through the new mobility policy;
 - staff security in the field for all categories, from both the standpoint of harassment of health and physical security;
 - the fight against discrimination between international and local staff in terms of the safety and evacuation policies, including the rights and benefits linked to high-risk duty stations.

Means of action

- The new system of monthly discussions via Skype held regularly with all the regional representatives is now an effective reality that facilitates the sharing of experiences on the implementation modalities of the above priorities.
- Continuation of the census approach and sharing of good practices while pointing out irregularities, to enhance the participation and action of the Union in the negotiations in the various decision-making at headquarters.
- Implementation and monitoring of the new Staff Union circular on the organization of the structure of the Staff Union globally, and the periodic election of union representatives at headquarters and in field offices (adopted at the Global Meeting in October 2015).

Coordinator: José Tossa assisted by Thierry Bousquet, Dan Cork, Momar N'Diaye, Maria-Marta Travieso, Christiane Wiskow

Achievements

The main objectives have been achieved, including the implementation of the new structures and procedures for recruitment and selection through the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC).

Reimbursement of medical costs by the SHIF has improved, with a considerable reduction in the backlog. That said, we need to keep our eyes open, as the rapid payment of medical emergencies has still not found a satisfactory solution. The commitments announced by the Director-General in his information letter to the staff in December 2015 have not yet all been met, notably with regard to emergency payments.

Challenges ahead

- On the subject of career prospects we have not yet had any news as to the effective implementation of the recently announced decisions concerning mobility, especially in the case of nationally and/or locally recruited personnel.
- It is important that we keep a close eye on the reform of the United Nations system as it relates to National Officer (NO) staff.
- We need to follow up the contracts and renewals of our technical cooperation colleagues systematically.
- The effective alignment of ILO policy on that of the United Nations as it relates to retirement at the age of 65.
- Professional relations between supervisors and other categories of staff in the field (working relationship, behaviour, social dialogue, etc.)
- Capacity building for Union stewards on social dialogue (role of the Staff Union, function of the staff representative and means of action by the Union).

II. Use of financial resources

Objective. Ensure maximum transparency in the use of financial resources

Means of action

- Examine the monitoring and follow-up process for all financial transactions.
- Pursue discussions with the Administration on the opening of bank accounts at duty stations where Union dues are deposited locally.
- Issue a Staff Union circular clarifying the financial powers and responsibilities of staff representatives in the field.

Treasurer: Yvan Poulin

Deputy Treasurer: José Tossa

Achievements

The centralized processing of the payroll has entailed a review of the procedure to ensure that local Union representatives receive the share of union dues to which they are entitled (75 per cent of contributions paid), for two fundamental reasons: financial control and payment of dues.

Challenges ahead

The creation of a "Solidarity" account into which voluntary contributions can be paid in the event of a national disaster, for example, would enable the Staff Union to provide assistance quickly to workers and their families in affected areas by financing projects in the field directly.

A dedicated account of this nature would make it easier for the Union to collect and redistribute specific financial contributions by doing away with the logistical constraints of a physical collection. With access to modern electronic forms of payment, people would be able to make any donation they can afford quite easily.

III. Support for ILO staff in the prevention and resolution of disputes

Objectives. After having succeeded last year in adopting a negotiated procedure on harassment complaints, this year action will focus on putting the new procedure into action and improving managerial accountability. In addition:

- Staff will be even better informed and aware of their rights and of ways to defend them.
- Legal action will be used strategically to improve compliance, end impunity for illegal practices and ensure equal conditions of employment for all staff.
- On-going support will be provided for the realization of the Staff Union Objectives 2015-2020 in the areas of industrial relations, job security, social protection, career development, staff security, safety and health, etc.

Means of action

- Legal support in the framework of negotiations with the Administration.
- Ongoing provision of legal advice to the SUC and individual staff members, in headquarters and in the field:
 - technical assistance in the formulation of grievances to be presented to the dispute resolution bodies with the support of the Staff Union;
 - advice to individual staff on options for conflict prevention and resolution, upon request, in the framework of individual cases.
- Organization of workshops, seminars and information sessions on specific legal subjects of particular interest of staff, e.g., the new procedure on harassment complaints and the functioning of the dispute resolution bodies like the JAAB.

Coordinator: Katerina Tsotroudi

Members: Graciela Jolidon, Momar N'Diaye, Craig Russon, Maria-Marta Travieso

Achievements

After a fully transparent and competitive recruitment process, a new Staff Union legal adviser was appointed in September 2016. In the interim period, every effort was made to ensure that staff obtained the advice and defence to which it is entitled and that the objectives of the Staff Union continue to be promoted through legal support in the framework of negotiations with the Administration.

In the period November 2015-September 2016, more than 50 colleagues obtained legal advice. Most cases brought to the attention of the Union concerned recruitment and selection, classification, employment security of TC staff, retirement age and non-discrimination of LGBT staff. Harassment was also raised in a

number of occasions and the Staff Union did everything in its purview and in the framework of the new collective agreement on harassment to provide the necessary legal support to colleagues.

The Staff Union has also participated in the procedure for the recruitment of the new mediator which is ongoing at the time of drafting of this report.

Challenges ahead

The Staff Union is concerned that it still does not have the formal right to file complaints with the JAAB and ILOAT in the interest of all staff and that recent decisions by the ILOAT constitute a regression in relation to the very progressive case law adopted by this body on the issue in recent years.

Moreover, an area for improvement would be the provision of information on specific legal subjects of particular interest to staff. During the reporting year, an information session on the new procedure on harassment complaints was organized for interns, which generated a lot of interest and requests for this information to be shared with all staff. This issue will be followed up by the next Committee.

IV. International

Objective: Stronger alliances at the international level

Means of action

- Pooling of know-how and resources in mobilization campaigns aimed at international federations of international civil servants.
- Revival of the "Geneva Group" so as to induce international organizations to be more responsive to the interests and needs of their staff.
- Encouraging staff representatives to join or establish local federations of UN staff associations (FUNSAs).

Coordinator: Catherine Comte-Tiberghien

Members: Dan Cork, Momar N'Diaye, Gurchaten Sandhu (Focal Point UN GLOBE), Katerina Tsotroudi, Faustina Van Aperen

Technical Adviser: Valentina Stoevska

The Staff Union had every reason to hope that 2016 would mark a significant turning point in the rapprochement of the United Nations' two major federations of staff associations, so that they can defend the staff's interests much more effectively against the threats posed by the common system for their conditions of employment. But in the end it seems that the time is not yet ripe for them to work hand-in-hand in any real way. There *have* been synergies and a certain amount of combined action, especially where the issue has meant defending the staff's interests against an ICSC that is all too keen to meet the demands of the major countries that it make economies and reduce substantially the range of benefits available to the staff. By and large, our efforts have been successful, but further discussion between the two federations is needed before they can agree on an eventual merger.

The Union has also been hard at work in the joint committees at the local level, defending the standard of living of staff members employed in the world's most expensive duty stations. The findings of the general service salary survey are not encouraging in this respect, though this is compensated to some extent by the excellent work the staff unions and associations have put in on the question of raising family allowances.

The current post adjustment survey for professional staff, too, benefited from the staff representatives' firm commitment and determination to make sure that the data collected reflect the real cost of living in Geneva, despite the ICSC's tireless efforts to reduce the purchasing power of international civil servants recruited at the Geneva headquarters of United Nations organizations.

The fact that the "Geneva Group" comprising all United Nations staff representatives has been reactivated has greatly contributed to the better coordination of individual positions and to the ability to respond more effectively to systematic attacks by the ICSC.

In the field, the Staff Union continues to encourage its representatives to form alliances with their counterparts from other organizations and to establish Federations of United Nations Staff Associations (FUNSAs) so that they can respond more effectively to salary surveys and to common concerns within the same duty station.

V. IRIS "Users" Forum

Objective. To be attentive to the IRIS roll-out in the ILO field offices – 2016 will be the year of the IRIS implementation in the Abidjan and European offices– and ensure that this change does not result in much deterioration in working conditions of employees

Means of action

- The Union will continue to participate as observer in all reviews of business processes resulting from the IRIS implementation. It remains also a focal point in case of some potential difficulties faced by staff during this phase of implementation.
- The Union will insist on its demand that ongoing IRIS training be put in place at Headquarters and in external offices in order to provide adequate career development opportunities to General Service staff and stop the re-employment of retired officials.

Members: Manuel Cespedes Ocampo, Entela Lula Vallat, Yvan Poulin, José Tossa

Achievements

The Staff Union's IRIS team has taken part in all the working meetings on the IRIS rollout to ILO external offices. The IRIS implementation to Abidjan was completed in July 2016. The implementation of IRIS to ILO offices in Berlin, Brussels, Lisbon, Madrid, Paris and Rome, as well as to ILO New York, Washington and Tokyo should be completed by November 2016.

The Staff Union's main role in the meetings is to ensure the smooth incorporation of these changes in the new functions or responsibilities of staff in field offices.

As in 2015, and thanks to demands from the Staff Union, we have noticed that IRIS training is being made available to General Service staff at headquarters. IRIS should no longer be obstructing their career progression.

Challenges ahead

The Staff Union will continue to be vigilant about the impact of the next IRIS implementation on the colleagues in the field. In addition to the offices yet to be completed this year, the IRIS rollout plan for the coming years would be as follows:

- 2017 - ILO offices in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in Ankara and Moscow
- 2018 - ILO offices in Asia and the Pacific
- 2019 - ILO offices in Africa

II. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Africa

Titular member: Roger Mavinga Nkambu

Substitute member: José Tossa

The main issues facing the African region this year are as follows.

Field structure review. With technical support from the Staff Union Committee, the titular member assisted in the consultation organized in the Region concerning the various proposals of the field structure review in Africa.

Return of the Regional Office to Abidjan. The Regional Office returned to Abidjan on 1 July 2016. Unfortunately, however, advantage was not taken of its absence to renovate the building before the staff went back to their offices. The lack of planning means that the staff's working conditions and performance have inevitably suffered from the need to re-house them while renovation is going on. The staff are also worried that certain posts attached to the Regional Office in Addis Ababa might disappear, and the Union is going to have to negotiate hard to ensure that no posts are suppressed. A broadly based Committee needs to be set up in Abidjan to discuss improved working conditions and the recruitment of former colleagues whose contracts were interrupted by the Office's relocation from Abidjan to Addis Ababa in 2005.

Staff Union Assistance Fund (SUAF). At the request of the Staff Union Committee, the Fund made loans and/or gifts to several staff members in precarious circumstances (end of contract, insolvency, sickness, disaster, etc.).

Regional consultations. Regular meetings are held between the Regional Director and the staff representatives of country offices and technical support teams in Africa. They provide a useful opportunity for the two parties to discuss issues between themselves and to clarify possible misunderstandings. The next meeting is scheduled for the last quarter of 2016.

Regrading. After a lengthy procedure some staff members have at last had their posts regraded, but many others with out-of-date job descriptions have not yet had their current position recognized. This is an ongoing problem, and the regrading of posts has still not been clarified. So far there has been no significant progress, despite the fact that the imminent global regrading exercise shows every sign of being little more than a gimmick to make the Administration look good. Moreover, the highest grade at the ILO is usually National Officer B (NOB) and, very occasionally, National Officer C (NOC). Inasmuch as the ILO is part of the United Nations system, though, it has to assume its role fully along with its implications. The whole NO issue is currently being discussed within the United Nations system, and this is something the Staff Union Committee will have to watch very carefully.

Assistance, support and advisory services. The Staff Union provides advice and guidance to any members of the staff who consult it and does everything it can to maintain good labour relations and a cordial atmosphere.

The field structure review and its effect on staffing. Restructuring has sometimes taken place without producing the expected outcome and, as a result, staffing is not always adapted to the workload generated

by the changes. The field structure needs to be harmonized so that each office has the same chance of doing its work properly.

Safety and security of field staff in the face of new forms of terrorism and epidemics. United Nations staff everywhere continue to be the target of terrorist attacks, and the plethora of terrorist movements in Africa is a source of real concern for the future and technical cooperation and the safety of UN personnel. The number of countries emerging from recent conflicts where conditions of safety are precarious, the resurgence of urban gangs, pick-pocketing, bag snatching, armed robbery, civil disorder before and after elections, etc., are as many reasons why the ILO, both as a member of the common system and on its own initiative, must in the name of equal treatment and social justice take appropriate steps to protect its local staff, by the same token as it protects their international colleagues. Anything else would be tantamount to failing to assist a person in danger.

Working conditions and occupational safety and health. The resurgence of epidemics and the emergence of new forms of disease call for greater vigilance at the workplace and the adoption of occupational health measures. It is unacceptable, for example, that visitors should use the same sanitary facilities as members of the staff. The extra workload generated by successive reforms without any improvement in the quality and quantity of human, financial and logistical resources poses a threat to the staff's health and undermines the Organization's image. Occupational health committees are needed in every local office.

Reimbursement of medical claims (excessive delays). More effort is necessary to reduce the backlog in the payment of medical claims. However, the SHIF's staff is so small that that it can only do so much to speed up the reimbursement of claims. The processing of emergency claims continues to be a real problem and the Committee must take effective action to implement provisions that are better suited to the regional context.

Career development and training. There must be more options for career advancement if we are to benefit as we should from the accumulated experience of the past 100 years. The ILO is not an NGO, nor is it just another United Nations agency. The right person has to be in the right place, and an ongoing training programme is needed to ensure that the staff are really up to meeting their new responsibilities.

Retirement age at the ILO. The retirement of all ILO staff at the age of 65 as from 2017 rather than 2018 has to be hotly pursued by the Staff Union.

Access of local staff in certain countries to loans from the UNFCU (where the payroll is managed at headquarters). The Staff Union Committee must actively advocate improving the social conditions of local staff by facilitating their access to such loans.

Americas

Titular member: Amalia Cuba

Substitute member: Maria-Marta Travieso

Since the last AGM held in February our region had an important event, the VI Regional Staff Union Meeting held in Lima in May. Presidents from the field offices participated and reviewed and discussed issues related to Human Resources, recruitment & Selection, Salary methodology for local staff, contracts policy, SHIF, Mobility and also important issues in our region such as transparency, governance and ethics.

Human resources

The participants in the Regional Meeting expressed their preoccupation for the Business Process Review (BPR) being carried out at headquarters and also the job review exercise, originally thought to be

implemented for Africa & Asia. However once it started HRD stated that the job review exercise was to be implemented throughout the ILO. Also in our region.

The staff expressed concern because we already have several positions of colleagues who have retired or resigned from ILO whose posts have not been replaced and won't be replaced. Therefore some offices face lack of human resources for some areas of work with a resulting work overload for those who perform the tasks of posts left vacant.

When the BPR and the Job review exercise are implemented in the field, Staff Union representatives should be involved and participate actively in order to alert Administration on possible effects against the staff's employment conditions.

The staff in the region expressed high concern because the Library / Documentation Unit in every field office as in the Regional Office in Lima has been affected already by the restructuring process. The Regional Direction informed in May 2014 that the Budget for the Biennium was reduced, therefore the posts of Librarians or Documentarians in our region were not going to be replaced whenever they became vacant. Thus the functions were modified and combined with Information Management and Communication functions as well.

The staff representatives mentioned that in various offices in our region the tasks performed by the colleagues who have not been replaced in said posts have been given to other colleagues in the offices who have been helping and doing so with the best will possible (as in the case of CINTERFOR), however they recognize that this is not the correct way to proceed, since they are functions that require certain degree of expertise. To be a Librarian is not the same as to be a Communications Specialist.

Besides that in other offices the IT services has been externalized and given to third parties with the high risk that other companies that provide IT services hold confidential information and IT data.

We insisted that it was not a correct way to reduce costs for the Organization. On the contrary, it would create other kind of problems, such as quality and efficiency in the assistance provided by the ILO.

Finally the Business Process Review and Job review exercise should really provide optimization of human and financial resources with a clear and better distribution of tasks amongst the staff available so as not to create unnecessary work overload to anyone.

With regards to TC Contracts in our region, we still have a large number of staff especially in Central America working under TC contracts. However the tendency is to reduce Technical cooperation projects because of lack of donors.

Because of this reduction in technical cooperation projects in the region, a significant number of staff was affected from one month to the next because donors stopped financing projects (especially Spain) and the staff had to stop working from one day to the next.

During the meeting, staff representatives expressed the need for the region and the ILO in general to work on policies to get more donors interested in financing technical assistance in our Organization.

Mobility was also mentioned because several colleagues apply to different vacant positions however in most of the cases they are answered as if the Competition was declared unsuccessful. We wonder why this is happening with so many competitions especially considering that the labour market and the ILO itself offers a vast ratio of specialized and well trained officials.

Recruitment and selection

The recruitment and selection procedure for local staff is efficient in the region because we have had the Guidelines for selection of local staff agreed in 1992 and reviewed in August 2010 and which are still in practice.

The existence of Local Selection Bipartite Committees is a way to guarantee the participation from SU representatives from the very beginning (preparation of terms of reference, review of resumes, exams and interviews) to the end of the process.

Currently the procedures are being reviewed between the Regional Representative and Human Resources Chief so that they can be clear in steps to follow in each phase of the process. As we did in 2010, once this first phase is over the proposal for the clarifications on procedures will be shared with the Regional SU Team so that we can all share comments and possible suggestions and then conclude with the final version and be officially distributed to Directors and staff in our region as we did in 2010.

This selection procedure for local staff is a clear example of a good practice because every step is clearly backed up and supported with documents.

Salaries

One of the participants in the Regional Meeting was a colleague from the Haiti ILO Project office because of a very delicate situation regarding salaries of local staff in Haiti.

The meeting presented a very clear and precise explanation on the local staff salary methodology and answered the various questions raised on the subject.

Our region has colleagues with high expertise on the Local Staff Salary Methodology and have contributed with complementary charts that have helped clarify the process in various countries. Colleagues from Buenos Aires and Lima Regional Office have participated in Video Conferences with colleagues who need support from our region on the subject.

Staff representatives participating at the Regional meeting emphasized the great importance of having solid and integrated local salary survey committees (LSSC) in local countries in the region.

Staff representatives also recommended once more that ILO should try always to be the leading UN Agency of LSSC.

Several training sessions on the methodology were organized in our region – one in October 2015 in Lima and another one in Santiago in September 2016.

We encourage most of our SU representatives in the LSSC to participate and be financed by training funds. In some offices where training funds are not enough, SU finances 50%.

SHIF

We have noticed some improvement in claim reimbursement time. Some offices still have some pending reimbursements, but little by little the information on delays has reduced. We are glad to know that the recommendations from the Working Group to oversee SHIF issues created by the DG last year are being applied gradually.

Besides it is important to mention that the region THANKS the SHIF through its Executive Secretary, our colleague Florian Leger, and colleague Heather Harris as well as the Committee that authorizes advance payments, for the very efficient and prompt support provided as a result of an accident suffered in Central

America by a Technical Cooperation colleague from ILO Buenos Aires. All paper work was eased for his treatment and his medical evacuation was processed in due time.

Pensions

There have been some delays in the retirement payments especially of those colleagues who retired from July 2015 onwards. Apparently the delays were due to the change in software in UN NY Pension Unit. We hope this problem disappears because we have had cases of eight-month delays and that is unbearable.

HRD Regional Unit has committed to assure that paper work is done at least some months before the retirement date so that when the time comes for the retiree-to-be to end his work in the ILO the papers are sent to HRD Geneva in due time so as to also prevent timeframe to be shorter when papers are sent from ILO to UN Pension Unit in NY.

Governance, transparency & ethics in the region

It was clearly stated that the region is highly demotivated because we do not feel presence of Management as active and interested in staff issues. As Staff Union Regional Team we assured the commitment with staff in the region to look after this situation so that it does not result in toxic environment in various offices.

Due to some situations in some offices we requested the HRD Unit to provide us with information on what actions were taken whenever Article 1.1; 1.2 and 1.6 and also the code of ethics in the ILO are not well followed by any official.

Transparency is requested from Management and especially when dealing with staff issues in the region. Due time consultations are necessary, not only to inform staff when decisions were already taken.

We praise social dialogue however we believe that social dialogue is not being applied openly and transparently within the house.

Staff Union commitment

As Staff Union representatives of all local and internationally recruited staff in the Americas & the Caribbean we reaffirmed our commitment to work for a stronger Staff Union safeguarding and trying to improve working conditions & environment in the ILO.

Finally, I would personally like to leave a final message in writing, because I am about to retire from the ILO in a few months, three to be exact, and I wanted to THANK the Staff Union and all staff in our region America & the Caribbean for having taught me so much during all the periods that I was elected as their Titular Regional Delegate. I also thank colleagues from all other regions who trusted me and requested me to speak on their behalf several times in front of the DG. I could not be more proud and feel so honoured to have had the opportunity to serve and try to support staff defending labour rights not only of GS and P staff, but also of some Directors in our region, whenever they felt their rights were to be affected and came to me as their Regional Staff Union Delegate. GRACIAS TO ALL!

Asia and the Pacific

Titular member: Amrita Mehrotra

Substitute member: Dan Cork

The Asia and Pacific Region is vast. However, the issues in all the offices are the same:

Recruitment and selection procedures. There is no uniformity in the recruitment and selection procedure and it varies from region to region and office to office. Sometimes recruitment is done arbitrarily and staff are recruited at a lower grade than advertised. This procedure should be uniform throughout and staff representatives need to be involved in the entire process.

Proper grading/Career advancement from GS to NO/P. There is no proper grading system and hardly any career advancement for GS staff members. The system should ensure equal opportunity to all. Moreover the Personal Promotion policy of the office also needs to be revisited and movement of staff allowed across categories as was done in the past.

Organizational changes/IRIS Roll-Out. There is no transparency in the process as we noticed during the Field Structure Review. Any such organizational change should have complete involvement of the staff reps. and total transparency.

Technical cooperation staff/PSI. It is noticed that there is no job-security for TC and PSI staff members. They should be given a chance to have access to training funds as well as to apply for posts under RB.

Staff Development Fund. The staff representatives should be a part of the staff development fund committee and there should be equitable distribution of these funds amongst the P and local staff.

Performance management framework. The implementation of the new system of performance appraisal should be linked to career growth and development of the officials.

Capacity building of staff representatives. Staff representatives should be trained in areas such as negotiating skills, and funds should be earmarked for this purpose.

Local salary survey methodology. Adequate training should be provided to data collection team members. The input of data during the comprehensive survey should be transparent. This exercise should not influence/change the policy of the organization in any way.

Besides the above, one also needs to look into the impact of UN reforms in the countries where it is implemented, medical policies, recruitment of national officers, uniform retirement age.

In all the duty stations, the staff representatives are very committed towards staff-welfare activities and ensuring that a congenial environment is maintained by maintaining cordial relations between staff and the management. They also take adequate steps to represent staff issues at different forums and take necessary actions whenever required.

Europe and Arab States

Titular member: Rania Bikhazi

Substitute member: Christiane Wiskow

The activities in the Region of Europe and the Arab States are characterized by the diversity of the Region. Nevertheless, the activities undertaken in the period August 2015 till August 2016 can be grouped along four main topics:

1. Increasing the membership base and strengthening representation and communication
2. Ensuring the Staff Union is involved in all office committees affecting staff
3. Staff Union in times of reform and uncertainty
4. Other priorities

Increasing the membership base and strengthening representation and communication

The Staff Union Committee for Arab States was composed of three people holding the position of President, Secretary and Treasurer. The composition included one TC staff member in an effort to encourage enrolment of project staff and the proper representation of this target group. Unfortunately, given the limited time span of contracts, the Secretary position became vacant in January 2016 and remained so despite efforts exerted to encourage staff members to nominate themselves. The position of Treasurer also became vacant in August 2016 because of the move of the staff member to HQs. A call for the election of a new committee will be launched soon; however, it has proven extremely hard to convince people to nominate themselves due to the following reasons:

- heavy workload
- demotivation from career prospects and unwillingness to take on more duties
- apprehension to face management and jeopardize working relations that could negatively affect future career development prospects.

Based on the above, the Staff Union Committee in Beirut will continue promoting Staff Union representation with an aim to strengthen the involvement of the staff in the field and to be able to defend their rights, including those on technical cooperation projects. Unfortunately, field and project offices – Jordan, Kuwait, Jerusalem and Yemen – have not expressed to date any willingness nor interest.

On a brighter note in Europe, since 2015 three officials became members of the Staff Union, two in Brussels and one in Paris.

In difficult times of reform and BPR, there is a strong need to work on a marketing campaign to showcase the Staff Union work and achievements (the usage of info-graphics to show pre and post situations could be considered), in order to convince staff to become members and benefit from the support and assistance of the Union.

Ensuring the Staff Union is involved in all office committees affecting staff

The Staff Union Committee in Beirut is negotiating with the HR department the possibility of taking part in the recruitment panels of national staff. Two RB positions are currently advertised namely Programme Officer (NOA) and Finance Assistant (G6).

The Staff Union in Beirut continues to successfully participate in the Staff Development Committee to ensure a more just and transparent process of applications, especially as it relates to the eligibility of TC staff to benefit from staff development funds. Approximately 40 applications were processed in the last year to the benefit of staff members.

Two staff union members continue to sit on the Committee on Occupational Safety and Health at the regional office in Beirut along with a representative of management and the OSH specialist. The OSH committee is working on applying safety measures at the office level and improving the working conditions. Lately, an Air Quality Test was conducted by the laboratory of the American University of Beirut to check air quality and the level of Asbestos in the working premises. The recommendations showed that indoor air pollutant concentrations in the tested floors do not exceed the limits specified internationally for ambient air and that although asbestos presence was not detected; asbestos testing is recommended during any pre-abatement and post-abatement or reduction measures. Additionally, ideas to improve the work environment tackling greening initiatives and improving work life balance are being explored with management.

At the initiative of the Budapest SU, the Committee on OSH has been set up in the office with one SU member sitting on the Committee. Initial meetings were conducted and several pieces of ergonomic furniture were purchased based on the Committee's recommendation. The Staff Union has also recently

been involved in the discussions for the ILO Recognition Award nomination where it is likely to submit one nomination as an entity.

In Brussels, almost all staff members are part of the OSH committee. The asbestos previously found in the cellar has been removed. The SU representative is also part of the Local Salary Survey Committee.

Staff Union work in times of reform and uncertainty

In Budapest the Staff Union raised the issue of eliminating an RB-financed programme assistant position with management. As an immediate fix, short-term staff was hired and various options have been examined to alleviate the pressure caused by the heavy workload. The situation remains difficult because two staff members of the Budapest office are still on temporary assignments in Geneva and their return is uncertain. Consequently, the Staff Union input was solicited to handle restructuring of RB-financed positions in the office, and, as a result, a new – albeit lower grade – Programme Assistant was advertised while the position of receptionist is being discontinued. The Staff Union was heavily involved in the process of workload redistribution and drafting the job description. This was considered as an opportunity to “regularize” staff presently on PSI and TC positions. Additionally, and because of the Staff Union action, the G/6 secretarial position remains at its present grade even though management envisaged lowering the grade to G/5 after the retirement of the incumbent.

The same ‘opportunity to regularize’ is being raised by the Staff Union in Beirut, where every time there is an RB vacancy or a P&B formulation, Management is reminded of the need to give priority to the selection of staff members serving on PSI or projects who possess the required skills and qualifications.

A regular budget position has been awarded in Brussels to the official performing the work for consecutive 5 years, first as a JPO and then on an RB temporary contract. However, there are concerns in small Western-Europe offices where Administrative staff are not replaced after retirement; consequently, some staff members find themselves taking on additional duties not included in their job descriptions at the time of their recruitment (Rome and Berlin).

There is a concern in Europe that branch offices being small, IRIS might not be deployed and administrative tasks would be centralized in Geneva. In addition, the fact that staff members in branch offices (Paris, Berlin, Madrid, Lisbon, and Rome) are not awarded WLT contracts remains a concern.

Other priorities

- Successful negotiations of the Staff Union in Beirut with the management to avoid a summary dismissal case of one TC staff member.
- The Staff Union in Budapest contributed to cover the emergency medical cost of an intern working at the office, to support migrant children housed in Hungary and to cover family medical costs of a colleague.
- Employment related issues which remain of concern to the Staff Union in these times of reform are:
 - ✓ Equality of opportunities and treatment of staff regardless of status
 - ✓ Transparency of the recruitment, selection and mobility processes. A concern remains in the area of career development for long-serving G staff who arrived at the top of their grades and see no potential for further development. This is visible with the new job-grading proposal that on the one hand dismisses the G7 level and focuses on the educational background in the new JDs without giving enough importance to working experience to access higher grades such as the NO level. Moreover, the mobility process does not seem to be applicable to G-staff allowing them to move within the Organization into other duty stations to gain more experience and exposure.
 - ✓ Reclassification and grading: the process needs to be more efficient and more encouraging given the amount of staff members performing additional duties without being rewarded. In

Europe, administrative and finance positions are graded as G while in Africa the same post is given an NO grade.

- ✓ Information sharing and update on the contracts policy under review remains a worry to staff members.
- Security and safety of staff members with a focus on employment continuity remain a priority of the Staff Union committee that strives to ensure that all staff members, regardless of contract types, years of services and grades, are provided with the needed PPE and radios and are included in the security communication tree. Security works should be undertaken soon in the offices of Paris and Brussels after the visit of UNDSS representative following the bomb attacks in these two countries.
- The Staff Union Committee in Beirut will continue the negotiations with the Management for the yearly Christmas Holiday Bridge.
- In Budapest, the SU continues to raise the SHIF bottlenecks endured by staff members to HQ.

Turin

Titular member: Valéria Morra

Substitute member: Enrico Cairola

Improve industrial relations

The Turin SUC established a positive relationship with the new Director, appointed in February 2016, who showed availability to restore social dialogue with the staff representatives, but so far only limited progress on collective issues has been achieved.

On many occasions the SUC has put forward the need for genuine consultation instead of merely being informed. Despite the joint recommendations by the Employers' and Workers' groups at the last Board meeting to proceed in consultation with the Staff Union on a streamlining of procedures and integration with the ILO, an attempt without consultation to implement changes going in the opposite direction (bottlenecking instead of streamlining) was unsuccessful and resulted in the postponement to 2017 of the "streamlining project". The SUC remains vigilant to ensure that, before any change, the staff and its representatives are fully involved and that no changes adversely affecting the workload, which is in many cases already unsustainable, be implemented.

The SUC regrets that in several cases the established rules have not been equitably respected by HRS, in particular concerning inappropriate use of contracts (abuse of external collaboration contracts instead of short-term or fixed-term contracts), overtime work, performance appraisal, career development, and mobility (internal and with the ILO). The SUC has also tirelessly searched for a constructive dialogue aiming at finding positive solutions to several individual cases of colleagues that presented complaints to the ILO Administrative Tribunal, or at least aiming at preventing new complaints, but due to the rigidity of the counterpart no positive outcome has been obtained for the moment. The SUC is therefore obliged to devote an important part of its work to assist members and provide, with the support of the ILO SUC, legal assistance.

Job security, fair and equal conditions of employment for all staff and a career development path for all

The main energy and work of the Turin SUC has been devoted to the negotiation of a sound Agreement concerning the colleagues working with precarious contracts, in Turin called "project-based" (PB) contracts.

On the occasion of the Board meeting at the end of October 2015 a campaign "Equal rights for all" was launched; the staff was invited to wear the campaign pins that were also distributed to the Board Members together with the position paper of the Staff Union.



In December 2015 a legal opinion concerning the situation of PB staff was requested from the FICSA Legal Adviser, who confirmed that the deprivation of certain rights to the fixed-term “project-based” staff is discriminatory and unlawful. A financial analysis was also prepared by the SUC to demonstrate the important contribution to the Centre’s financial sustainability made by PB staff. The negotiations are in the final stage and a joint drafting committee is preparing the draft Agreement based on the recognition of all rights apart from the access to Without Limit of Time contracts, which will be presented at the General Assembly for endorsement before signature.

In parallel the SUC has been partially successful in obtaining the application of the existing titularization procedure that was frozen: in December 2015 the 2013 exercise was concluded and the 2015 exercise should be undertaken soon. There is still a long “waiting list” among colleagues with 10 or more years of seniority because in both exercises the Director decided to grant only a limited number of new WLT contracts, and not all contracts resulting from the application of the established formula. Approximately two-thirds of the entitled officials still have to benefit from a WLT contract.

Within the Selection Committee of the Centre the SUC is systematically promoting the regularization of fixed-term project-based staff and the career development of internal staff, and is vigilant to ensure that the selection process is always fair, independent and objective.

Full social protection

The Turin SUC has presented to the JNC the proposal to implement as soon as possible the new retirement age of 65 according to the UN General Assembly recommendation, but with the excuse that the Centre will align itself to the ILO implementation date the answer was negative.

In December 2015 the SUC mobilized the staff and the Former Officials Association to sign the petition against the increase of the SHIF contributions.

For the first time a summer camp for children was organized on campus in July 2016; the initiative was well received and appreciated, and should be consolidated in the future as a contribution to improve work-life balance and a support to working parents.

An even stronger Union

The new SUC is implementing a transparent, participatory and democratic approach in order to strengthen the Staff Union role. The discussions and the outcomes concerning collective issues are communicated to the whole staff; consultative committees have been established to support and guide the SUC work; communications with the Management are published on the Staff Union intranet; information meetings and general Assemblies are held regularly with high and active member participation; draft agreements on collective issues are presented to the General Assembly for endorsement.

Enhancing staff security, safety and health

The SUC has been very active is asking for immediate measures to eliminate hazards and improve working conditions, in particular OSH conditions.

The SUC asked the Centre's COSH Committee to be involved in the entire process from risk identification to the implementation of preventive policies. We need to find and analyse information concerning risk existence so that the necessary preventive measures are taken. The SUC therefore presented a formal request to start a 360° risk assessment on OSH, covering:

- workplace and installations
- machinery, technology and tools
- ergonomics
- work organization.

The risk assessment should be developed by specialists, agreed by the members of the COSH, and we requested that staff representatives be involved and consulted throughout the entire process.

III. OTHER BODIES

Former Officials' Section

Executive Secretary: François Kientzler

The Former Officials' Section met regularly twice a month, inter alia to discuss the latest developments in the Staff Health Insurance Fund and in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. The Bureau of the Section was renewed at the beginning of 2016.

The Bureau responded to the SHIF Management Committee's proposal to increase contributions to the Fund by writing to all retirees to ask them not to vote in favour of the increase. It also wrote to the Fund's Management Committee and Secretary to explain its position, as well as to the Director-General in response to his request for an external audit of SHIF's management. In spite of the difficulties encountered in recent years, the Former Officials' Section and retirees as a whole continue to be firmly in favour of the Fund being managed internally. In person, by mail or by telephone, the Bureau answered a large number of requests for assistance from former officials, notably on tax issues.

The annual information meeting of retired officials living in the Geneva area dealt with the recent computerization of the Fund and with members' online access to their personal data. The Section participates in the seminar for future retirees and organizes an information stand on the first day. The Section recently set up its own website for retired officials, with hyperlinks to the SHIF, Pension Fund and other sites.

The Section's Bureau enjoys fruitful cooperation with the Staff Union Committee and is pleased to note the strong ties it enjoys with its President and its secretariat, which make it that much easier to keep abreast of the many issues they are concerned with. The Bureau is especially keen to be in close touch with retired officials living outside the Geneva area and in non-European countries.

Message appeared twice in the course of the year, thanks to its editor and to several retired volunteers. The Executive Secretary took part in meetings of the Association of Former International Civil Servants (AAFI-AFICS), and the Section maintains good relations with the other associations of former employees in Geneva. The Arts and Decoration Circle was revived and in October 2016 it held a second exhibition in the Colonnade at headquarters.

Last but not least, the annual receptions for retired officials in May and December provide an excellent opportunity for them to catch up on each others' news. The DG's attendance at these receptions is always greatly appreciated.

International Civil Servants' Mutual Association (MEC/AMFI)

Staff Union representative: Pierre Moulet

The year 2015 was to be a busy year for the Mutual Association. The reality went far beyond these predictions, mainly because of the economic situation and negative interest rates which the Mutual has faced since the end of the 1st half of the year.

From an operational point of view, members' deposits continue to decline significantly. The closures of the accounts were done primarily by members reluctant to comply with the tax provisions, but they also concern dormant accounts and depositors who benefited from the appreciation of the Swiss franc in early 2015 to be directed towards other currencies.

The decrease in deposits of members and membership is not, at present, a problem for the Mutual since the loans represent 34.87% of members' deposits. If one day this ratio would be too high, one of the measures that the Mutual could take would be to increase the current limit of deposits on the accounts, which, given the feedback we receive, would be greatly appreciated. However it must be noted that the current limit on deposits allows the Mutual to maintain an exceptional interest rate on deposit accounts; and the decrease in revenues from investments and loans to members is offset by the decrease in member deposits.

The decrease in member deposits also affects the reserves. According to the Regulation, the ordinary reserve must amount to 10% of total assets less reserves. This objective was achieved for the fund in CHF (11%) but is still far for the fund in USD (3.77%). However, the Governing Body decided to increase the limit to 12% under the Agreements of Bâle III advocating a strengthening of capital.

To continue on the subject of risk minimization, computer backups were relocated to a site outside of the United Nations Office, the regulation of transfers by members on an external bank account was strengthened to minimize the risk of fraud, and cash transactions are limited.

The tender for the insurance covering the loan in case of death or disability has been finalized. Only two insurers have expressed interest and Allianz won the contract. Given the increase in recorded losses in recent years, the cost of this insurance will rise sharply. If the number of claims continues to rise and the revenues continue to decline, it is unfortunately possible that the total coverage currently enjoyed by the members must be reviewed.

As mentioned in the last General Assembly, the Administration of the United Nations Office at Geneva requested that the Mutual Association study the integration of GPAFI (Provident and Insurance Group of International Officials) in its structure. This integration project requires a complete revision of the Statutes, the Internal Regulations and the structure of the Mutual. A committee was formed to develop the new documents. The Board of Directors and representatives of affiliated organizations wanted the new projects to be as close as possible to that currently in existence, the current structure being, indeed, recognized and fully contributing to the sustainability of the Mutual. The projects were finalized during the 1st quarter of 2016 and will be sent for approval to the United Nations Legal Department in Geneva as well as to affiliated organizations.

During 2016, the Information Technology and Communication Service of the United Nations will conduct an assessment of the computer system of the Mutual to determine if it complies with United Nations guidelines. The Secretariat of the Mutual is also working on the launch of a new loan that would allow members to borrow small amounts for short periods in order to offset, for example, credit cards whose costs are very high. It hopes to offer this during the second half of 2016.
