

# ILO STAFF UNION

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25 October 2018

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** **SECOND SESSION**

**25 OCTOBER 2018**

**Annual Report of the ILO Staff Union Committee**  
**for the year 2018**

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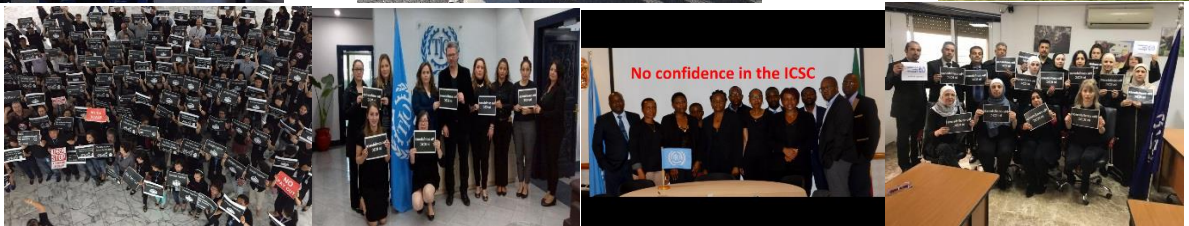
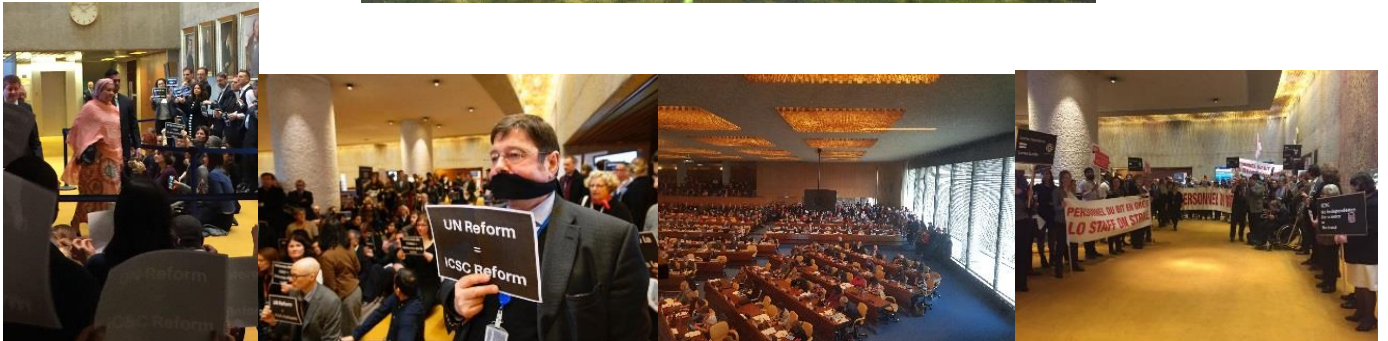
# WHAT A YEAR !



The Battle is Global!  
Reform the ICSC NOW!



2+2=





**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 2018**

### **A year like no other**

The Staff Union ended its report for 2017 on a relatively optimistic note, notwithstanding all the problems we had had with the common system – especially over the complex business of fixing salaries. But we were clearly being somewhat naive if, after the enthusiastic mobilization of staff throughout the United Nations system, we thought that the ICSC (which determines conditions of employment in the UN) had finally come to its senses and that the matter was as good as settled.

But that of course was to forget the grim determination of certain penny-pinching member States to force through the findings of a set of flawed salary surveys that were based on highly questionable methodologies, not to mention the implementing bodies' complete disregard for its commitments and the agreements in principle it had reached and its manipulation of the United Nations General Assembly.

As far as the Staff Union is concerned the ILO, as it approaches its hundredth anniversary, has just signed one of the darkest pages in its long history. Successive Union bulletins have kept the staff informed of everything that happened during the March 2018 session of the Governing Body, but they have also had a major impact on the worldwide trade union movement in general. The first half of 2018 was marked by a series of work stoppages, demonstrations, and public statements that caused a major setback for a painstakingly constructed social dialogue as all the other issues that the union and the administration were working on were put on hold. It will be a while before things are back to normal. At the same time we have every reason to be proud of the majority of the Union's members who were in the front line to defend the values, the principles, the very DNA of the Organization, when it showed signs of going off the rails. Our thanks go out to all those highly committed members who made it possible for the Staff Union Committee to reach important decisions at extraordinary general meetings that were held on an almost daily basis.

But our spirit of resistance and the fight we put up have not been in vain, since the ICSC – however much it dragged its feet – eventually promised to review its salary-fixing methods and even to re-examine its own governance in the not too distant future. Let's hope that this time they get it right.

Trade unionism is a never-ending struggle that calls for the unwavering courage and determination of those involved. Looking at the Staff Union's archives (which we are starting to do in advance of its centenary celebrations), we can see how time and again our forerunners have had to rise up against the gangster-style methods employed by the ICSC and have had to go on strike and mobilize the staff to defend their employment conditions. Surely, for the ILO's hundredth anniversary, it is time for the United Nations to establish a form of social dialogue that meets the ambitious objectives set out in its Sustainable Development Goals.

At the very heart of the ILO stands its staff, and as such it warrants the greatest attention, especially when it is about to celebrate 100 years of existence.

## I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME AND STRATEGY

### SECTION 1 – Objectives and priority areas of action for 2015-2020

#### 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: Improve Job security

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

#### Objective No. 3: Ensure full social protection

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

Objective No. 4: **Guarantee fair and equal conditions of employment for all staff**, *without discrimination based on age, race, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, religion, colour, national extraction, social origin, marital status, pregnancy, personal and/or family status and responsibilities, sexual orientation, disability, union membership or political conviction, grade, type of contract, and duty station*

#### Objective No. 5: Ensure 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 Objectives and Means of Action for 2018

### I. Improve industrial relations

Objective: Strengthening the framework of industrial relations so that the Recognition and Procedural Agreement between the International Labour Office and the ILO Staff Union becomes a reality.

Means of action

- Ensuring that the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) insists that every decision or proposal from the Administration is backed by detailed information and, if necessary, by due consultation or negotiation with the staff.
- Establishing internal rules of procedure that fix time limits, deadlines and terms of reference for each negotiation.
- Improving the negotiating capability of our staff representatives.

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

**Co-Secretary:** Elisabeth Fombuena

**Members:** Indira Bermudez Aguilar, Carlos Carrión Crespo, Dan Cork, Yvan Poulin

**Technical Advisers:** Enrico Cairola, Chloé Charbonneau-Jobin, Maria-Marta Travieso, Christiane Wiskow, José Tossa

The Staff Union is not happy with our social dialogue as it exists today. The three pillars of the Recognition and Procedural Agreement (information, consultation, negotiation) have gradually been frittered away, and today we simply have a set of informal arrangements instead of the formal agreements that are the only way to conduct collective bargaining and to protect the staff's interests effectively. The fact that there are no regular meetings of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC), the tendency to deal directly with the staff rather than with its representatives and the resort to time-wasting tactics in order to restrict the Staff Union's freedom of expression are recurring issues that need to be taken up in the proper forums.

### II. Improve job security

#### A. Recruitment and selection

Objective: Sound implementation of the collective agreement on recruitment and selection, in the context of a mobility and career development approach, as well as a greater motivation and job satisfaction of staff.

Means of action

- For confirmed vacancies, the Staff Union Committee (SUC), in collaboration with HRD, plays an important role in the review of vacancy announcements. The SUC's review aims at ensuring fair job descriptions and real opportunities of career development.
- The coordinator of the recruitment and selection working group is currently participating in the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC), in an advisory capacity. In terms of filling the vacancies, the action of the SUC is reinforced by the presence of two SUC representatives in the RAMC, and it is based on a sound implementation of the recruitment and selection procedure and the principles of transparency, due process, fairness and equity. Particular emphasis is placed on: recruiting internal candidates for career development positions; of TC+5 so that they can have job security; and the diversity of languages in order to

promote French and Spanish in the interest of the organization and its effective multiculturalism.

- The SUC also aims at ensuring a good communication to staff on matters related to the agreement on recruitment and selection procedures.
- Good relationships with the appointed independent members of the technical panels are important for the success of this critical role. The SUC's purpose in this matter is to share the working group's experience, provide practical guidance and develop materials to support fulfilling their responsibility.
- Ensure that equivalent experience is recognized according to ILO Staff Regulations in order to preserve the very essence of the ILO and its mandate.

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

**Technical Advisers:** Manuel Céspedes Ocampo

**Substitute:** Carlos Carrión Crespo

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

**Members:** Harvey Addo-Yobo, Indira Bermudez Aguilar, Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, Carlos Carrión Crespo, Elisabeth Fombuena, Yvan Poulin, Maria-Marta Travieso, Clara Van Panhuys, Christiane Wiskow

In 2018, the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC) has met 11 times in connection with vacant positions and RAPS sessions. Since January 2018, and at the time of this writing, two RAPS sessions have taken place and RAPS 3 was in preparation by HRD.

In RAMC meetings, 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 Staff Union's position as regards a competition.

The Staff Union representatives 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 to open vacancies and review of vacancy announcement.*

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 – over 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 trends noted at this stage by the Staff Union are:

- The bias in favour of English, with negative consequences on the efforts made for a cultural and geographical diversity.
- The managers are always tempted to downgrade the vacant positions but maintaining the tasks of the upper level, what we call low-cost employment.

*Stage 1:* In the RAMC, the SUC representatives review and participate in recommendations on proposals to transfer colleagues without competition; due to humanitarian and medical reasons, legal obligation of the Office, an abolished position, etc.

The SUC continues in its efforts to protect the interest of staff at this stage one 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.

The SUC takes serious account of the apparent frustration noticed because of this second stage, as some colleagues considered it as a brake to career development. Nevertheless, the domino effect of reassignments for mobility have meant the creation of vacant positions meaning a real chance for colleagues to further their career through competition.

Stage 3: Filling vacant positions by competition.

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 long and short-lists.

Communication with HRD on recruitment and selection matters remains a challenge. The introduction of the new ILO e-Recruitment platform (ILO Jobs) by HRD is an issue. This new tool, with changes in the way the candidates are assessed by HRD and hiring managers, was implemented by HRD without consultation with the SUC. The SUC was only informed afterwards.

The SUC takes very seriously the complaints from colleagues who were unsuccessful applicants for positions filled at the three stages of the recruitment process. Ensuring confidentiality, the SUC has shared staff concerns with HRD and other RAMC members.

The SUC has noticed a trend of a decrease in General Service positions being advertised. What about the career development for GS colleagues?

Several times, the SUC has raised a recurrent issue of English-language bias in many JDs, with the trend to exclude many possibly better qualified candidates for the benefit of Anglophones, which in the SUC's view is unacceptable in a multilingual organization.

The role of the Independent member of the recruitment panel is key in the third stage of the selection process; that is why the Staff Union plans to again organize sessions to share experiences and practical advice with the independent members.

## **B. Contracts and employment security**

Objectives: Protect employment security at the ILO, including in the context of the current negotiations with the Administration on a new contracts policy. Take measures to eliminate precariousness, limiting the abuse of internships, daily, special-short term, short-term, and TC contracts, as well as false "excoll" contracts.

Priority areas include:

- defending the eligibility of staff in the titularization process and supporting such process as a permanent feature of the Organization.
- addressing the realities of precarious staff in the negotiations with the Administration in order to obtain tangible improvements for all staff while defending acquired rights.

supporting the claims of interns: recognizing internships as professional experience, extending the representation of ILO interns in the field, providing regular performance feedback throughout the internship cycle and periodical revision of the adequacy of the stipend

Means of action

- Negotiate a new contracts policy by the end of the year.
- Coordinate the contracts policy with an appropriate legal strategy.
- Maintain a close and constructive dialogue with the Intern Board.

**Coordinator**: Maria-Marta Travieso

**Members**: Enrico Cairola, Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, Dan Cork, Laurence Dubois, Elisabeth Fombuena, Yvan Poulin



The contracts policy is still in the process of negotiation with the administration via the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC). So far it has proved impossible to obtain any tangible results that might improve the situation of colleagues with precarious contracts or to devise a policy that is consistent with other policies such as recruitment and selection. The Staff Union is waiting for the administration to submit new proposals so that negotiations can proceed.

Meanwhile, the Staff Union is trying to do something about the precarious conditions of our colleagues on an individual basis. It is fully aware of how urgent the matter has become and is making every effort to give it priority on the administration's agenda.

### III. Ensure full social protection

Objective: Making sure that the policies adopted by the Management Committee of the Staff Health Insurance Fund (SHIF) and by the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board (UNJSPB) reflect the needs and interests of serving and former officials, as follows:

In close collaboration with the representatives of the members of the SHIF and of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF), the Staff Union shall continue to pursue the following objectives:

- better governance;
- improved benefits;
- speedier settlement of reimbursement claims and faster processing of files of retiring officials.

In addition to its participation in various committees and councils, the Staff Union's priority this year will be to protect the SHIF and the UNJSPF – and of course their members – from attempts to cut back benefits, split up the funds and outsource their services.

Means of action

- Making the staff more aware of health insurance and pension issues so as to bolster our staff representatives' influence on the Fund's joint bodies. This will entail regular and close communication between the Staff Union (including the Section of Former Officials of the ILO) and members' representatives on the SHIF Management Committee and Joint Staff Pension Board, as well as the organization of training sessions.
- Promoting and organizing information meetings, general assemblies and referendums so as to be sure that SHIF and UNJSPF members are clearly and fully informed about any proposal to modify the structure, programme, benefits or contribution rates of either of the Funds and that no decision is taken without their being widely consulted.

**Coordinator:** Elisabeth Fombuena

**Members:** Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, Chantal Nahimana, Yoshie Noguchi, José Tossa, Faustina Van Aperen, Clara Van Panhuys

**Technical Advisers:** Fabio Duran Valverde, François Kientzler (Former Officials' Section), Samir Koufane, Rosinda Silva, Cherry Thompson-Senior

**Member of the Compensation Committee:** Elisabeth Fombuena assisted by Clara Van Panhuys

Staff Health Insurance Fund (SHIF)

The services provided by the Fund have improved and the Executive Secretary has promised to go to the field to see what the situation is like on the ground and what can be done in the most problematic duty stations. The Staff Union has also been informed of the forthcoming introduction of measures to facilitate payments, such as direct payments to hospitals in the field as well as at headquarters, the use of electronic mail to send reimbursement forms and a "self-service" portal.

However, the African region, through a resolution, requested that the quality of services match the contributions made.

Communication between the Staff Union and the Fund has also improved, to the extent that the latter has responded to every question or urgent request put to it within a reasonable time.

More needs to be done to monitor improvements in the running of the Fund, especially in the field, and to ensure more periodic meetings of the working group at headquarters.

#### United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF)

Two meetings of the representatives of UNJSPF participants on the ILO Staff Pensions Committee were held, one before and one after the Joint Board's meeting in Rome. The Staff Union has been informed that the discussion focused on urgent issues on the agenda.

In addition, a number of urgent requests were taken up by the Staff Union and the Office's PENSIONS unit so that certain particularly pressing situations could be resolved to the satisfaction of our colleagues.

The Staff Union will keep abreast of the Fund's financial situation by pursuing its dialogue with the representatives of participants and will continue to interact with PENSIONS so that it can immediately alert the staff to any emergency.

#### Compensation Committee

One of the principles defended by the Staff Union in cases brought before the Compensation Committee is that, while compensation may be determined on the merits of each case, the general principles that are applied in one case must be equally valid in similar cases. The Committee further maintains that, whenever there is an element of doubt, the ultimate objective must be to guarantee a minimum level of protection for the workers.

Last year the Staff Union drew attention to the urgent need to establish rules of procedure and clear guidelines concerning the Committee's mandate, composition and functioning through the Internal Governance Document System (IGDS). The Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) has set up a working group on the subject which has already met. The Staff Union hopes that these meetings will resume soon to pursue the on-going work.

The way the administration treated the question of burn-out is another matter that we shall be taking up. Hitherto, the Committee has not recognized burn-out as an issue in its own right, though it has on occasion awarded compensation in respect of other symptoms (such as heart-related problems, for example). There is no denying that this is a difficult subject inasmuch as the human being needs to be looked at as a whole. That being so, the question is always to what extent the decisive factor is the work or the person's personal life. It is nevertheless important that the problem be tackled so that principles can be established which recognize burn-out and other work-related psychosocial problems.

## **IV. Guarantee fair and equal conditions of employment for all staff**

We all bring with us diverse perspectives, work experiences, life styles and cultures, which should be valued, respected and supported. The Staff Union Committee is committed to working to create a working environment where diversity, equality and work-life balance is respected and leveraged to improve organizational performance.

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

#### Means of action

Building upon the success of the previous year and learning from the challenges faced, the Staff Union proposes continuing to work on special mechanisms/initiatives to facilitate inclusion, diversity, equality and work-life balance.

More specifically, the working group will:

- Actively collaborate with the Joint Negotiating Committee Sub-Working Group
- Conduct a series of trainings for ILO SU Committee Members and Stewards on various themes under the remit of this group;
- Design and implement the 3rd March for Diversity Campaign in collaboration with ILO Intern Board and HRD;
- Develop Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and information notes;
- Develop a plan of action on employment of persons with disabilities and staff with dependents that have a disability.

**Coordinator:** Gurchaten Sandhu

**Members:** Indira Bermudez Aguilar (Gender Focal Point), Laurence Dubois, Dan Cork, Elisabeth Fombuena, Yoshie Noguchi, Faustina Van Aperen

**Technical Advisers:** Eric Carlson, Jurgen Menze

#### Harassment Training

Working together with both the Stewards Group and the OSH Group, a set of 3 half day workshops were organized for committee members and stewards on harassment in the ILO workplace. The purpose of the training was to: a) raise awareness among ILO Staff Union representatives on the meaning of harassment, according to ILO policy and practice, b) recognize instances of workplace harassment at the ILO, focusing on grey areas, and c) identify what the role of Staff Union committee members and stewards is, providing concrete guidelines and recommendations. The training was a success with the objectives achieved and a concrete enhancement of the capacity of the participants to support colleagues in situations of harassment. The participants highlighted the need to have this type of training established ILO-wide and the Staff Union made this suggestion in the framework of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Campaign.

#### Anti-Sexual Harassment Campaign

Following the #MeToo Campaign, the ILO launched an Anti-Sexual Harassment Campaign with the support and engagement of the Diversity, Equality and Work-life Balance group. The Staff Union and in particular the working group will follow-up on this important issue including through the JNC Sub-working group on Diversity, Equality and Work-life balance.

#### Diversity Month

The ILO SUC collaborated again this year with the Intern Board and ILO HRD for the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the “March for Diversity” Campaign. The year’s campaign was made up of presentations and panel discussions with ILO officials as panellists sharing their testimonies and experiences on themes including class and race, disability and gender equality.

#### Information notes

Work on the information is moving along slowly. This year the group has drafted one note on “FAQs on Disability at the ILO” which is undergoing review for wider dissemination.

#### International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT)

Building on the success of last year, the ILO SUC supported the GED & ILOAIDS photo campaign “LGBTI allies at the ILO” that encouraged ILO staff to take practical steps to “come out” as allies to LGBTI staff.

#### Teleworking Survey

In June, in consultation with the Staff Union, HRD launched a survey on teleworking in the ILO. The purpose of the survey was to collect inputs regarding the current teleworking policy with a view to taking stock of the office-wide teleworking arrangements, and inform any possible policy review/update. Committee members and technical advisory from the Group, provided detailed inputs and suggestions into the questionnaire. The group will continue to work with HRD to analyse the results and the recommendations.

## V. Ensure a career development path for all

### A. Personal promotions and upgrading review

#### Objectives:

- To ensure that the personal promotion machinery is transparent and equitable. Push for clarification regarding the eligibility of staff who are being unlawfully excluded from the exercise.
- To ensure that the global reclassification exercise in the field is executed, and Independent Review Groups are established and active in all regions for the examination of job grade review appeals.

#### Means of action

- participating in the joint committee on personal promotions, and legal action where appropriate;
- Negotiating the implementation of the reclassification exercise in the field that provides equal opportunities for all; and
- Assisting the JNC when needed.

**Members of the JNC sub-working group on Personal promotions:** Carlos Carrion Crespo and Clara Van Panhuys (Professionals), Catherine Comte-Tiberghien and Yvan Poulin (General Service)

As you can see in the defined objectives, the personal promotion covers several areas.

At this very moment, the joint group on personal promotion has finalized the 2017 exercise for G staff and has begun the exercise for the P Staff. The Staff Union will do its utmost to ensure that the group achieve its goal as soon as possible.

The global reclassification process in the field is ongoing and the Staff Union has had various meetings with HRD in close collaboration with the staff representatives in the regions. The harmonization of the Recruitment and Selection process is also an important matter to ensure equity and transparency.

The validation of work experience for educational requirements in applying for new posts has been mentioned several times in the framework of the recruitment and selection process and the Staff Union will ensure that the issue is dealt with in the appropriate forum.

The titularization exercise for all staff and the personal promotions exercise for G staff are up to date.

### B. Training policy and performance management

#### Objectives:

- 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, including a review of the Reports Board;
- To ensure a transparent mechanism for merit increments that reflects performance evaluation results;
- To ensure that the review of job descriptions in the field and headquarters is fair to the staff.

Means of action**Training policy**

- Negotiating a training policy in line with the needs of staff at all levels and categories, in the context of the JNC;
- Reactivating the Joint Training Council under its terms of reference and the Collective Agreement on Personal Development Plans, so that the Staff Union has a voice in the use of staff development funds, the impact of training expenditure and the assessment of how proposed training programmes satisfy staff members' needs and requests;

**Performance management**

- Surveying the staff regarding the implementation of the performance management system and assessing how the introduction of a new system has responded to staff needs; and
- Negotiating improvements suggested as a result of this consultation process with staff, through the JNC.

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

**Members of the Joint Training Council:** Siska Dubbert, Chantal Nahimana, Olga Strietska-Ilina

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

**Members:** Harvey Addo-Yobo, Indira Bermudez Aguilar, Siska Dubbert, Chantal Nahimana

The Staff Union has been consulted throughout the year on performance management issues, as the result of the on-going Business Process Review (BPR) requires some modifications of the existing mechanisms and policies.

*Training policy:* As already mentioned, the Joint Training Committee (JTC) has been reactivated. Its mandate and composition has now been agreed by the Staff Union and the administration and the first meeting will soon be convened. In this framework, the Staff Union will have a voice in the use of Staff Development Funds, the impact of training expenditure and the assessment of how proposed training programmes satisfy staff members' needs and requests. The JTC members scheduled a retreat shortly before the AGM to prepare for its upcoming meetings. The Staff Union will seize this opportunity to ensure that every training indicated in the appraisal reports is realized and, if not, managers should justify its absence.

*Performance Management:* Under the BPR, the Staff Union has been invited to several meetings to discuss the modification of the Performance Management Framework (PMF). Discussions are on-going but the Staff Union has already underlined its aim to preserve the interest of the staff in this exercise to ensure that the Performance Management Framework is used as a real tool to help colleagues in their career development. The Staff Union has received many complaints regarding this assessment tool, which will be taken into account.

The situation of our colleagues on development cooperation projects is part of this discussion and the Staff Union will keep all staff informed in due course of all and any evolution of the situation on these important matters.

## VI. An even stronger Union

### A. Communication

Objective: Ensuring that the Staff Union communicates with the staff more effectively, both on ongoing problems and on progress made, in close collaboration with the relevant working groups.

Means of action

- Keeping the staff regularly informed of developments through the Union's website, social media etc.
- Updating the website in English, French and Spanish.
- Updating existing information notes on important issues such as the Staff Union Assistance Fund, the use of members' dues, recruitment and selection.
- Improving the wording of Staff Union material (especially its flyers and membership forms) so as to make it more inclusive.
- Drafting new information notes to make procedures easier to understand for the officials concerned.
- Communicating regularly with the drafting committee of *UNION* regarding the publication of editorials on ILO policies and procedures.
- Finding new ways to promote Staff Union campaigns and explain what they are about, especially recruitment drives, training activities, etc.

**Coordinator:** Elisabeth Fombuena assisted by Harvey Addo-Yobo, Indira Bermudez Aguilar, Siska Dubbert, Yvan Poulin, Fernanda Winter di Calafiori

The communication team meets every week to prepare the latest headlines and press releases, and its members keep close touch with each another so that in an emergency they can make provide a rapid response between Union and staff. This proved crucial to our reaction to events early this year when the staff were able to be kept fully informed as the situation evolved.

The Staff Union's bulletins, broadcasts and headlines are our preferred means of communication; since October 2017 it has issued 88 broadcasts.

This year the communication team has provided support for:

- the campaign on juridical appeals;
- the CCISUA campaign on post adjustments and ICSC issues, by providing the material and design for posters and publications on social media, notably Twitter and Facebook;
- the campaign against sexual harassment, whose demands have been largely taken into account by the administration.

As for the drafting and updating of information notes, the Staff Union has already issued several such notes on recruitment and selection and on personal promotions which were distributed on Staff Union Day in 2017. The note on the Staff Union Assistance Fund also been updated while, at the request of the Intern Board, another information note was prepared on the ILO's internship programme and the rights and duties of interns.

Information notes were drafted and distributed on Staff Union Day on:

- different types of contracts;
- salaries;
- respect at the workplace;
- careers.

As for UNION magazine, this now appears in electronic form; the Staff Union is also planning an annual publication to maintain its archives, which should shortly be available. Contributions from staff members who have something to share with their colleagues are always welcome, so don't hesitate to get in touch with us at: <http://unionmag.ilstaffunion.org>.

The Union website is currently being updated. This is a lengthy and painstaking process because the team wants it to be as comprehensive as possible and, most important, to be in the three working languages.

The Staff Union intends to continue doing everything it can to improve communication with the staff and to use all available means for the purpose, including the know-how of each of its members.

## **B. Membership, staff representation and training**

### Objectives:

- To strengthen the capacity of the Union Stewards and new SUC members in Geneva to carry out their representative roles.
- To expand the membership base of the ILO Staff Union, and activate staff to become involved in the work of the ILO Staff Union.
- To expand and renew the Union Steward Network in ILO HQ
- 

### Means of action

#### Objective 1

- Organizing a series of 3 workshops for union stewards and SUC members (in collaboration with the Equality and Work-Life Balance Working Group) on identifying and dealing with harassment and sexual harassment in the ILO workplace, from identification to prevention, and supporting staff in accessing the formal complaint processes;
- Providing training sessions for union stewards on mobilization techniques, as well as negotiation and influencing skills for working with management at the unit level;
- Finalizing a Union Steward Guidebook, to support stewards in addressing various aspects of their representative role, which would also be made available to staff reps in the field; and
- Providing mentoring support for union stewards in their work (each member of the coordinating group will be asked to work with four or five stewards, to check in with them on their work and to be a sounding board for challenges that come up; this will include joining union stewards at meetings with departmental management).
- Identifying departments where restructuring is going on or planned for 2018, in particular tied to the Business Process Review (in collaboration with the Ad Hoc Business Process Review Working Group of the SUC) , through regular communication with HRD;
- Establishing working groups of Staff Union committee members and union stewards in the key departments that will face restructuring, with mentoring support provided on application of the change management guidelines and mobilization of staff to participate in transition processes;

#### Objective 2

- Developing union recruitment campaign for 2018 that targets those regional offices and ILO HQ units with fewer members for focused organizing efforts, including organization of Union Day in 2018;
- Organizing a minimum of 2 café croissant information sessions with ILO departments in HQ in 2018, in departments with a union steward, to strengthen support for the union.
- Providing training to Staff Union representatives in at least two regions in the field on organizing skills and targeting of specific demographic groups.

- Leading in efforts to mobilize ILO and potentially staff from other UN Agencies (in collaboration with the international relations working group), in relation to the ongoing UN Pay Cut issue, and other issues that may arise during the calendar year.

### Objective 3

- Organizing a minimum of 2 additional café croissants in ILO departments without a union steward, to recruit additional stewards to complete the network.
- Preparing for renewal of the network of union stewards at the expiration of current mandates in September 2018, through outreach efforts and elections at constituency level.

**Coordinator:** Dan Cork assisted by Indira Bermudez Aguilar, Siska Dubbert, Elisabeth Fombuena, Yvan Poulin, Clara Van Panhuys

The Staff Union Committee maintained its active support for the Union Steward Network in ILO HQ in the past year, through capacity building support and ongoing outreach, which resulted in expansion of the network from 23 to 25 constituencies, with new stewards in RESEARCH, SECTOR, GED-ILOAIDS, and INTSERV 1, i.e. REPRO. Elections for renewal of the union steward mandate were organized in September.

The Coordinators for the Union Steward Network, in collaboration with the Equality and Work-life Balance Working Group, organized a series of three, 1-day workshops to train stewards and Staff Union Committee members on harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace, from identification to prevention, and supporting staff in the formal complaint process. The workshops were well received, and contributed toward creating more space within the ILO on harassment issues. The outcomes from the workshops also contributed to the Staff Union's discussions with the ILO administration on preparation of a survey on harassment in the ILO.

### UN No Confidence in ICSC Campaign and the Role of Union Stewards

The Union Stewards, Organizing, and Training group was actively involved in the UN-Wide Efforts to prevent implementation of the ICSC Pay Cut for Geneva, which culminated in the March 2018 Governing Body Meeting and the historic 1.5 day strike. The Union Stewards at the ILO showed great strength and determination in mobilizing their colleagues to take action in support of the Campaign and strike, from door to door canvassing, to attending rallies and information sessions, toward attending the Emergency AGM sessions in the run-up to the GB meeting, and in its aftermath.

Following the ILO Decision to Implement the ICSC Pay Cut, the Union Steward Group worked closely with the Communications' Group and Legal Support Unit, and other members of the Staff Union Committee, to encourage staff to appeal the pay cut, through the development of FAQs and the distribution of badges. This effort brought visibility and energy to the Appeal Campaign, encouraging a large number of union members who joined the mobilization to also file appeals with the support of the Staff Union.

The union steward network also continued its active support for Union Day, which was organized in the spring of 2018, which highlighted the Union's achievements and ongoing support for ILO staff in Career Development; Contract Policy; ICSC Reform; and Retirement.

### Organizing campaign

The Union Steward Working Group organized café croissants in two departments in the past year, which created space for staff to speak openly about their working conditions and to ask questions of the Staff Union. Formal meetings were held with staff in DCOMM and RESEARCH, with informal discussions taking place with staff of SCORE, SOCPRO and Better Work, to support stewards in engagement with staff on the processes of transition. In headquarters, the Staff Union focused new membership efforts on the ICSC No Confidence Campaign, the Legal Appeal against the ILO Decision, and Union Day.



In February 2018, a meeting was held with Regional Titulars on the side-lines of the AGM to discuss union membership figures by region, and to bring even greater focus to the field's efforts to invite ILO staff to join the ILO Staff Union.

So far in 2018, as of mid-September, a total of 223 staff became members of the Staff Union, 165 in the field, and 58 in Headquarters, Geneva. A majority of the new union members in Geneva for 2017 joined during the period of the ICSC No Confidence Campaign and Legal Appeal process. In the field, the union membership expanded significantly in Jordan, Budapest, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam, Bangladesh, and elsewhere.

## 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 security and occupational safety and health and well-being in the ILO.

### Means of action

- Supporting 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;
- Participating in the COSH working group on stress at work and contributing to advancing the implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) in 2016;
- Expanding and supporting the network of Staff Union OSH representatives in the field offices and at headquarters through information, advocacy activities, technical assistance and training;
- Contributing to capacity-building among SU representatives 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;
- Ensuring 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;
- Ensuring that staff are kept informed of developments concerning security and occupational safety and health through communications and/or information sessions.

**Titular members of the Committee on Occupational Safety and Health:** Yoshie Noguchi, Christiane Wiskow

**Substitute members:** Harvey Clavien, Ana Catalina Ramirez

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

**Members:** Harvey Clavien, Jurgen Menze

We have recruited new members to the OSH working group to fill vacancies arising from staff mobility. We are proud to welcome these new members who are very knowledgeable and experienced in the matters of OSH and staff wellbeing. The working group met with the ILO OSH coordinator to strengthen collaboration and also discussed concerns regarding stress at work. We met with the SU working group on equality, work-life balance and diversity to better coordinate on cross-cutting topics, such as violence and harassment at work. Advice regarding OSH concerns in individual field offices was provided to SU OSH representatives upon request through calls or via email.

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 Management team. At the beginning of the third phase of the building renovation we attended to many complaints and requests from staff and contributed to problem-solving efforts. We salute the installation of kitchenettes, an issue the SU had

lobbied for a long time to improve hygiene. We participated in the ongoing training of volunteers as fire wardens and intervention teams and in an evacuation exercise that has successfully been completed.

We are very concerned about the stalling of OSH related activities in general. The main reason is the mobility of colleagues, which led to vacancies in the joint committees and joint working groups. Since the appointment of the previous COSH chairperson to a new position, no successor has been nominated. Despite various initiatives and reminders from the SU OSH working group, no COSH meeting took place in 2018. Further, the COSH joint working group on stress at work could not pursue its work for the same reasons while at least new representatives have meanwhile been nominated by administration. We hope to take up our work on this topic again soon.

At headquarters, the start of the third phase of the building renovation project and the related office moves of nearly 1,000 persons took much of the attention of the SU OSH group members. Moreover, the OSH Coordinator was absorbed by this process for many weeks. This led to a further delay in advancing on OSH priorities such as the training of OSH staff representatives.

Creating a culture of security, safety and health is a long-term challenge. Anchoring COSH as the main advisory body in the organizational procedures, and improving collaboration and coordination at the interfaces of the respective units and responsibilities is an ongoing demanding effort.

### Section 3 - Periodic and regular action

#### I. Resolving the problems facing non-headquarters staff

Objective: Pursuing more and more intensively the pooling of information and coordination between the various regions and headquarters, by means of:

- a more systematic pooling of information in order to improve collective efficiency;
- coordination between the regions and headquarters on:
  - the effective implementation of the new field structures;
  - recruitment and selection procedures, through the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC);
  - ongoing negotiations with the Administration on the drafting of job descriptions - to be implemented as soon as possible;
  - reclassification of field posts;
  - effective establishment of Independent Review Groups (IRGs) for the reclassification of field posts (in the case of Africa, during the first half of 2018);
  - career prospects under the new mobility policy;
  - security of all categories of field staff, in terms of both harassment and their physical safety and health;
  - pursuit of the campaign against discriminatory security and evacuation policies as they concern international and local staff, especially with regard to rights and benefits in high-risk duty stations.

Means of action

- Continuing to hold regular monthly discussions with all regional representatives via Skype, as an effective means of facilitating the sharing of experience in the practical implementation of the priorities indicated above (monthly meetings are currently programmed on a quarterly basis).
- Identifying and sharing best practices while at the same time drawing attention to irregularities, so as to improve the Staff Union's participation and negotiations in decision-making bodies at headquarters.

**Coordinator:** José Tossa assisted by Indira Bermudez Aguilar, Enrico Cairola, Laurence Dubois, Yoshie Noguchi, Maria-Marta Travieso

The practical implementation of the new field structures in all the regions is now a fact. However, the Committee still has to follow up on a few temporary hitches that need to be resolved, notably the maintenance of a proper balance of staff among offices that are expected to produce the same results.

Further progress has been made by the SHIF in speeding up the reimbursement of claims. Meanwhile, discussions are afoot on how best to cover emergencies, the idea being to sign contracts with the best hospitals and health centres in the area, subject to a trial period in certain regions. Because the SHIF management has been a bit slow off the mark, a resolution was adopted at the last African Regional Meeting in September 2018 that again drew the SHIF's urgent attention to this highly important matter. The resolution further recommends that, since the insurance card issued by the SHIF is not recognized in the majority of countries in several regions, the logo of the Fund's partner AXA should appear on the card alongside that of the ILO.

Regarding the reclassification of field posts, HRD has made a number of proposals as to how families of jobs and job descriptions might be redesigned. The Committee has since submitted its own comments to the administration based on a summary of contributions from all the regions. Discussions and negotiations are actively underway to reach concrete proposals as soon as possible. Together with our Staff Union representatives in the field, the Committee will need to give its closest attention to this particularly important issue.

Some regions still have no arrangements in place for the effective functioning of Independent Review Groups (IRGs) to consider appeals against the classification of jobs in the field. As part of the implementation process the African region has entered into discussions with the Staff Union at the regional level that have led to an agreement and to the appointment of members of the regional IRG by the end of 2018, with the active participation of the Staff Union Committee in Geneva.

As to career prospects under the new mobility policy, a number of shortcomings have been identified and recorded which the Committee will need to look into very carefully during the IGDS review currently under discussion.

Lastly, in an effort to counter discrimination between international and field staff in the ILO's security and evacuation policies, especially as they relate to rights and benefits in high-risk duty stations, action still needs to be taken on a few outstanding issues – possibly involving discussions with the administration.

With the latest local elections in March 2018 the membership of several committees has changed, and this meant organizing a series of training sessions at this year's regional meetings in Latin America (May) and in Africa (September). Via Skype the Treasurer was able to clarify Circular No. 1 on the use of membership fees retained in field offices so as ensure that the same good practices are observed everywhere.

## II. Use of financial resources

Objective: Ensuring maximum transparency in the use of financial resources.

Means of action

- Investigating the supervisory and follow-up process for all financial transactions.
- Pursuing discussions with the Administration on opening bank accounts in duty stations where Union membership dues are maintained locally.
- Implementing Staff Union Circular No. 1 clarifying the financial powers and responsibilities of staff representatives in the field.

**Treasurer:** Yvan Poulin

A Solidarity account has been set up for voluntary contributions in the event of natural disasters, for instance, so that members of the ILO Staff Union can quickly come to the aid of workers and their families in the affected areas by financing urgent projects.

The Staff Union has also contacted the Financial Cooperative Association of International Civil Servants (AMFIE) about opening an account for field staff to pay their Union dues so that local committees can always function safely and independently.

Lastly, the revision of Circular No. 1 on the use of membership fees retained in field offices has been completed.

Looking ahead, it will be necessary to open an account with AMFIE, along with subsidiary accounts to meet the needs of the field offices.

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

Objective: Represent and defend the individual and collective interests of the staff.

Means of action

- Providing the staff members at headquarters and in the field with advice (individually or collectively) on the application and interpretation of the Staff Regulations, collective agreements and IGDS documents, and on the policies and procedures currently in force.
- Providing advice on matters relating to collective rights.
- Providing information notes on procedures that are applicable to officials.
- Representing or accompanying staff members in the context of conflict prevention;
- Organizing information meetings on legal issues at headquarters and in the field, notably during regional meetings or via Skype;
- Following-up on internal bodies' recommendations and identifying trends to meet staff needs.

**Coordinator:** Elisabeth Fombuena

**Members:** Carlos Carrión Crespo, Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, Siska Dubbert, Maria-Marta Travieso, Clara Van Panhuys

**Technical adviser:** Chloé Charbonneau-Jobin

During the period from January to October 2018, more than 135 of our colleagues obtained legal advice. Some of these colleagues came several times to discuss different issues. This number also excludes the consultations held concerning the strike, the compensation package and the legal appeals against the implementation of the ICSC decision. Thus, the Staff Union has been very much in demand.

Most of the cases brought to the attention of the Staff Union concerned recruitment and selection, requests for reclassification, issues related to the improper use of certain types of contracts and precariousness, disciplinary cases and labour relations with some very specific cases of workplace harassment (psychological and sexual harassment). Due to the mobilization of staff over the last few months on the issue of the revised post adjustment for Geneva and, more generally, the issues related to salary surveys conducted by the ICSC, the legal support group has been very busy in handling these files.

As the Staff Union has observed in previous years, legal consultations are steadily increasing and there is little or no concrete improvement in internal governance issues.

The Staff Union continues to work to ensure that cases are resolved informally rather than through litigation. Early conflict resolution remains the Union's best way to maintain a healthy work environment. More sustained efforts will continue to be made in this direction.

2018 corroborated the concerns of the Staff Union regarding the inability to file complaints or grievances in the collective interest before the JAAB and the Tribunal. Indeed, the requirement to file individual complaints for manifestly collective disputes such as the revised post adjustment for Geneva and all matters related to the manner in which the ICSC decides on the conditions of employment of staff members has monopolized huge Staff Union resources. The Staff Union is determined to make every effort to ensure that the international civil service has a modern, effective and efficient labour relations system that is responsive to the interests of staff and its members. This begins with the collective bargaining of all working conditions and the possibility for employee and staff associations to file class actions on behalf of their members.

#### IV. International

Objective: Strengthening alliances at the international level and contributing to the institution of collective bargaining across the board within the United Nations system.

##### Means of action

- Strengthening ties with the major world trade union federations and with those to which the Staff Union is affiliated, in order to benefit from their logistical capability and their influence in bringing about a better framework for industrial relations within the United Nations system.
- Working towards the pooling of know-how, resources and activities for the purposes of mobilization drives organized by international civil service federations.
- Pursuing the activities of the "Geneva Group" so that it can respond more effectively to the interests and needs of the staff of international organizations locally.
- Encouraging staff representatives to participate in or to set up local federations of United Nations staff associations (FUNSAs) in the field.
- Strengthening ties with NGOs and militant groups with a view to improving the employment and working conditions of certain categories of United Nations workers who risk being discriminated against on the basis of race, ethnic or social origin, national extraction, nationality, sex, family situation, family responsibilities, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, political opinion, religion, handicap, HIV status or trade union membership.

**Coordinator:** Catherine Comte-Tiberghien

**Members:** Harvey Addo-Yobo, Manuel Céspedes Ocampo, Dan Cork, Yvan Poulin, Gurchaten Sandhu (UN Globe Focal Point), Faustina Van Aperen

One of the Staff Union's objectives has been to strengthen its alliances at the international level with an eye to establishing a system of collective bargaining. It is of no little importance, then, that the events surrounding the Governing Body session in March 2018 gave rise to an extensive mobilization of the staff in defence of their acquired rights and conditions of employment. The response of the major national and international trade union confederations to this dispute was greater than we ever expected. Not only was the ILO Staff Union warmly congratulated but many quarters asked it to explain what seemed to them to be inexplicable – no easy task – and to provide a plausible account of what happened, step by step, and what decisions were taken at the time. The Chairperson of the Staff Union was a member of the international delegation that took part in the enormous Convention held by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) where again, once she had explained the ins and outs of the United Nations system of industrial relations to national trade unionists, she was assured by all the participants that, whenever our

federations needed them, they were prepared to support the Staff Union's efforts to establish a system of collective bargaining.

Throughout this past summer the Staff Union has also been in close contact with Public Services International (PSI) in discussions about a long-term strategy, subject of course to the coming meetings of the administrations and staff representatives with the ICSC.

The Staff Union has also been very active in the defence of the field staff's rights, with every advantage being taken of its synergy with national unions.

Finally, the Staff Union continued to provide support to all local federations of staff associations and UN staff unions so as to be well prepared for future campaigns in defence of employment and working conditions in the field.

## V. IRIS "Users" Forum

**Objective:** Keeping close watch on the deployment of IRIS in the ILO's external offices, and ensuring that the changeover does not result in any deterioration in officials' working conditions.

In 2018-19, IRIS will be deployed as follows:

### ***Asia***

*May 2018:* IRIS TOTAL: CO-Hanoi, CO-Jakarta, CO Kathmandu, Dili, and Kabul

*July 2018:* IRIS TOTAL: CO-Colombo, CO-Dhaka and DWT/CO-New Delhi.

*November 2018:* IRIS TOTAL: CO-Beijing, CO-Islamabad, CO-Manila, CO-Suva and Yangon

### ***Africa***

2019 : IRIS TOTAL for all field offices in the Africa region.

### **Means of action**

- Continuing to participate as an observer in all evaluations of operational processes stemming from the implementation of IRIS, bearing in mind that a focal point exists for any staff members who find themselves in difficulties during the implementation stage.
- Maintaining Staff Union pressure to ensure that continuous training on IRIS is organized at headquarters and in the field so as to provide general service staff with adequate career opportunities.
- Insisting that training be dispensed in the language of the regional office concerned.

**Members:** Manuel Cespedes Ocampo, José Tossa

The Staff Union's IRIS team participated in the work meetings of the team responsible for the system's deployment. The first two phases were completed in the ILO's offices in Asia in July 2018 and the third phase, comprising the full implementation of IRIS in the ILO's offices in Beijing, Islamabad, Manila, Suva and Yangon, is scheduled for November 2018.

The Staff Union's main concern at these meetings is to ensure the seamless integration of the changes into the new functions and responsibilities of staff in external offices.

The Staff Union will continue to keep a close eye on the impact of IRIS's deployment on our colleagues in the field. While this is to be completed in some offices this year, IRIS as a whole is expected to be fully operational in Africa next year.

Principal achievements (updated): coverage by regionAfrica:

**IRIS TOTAL:** RO-Abidjan and CO-Addis-Ababa

**IRIS PARTIAL:** DWT-Dakar, CO-Abuja, CO-Dar-es-Salaam, CO-Lusaka, CO-Cairo, CO-Algeria, DWT-Pretoria, CO-Antananarivo, CO-Harare, CO-Yaoundé and CO-Kinshasa

Asia:

**IRIS TOTAL:** RO/DWT/CO-Bangkok and Cambodia (Project Office), CO-Hanoi, CO-Jakarta, CO-Kathmandu, ILO-Tokyo, CO-Colombo, CO-Dhaka and DWT/CO-New Delhi

**IRIS PARTIAL:** CO-Beijing, CO-Islamabad, CO-Manila, CO-Suva and ILO-Yangon

America:

**IRIS TOTAL:** RO/DWT-Lima, ILO-Washington, ILO-New York, CO-Brasilia, CO-Buenos Aires, ILO-CINTERFOR, CO-Mexico, DWT/CO-Port of Spain, DWT/CO-San Jose, DWT/CO-Santiago

Europe and Arab States:

**IRIS TOTAL:** CO-Ankara, DWT/CO-Budapest, CO-Brussels, CO-Rome, CO-Paris, CO-Berlin, ILO-Madrid, ILO-Lisbon, RO/DWT-Beirut, DWT/CO Moscow

## II. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Africa

**Titular member:** Roger Mavinga Nkambu

**Substitute member:** José Tossa

The principal areas of concern in the region this past year are described below.

Staff Health Insurance Fund (SHIF)

A real effort has been made to reimburse medical expenses more quickly, even though the SHIF staff is obviously too small to do very much in the way of speeding things up. In cooperation with the Fund, measures designed to reduce the pressure on people's earnings without compromising their immediate access to health care have been considered, and the necessary machinery is currently being put into place. Meanwhile, the coverage of medical emergencies is still a real problem and the Staff Union Committee must find a way of taking positive and effective action, if necessary by introducing new arrangements that are better suited to particular regional contexts. At the 7th Regional Meeting held in Lusaka from 10 to 14 September 2018, a resolution was adopted focusing specifically on this issue and on the urgency of reaching a contractual arrangement with the best medical institutions.

Reclassification procedures

After lengthy procedures some of our colleagues have at last had their jobs reclassified, but many of those whose job description is outdated are still waiting to have their current situation officially recognized. The fact is that the reclassification process is still not clear and that this kind of anomaly is still a regular occurrence. There has in fact been no significant progress, despite the imminent reclassification of grades across the board which shows every sign of being a stop-gap measure for the sake of saving face. Meanwhile, the ceiling set by the ILO is NOB, or very occasionally NOC. Discussions between HRD (TALENT) and the Staff Union Committee on a new set of job descriptions have been going on since 2017.

At the request of the Staff Union at the regional level, the Regional Director has agreed to the establishment of the Group of Independent Experts (GIE) to encourage greater transparency and fairness in the handling of requests for reclassification and, in close cooperation with the Staff Union, has appointed its members, who will shortly be attending a capacity-building course at ILO headquarters.

#### Assistance, support and advisory services

The past year has kept the Staff Union very busy. It has provided advice and guidelines to the many colleagues who have approached it about a variety of concerns: the right to keep the UN laissez-passer, salary advances, working hours, the right to training during working hours, rest days at the end of a mission, the number of days that offices working a 40-hour week close at the end of the year, requests for job reclassification, medical evacuation, abuse of authority, holidays, reimbursement of medical expenses, contracts (especially under development cooperation projects), reimbursement of funeral expenses, salaries, the use of Staff Union funds retained at country offices and in Decent Work technical teams (DWTs), etc.

The Staff Union has been a constant advocate of industrial peace and the maintenance of cordial relations among colleagues in the ILO's various offices. If the unfortunate situations that have arisen in some of those offices are to be prevented in the future, however, it is important that the ILO arrange regular capacity-building sessions for its managers in the field, in the form of briefings, training and exchanges between junior and senior managers. It must also provide more training and awareness building for the staff as a whole. Out of a total of 139 cases (37 collective and 102 individual) 135 have been dealt with successfully through social dialogue and in consultation with the Staff Union.

#### Staff security in the field in the face of new forms of terrorism

United Nations personnel throughout the system are a prime target for terrorists, and the multiplication of terrorist movements in Africa is therefore a source of serious concern for the future of technical cooperation and for the safety and security of field staff. Countries emerging from recent conflicts where safety conditions are precarious, outbreaks of civil disorder before and after elections, etc., are among the 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 steps to protect its local staff, by the same token as it protects their international colleagues. Anything less would be tantamount to failing to assist persons in danger. Yet despite the efforts deployed by SERVSEC, much clearly remains to be done in terms of ensuring the safety and security of ILO staff as a whole effectively and fairly, irrespective of social or professional category.

#### Working conditions/health and safety

The field structure review in Africa has not brought the expected increase in the ILO offices' capacity, notably as regards the number of staff. The extra workload generated by successive reforms without any improvement in the quality and quantity of human, financial and logistical resources raises the stress level at the workplace, poses a threat to the staff's health and subverts the Organization's image. The extra stress is aggravated by the need to produce results within what are often unrealistic deadlines. The structure of field offices therefore needs to be harmonized at the regional level so that they all have an equal chance of doing their job properly, although this must not be at the expense of the career prospects of our colleagues serving in the field.



### Career development and training

If the spirit of the ILO's achievement over the past century is to be maintained, more has to be done to promote genuine career development for its staff. Systematic training is needed so that staff members are better able to take on new responsibilities. Also, the criteria for using SDF funds have to be clarified so that they really are used to enhance people's skills on an equal basis. Staff mobility both horizontally (field to field) and vertically (headquarters to field and vice versa) ought to apply to all categories of personnel, so as to improve their career prospects and raise the overall level of skills and experience. This is something the ILO must tackle irrespective of the cost.

### GS and NO salaries

The conditions of remuneration of local staff – and now of international staff too – continue to deteriorate. This is mainly because their salaries are held down by an obsolete wage-fixing methodology and by the UN system's hidden agenda of keeping them as low as possible, not to mention their virtual exclusion from financial advantages such as assistance with school fees for their children, reimbursement of the cost of personal safety measures, loans, etc. Although this is a matter for the common system to decide, the ILO (as the agency whose specific mandate it is to promote equitable social justice for all) has to play a leading role in persuading the UN to correct the shortcomings of the Flemming methodology.

A number of duty stations in the field have contacted the Staff Union Committee to voice their many concerns on the subject of salaries.

Given the importance and complexity of the issue, however, and although it comes within the competence of the common system, the Staff Union Committee should have an item placed on the agenda of the next session of the CCISUA and join forces with other bodies with an eye, ultimately, to having the current methodology reviewed. The Committee should also encourage more of our colleagues in the field to undertake training in the conduct of salary surveys, an opportunity which our colleagues in Kinshasa and Dakar have already benefited from during the period covered by this report.

The region has also given its overwhelming support to the campaign against salary cuts conducted by our colleagues in Turin and Vienna.

### Access of local staff in certain countries to loans from the UNFCU and the MEC

There has been some progress in discussions with the UNFCU via its office in Geneva, and over the years the number of duty stations with access to loans has grown. That said, the ceiling on loans to locally and nationally recruited staff is still relatively low and varies from one location to another. According to the UNFCU it is because of the instability and insecurity of several duty stations in Africa that loans of this nature are not yet available. The Staff Union, for its part, is of the opinion that political insecurity and instability are not restricted to particular countries but that, as has been amply demonstrated by recent incidents throughout the world, anything can happen anywhere and at any time. Furthermore, staff members employed by the ILO are recruited under different types of contract, including contracts without limit of time, and most of its officials are members of the Staff Pension Fund, two factors which we feel justify the UNFCU making its loans available to all the duty stations in the region.

As to the MEC, which we have approached on the subject on several occasions, its position is more ambiguous: whenever locally and nationally recruited staff outside headquarters have met its conditions, it has tended to add new conditions. Despite the fact that the ILO payroll is now calculated and paid from Geneva, the MEC has maintained its position not to grant loans to locally recruited staff.

The result is that, among other drawbacks in countries where the situation is particularly fraught, staff recruited by the United Nations in general, and the ILO in particular, have little or no access to regular bank loans – quite apart from the fact that their retirement prospects are dismal.

This is why for some years now we have been urging the Staff Union Committee and the Director-General to encourage the UNFCU and the MEC to adopt a more flexible position so as to improve the social conditions of locally recruited staff in Africa.

#### Retirement of the directors of country offices and DWTs

The titular member attended the events that marked the retirement of the directors of country offices and DWTs in Africa, which took place in Dakar, Senegal, in January 2018. A message from the Staff Union was conveyed to the Regional Director in the presence of all the directors in the region, as well as of a number of assistant directors-general and other departmental directors from headquarters.

#### Staff Union Assistance Fund

The Staff Union's regular contacts with the Regional Office (Regional Director, Assistant Regional Director and human resources officer) have been fruitful, providing as they have a means of exchanging information and tackling specific problems of personnel management.

### **Americas**

**Titular member:** Maria Elena Lopez Torres

**Substitute member:** Maria-Marta Travieso

The most important event in the region since the Annual General Meeting of February 2018 has been the VII Regional Meeting of ILO Staff Unions that was held in Lima from 30 April to 4 May, attended by Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, President of the Staff Union, and our colleague Carlos Carrión Crespo, first Vice-President. The Presidents of participating Staff Unions in the region reviewed and discussed human resources, the selection and recruitment of staff, the SHIF, the work climate, career development, social dialogue and relations with the administration, performance appraisals, staff mobility and other issues.

#### Human resources

The participants emphasized that everyone who works in ILO regional offices is essential to the Organization's success, which means that HRD has a strategic role to play in generating a healthy work environment and in promoting the full development of each individual. It is vital that HRD be able to respond to all the staff's needs.

Most of the human resources officers in the region also have to handle finance and administration. This poses something of a problem, as they find themselves responsible for three different sets of functions which they cannot possibly carry out properly in the allotted time. As a result, the HR work is often neglected and it is the staff that suffer.

That being so, the necessary transparency and compliance with the existing regulations, as well as the coherent use of resources and in some cases a more efficient management of external collaboration contracts, are not always possible.

In expressing their concern, the staff called for specific measures to ensure that their health is not compromised and that the harmful effects of stress, a bad work environment, the abuse of authority and poor planning and distribution of the office's work and resources are avoided.

The participants requested that training funds be fairly distributed among the joint training committees in each office and urged their colleagues to participate actively in the committees.

Recruitment and selection

The regional staff voiced their concern that when technical cooperation personnel were recruited the posts were sometimes classified at different grades even though they involved the same work.

Social dialogue and relations with the administration

The regional staff requested that the Regional Titular member be invited to attend the meetings of directors, in line with existing practice at headquarters and in other regions, so that the good relations that prevailed among them could be seen for what they were and so that the Staff Union could share their concerns directly with the regional team of directors.

Performance appraisals

The regional staff requested:

- ongoing training for supervisors, including recognition of their functions at each stage,
- the harmonization of the criteria for each level of skills so as to avoid discrimination and labour disputes,
- the resolution of ambiguous situations that arise when two or more supervisors fail to coordinate the work among themselves.

They observed that the forms used for technical cooperation projects are often too rigid and unsuited to the duration of the project.

Work environment and occupational safety and health

The regional meeting was informed of certain situations that had arisen in the region, for example in the Santiago office where a rather unsettled labour environment had developed when officers of the Santiago Staff Union resigned and new elections were convened. With support from Geneva an investigation is being conducted in order to get to the bottom of the incident. No further details are available pending the completion of the investigation.

SHIF

Although there has been some progress in the reimbursement of claims, there are still instances where it takes 2 to 3 months, and sometimes longer. The computerization of the SHIF's reimbursement advices would not seem to have done anything to facilitate the follow-up of reimbursement claims. Often the advices are not received, or only with much delay. It would be useful if the Fund's secretariat could visit the region more often so as to speak to the staff, contact the principal medical services in each country and see how the system operates on the spot. In 2017 it only paid short visits to the Santiago and Buenos Aires offices.

Regional mobility of local staff

Short-term staff movements can be highly enriching in a staff member's professional career, and the participants in the regional meeting requested that a transparent policy be introduced of listing all relevant posts that are vacant so that regional staff can apply and be selected on the basis of clear and precise criteria.

### Staff Union bank accounts in regional offices

The regional meeting reiterated its views on the Staff Union's bank accounts, which are still generally under the name of the Union's president and treasurer. In some countries, this has fiscal implications for the account-holder vis-à-vis the authorities and means that access to the funds is impossible in the event of his or her death until probate is complete. The problem has been raised time and again at regional meetings and there is still no clear solution. The regional staff would like to know what alternative is being envisaged and when it might be introduced in the region.

As the ILO and the Staff Union look towards their 100th anniversary, the representatives of all local and international staff in America and the Caribbean reaffirmed their commitment to a stronger Staff Union that protects the staff's interests and strives to improve working conditions and the work environment.

## **Asia and the Pacific**

**Titular Member:** Razi Mujtaba Haider

**Substitute Member:** Yoshie Noguchi

### Strengthening the Membership in the AP Region

There has been an active campaign around strengthening the SU both at the regional and at the HQ level and the strengthening of the Union has become visible due to joining of many new members in the to the SU. Two factors have contributed to this increase of membership in the AP Region:

- Training of the SU Reps through the Regional SU meeting of the AP Region
- Individual training sessions carried out the SU at HQ in various offices of the AP Region

Effective networking between the HQ, Regional titular and between the individual SU Reps in the AP Region has strengthened the communication, and has resulted in the enhancement of trust and confidence among members and among staff reps; and the ready support by the regional titular and by the SU at HQ has been very instrumental in strengthening the unions in country offices.

### Challenges and issues at the regional level

Despite the good side of the equation also some lessons have also been learnt and there are a few offices where a better coordination between the local committees of the SU and the members needs to be focused on.

Another important thing that needs to be addressed is the apparent lack of interest or passive role of the international staff (SU members) in the local SU's. Usually the international staff sometimes feel that the SU is more of a local affair at the local level and have often flagged that their (international staff) issues are not addressed by the local SU reps because either the local SU reps don't have the capacity to address their issues, or else the local SU does not take much interest in the issues of the international Staff Union members.

- Similarly there is a dire need that when the issues of the international staff are flagged at the HQ level with the SU, then the SU at HQ must give immediate attention to these issues. Necessarily all issues are not so easy to resolve and sometimes some issues cannot be resolved. But the important part and support needed from the SU at HQ can be based on the following initiatives:
- Effective communication: The SU at HQ needs to strengthen the communication, especially when local SU Reps flag an issue of an international Staff Union member – it must be given an immediate response. If in the SU we don't appear to take effective actions then we would lose the membership of international staff in the SU at the regional level.

### Social dialogue strengthening at the regional and local level

There has been a marked improvement in the engagement between the administration and the SU at the regional level in the AP Region. The Regional administration has ensured the inclusion of the SU Regional

titular in the Directors' meeting and the SU has been provided the opportunity to table the issues of the staff at the regional level. After the Regional SU meeting in 2017, the local SU Reps have also engaged in formal and more scientific and structured meetings and discussions with the Directors of their respective offices. And this is indeed a good indicator and an effective result of the investment by the SU, to the training of the SU Reps in the AP Region.

However, an important thing to note is that though these meetings and engagements provide an effective forum to flag the issues of the staff, unfortunately progress on resolution of the issues flagged is not that easy and effective.

#### Visible improvements in the SHIF

The SU members in the AP region have appreciated visible positive changes in the SHIF and effective and timely processing of medical claims. The better communication by SHIF and the relatively easier procedures in effectively tackling medical emergency cases are being appreciated by the majority of the SU members across the AP Region. However, there is a need to review how an online claim submission and processing system can be evolved effectively.

#### Use of precarious contracts

The use of precarious contracts is being observed, and for recurring and continuing office work the use of excolls is on the increase. Instead of awarding ILO formal contracts (ST, or ST 3.5) in many offices the tendency to engage staff on precarious contracts is becoming a practice rather than an exception. Despite there being staff rules and IGDSs and office procedures on using non-precarious contracts, the practice is to the contrary. The problem is mostly at the office-level administration who uses excuses of non-funding availability to encourage the use of precarious contracts.

#### Career development

- Career development opportunities must be provided for all officials of the ILO and a clear defined career-progression and development path should be available. Opportunities for temporary geographic mobility for the regional staff must also be explored and options should be discussed.
- Effective mobility policy, for both functional and geographic mobility, must be negotiated, agreed upon and implemented.
- SU members all across the regions are attaching a great importance to the Generic Job Description review and the members are hoping to hear good news in form of a good agreement between the ILO administration and the SU on the GJDs. There is a need to bring the discussions of the GJDs to an effective and fruitful close through an agreement.

## **Europe and Arab States**

**Titular member:** Rania Bikhazi

**Substitute member:** José Tossa *ad interim*

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 last period October 2017- 2018 can still be grouped under the following key topics:

1. Increasing the membership base and strengthening representation and communication
2. Ensuring the involvement of the Staff Union in office committees
3. Regional meeting in January 2018
4. Staff Union in times of reform and uncertainty
5. Other priorities

#### Increasing the membership base and strengthening representation and communication

Figures of the Staff Union in the Western European Offices namely Berlin, Brussels, Lisbon, Madrid, Rome and Paris seem to be stagnant with two new memberships. The small sizes of the offices may be the main reason for that.

In Europe, the membership increase was mainly visible in the Budapest and Ankara offices where new memberships increased by 6 and 12 respectively. In the Arab States, following the joint mission undertaken by the local Staff Union Committee President, the Global Staff Union President, the legal advisor and the titular in January 2018 to Amman and Beirut, a total of 19 new members joined out of which 14 were DC project staff from Amman. This increase clearly demonstrated the need for the Union to exert every effort in order to be closer to its constituency especially field offices and DC project staff.

In February 2018, the SUC Beirut conducted elections for a SU representative in Jordan (focal point) to support the SUC in increasing awareness among project staff in Amman working in DC projects and to convey and relay messages and information to and from project staff. Out of 25 SU registered members in Jordan, 24 participated in the elections.

From the statistics of the Arab region, approximately 65% of staff are currently members of the Union up from 47% at the end of 2016. This figure, despite being reasonable, can be improved if Staff Union Committee members work harder on increasing the membership base and strengthening representation and communication. There is a strong need to work on advocating and explaining what the Union does and additional efforts also need to be exerted vis-à-vis DC staff members to encourage them to become Union members.

It has proven difficult to convince people to join the Staff Union for various reasons such as the lack of belief in the mandate, lack of trust in its ability to drive change and others. There is a strong need to work on a marketing campaign – at the Global and Regional Levels - 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 to benefit from the support and assistance of the Union. This is especially true in field and project offices where staff members feel neglected. Additionally, efforts should be exerted in the field to ensure that all newly recruited PSI, RB or DC local staff members (who do not necessarily benefit from the orientation session in Geneva) are informed about the Staff Union in their welcoming package and briefing. Finally, in regional meetings, capacity building sessions should be included targeting Staff Union representatives in the field to ensure a stronger capacity is built to serve, assist, campaign and represent staff members.

#### *Ensuring the involvement of the Staff Union in office committees*

There are no committees in the Western European Offices due to their small size, except one OSH committee in Brussels and one in Budapest. No committees exist in the ILO office in Ankara.

ILO Moscow has also two operational committees where the Staff Union is represented namely OSH and Staff Development. The latter was created in 2018 and is comprised of 6 staff members (gender-balanced) of different categories (GS, P and NO). The SU Chairperson is a member of the team. The ToRs of this committee were developed to ensure proper facilitation and coordination of the staff development process in the Office.

ILO-Brussels' staff representative is also a member of the Local Salary Survey Committee and participates, as staff representative, in the data collection with the UN survey specialist.

At the Regional Office for Arab States, the SUC is represented in the new committees that were established in 2018, namely: OSH and Building Committee to address issues related to the physical working environment and parking spaces, in addition to a new Staff Development Committee (SDC) that covers the biennium 2018-19. The SDC comprises a representative from the Decent Work Team, Regional Administrative Services, and the Staff Union. Over the period February to September 2018, the committee has approved 13 out of a total of 18 applications. Out of the 13 applications approved, 8 were RB staff and 5 were TC staff who had met the criteria. Applications were reviewed based on the relevance of the course and to the work of the unit/team. The presence of the SUC in these committees is to ensure that all decisions taken are in the best interest of staff and follow a fair process.

Lately, and due to currency fluctuations and inflation in a number of countries, the Local Salary Survey exercise is gaining more importance. The ILO field office representation in the committee that oversees this exercise remains weak. It is therefore primordial for the Staff Union to consider building the capacity of its committee members in the field to participate actively in the Local Salary Survey Committee and ensure that the selection of comparators and methodology applied are in the best interest of the local staff.

A local salary survey was conducted in May 2018 in Brussels but results are not yet available as the UN survey specialist, coming from UNOHRM in Bangkok has been transferred to another duty station and no other official has been nominated to take over the position. There is a difficulty encountered in the job matching exercise. The issue will be escalated by the DO in Brussels to the UN in New York.

Fluctuation in exchange rates is a hot topic in Turkey nowadays. The UN Staff representatives met on Monday 13 August 2018 to list the concerns regarding the need to re-evaluate the salaries of the staff due to the rapid devaluation of the Turkish Lira (TRY). Based on the result of this meeting, and on behalf of all UN staff, staff associations' representatives of various agencies wrote a letter to the head of LSSC to find a remedy and take immediate action on the local salaries in order to save the purchasing power of staff, which has eroded significantly. Additionally, Turkey's RC Office sent an e-mail to the UN/HR representative, and all agency directors wrote to their HQs to give support to their staff. At the ILO Ankara office, a letter was written to the Director to raise staff's concerns with relevant departments at the ILO HQ in order to find the most appropriate and sustainable solution for the local staff in Turkey. The ILO Ankara Director shared the letter with ILO HQ, and the staff are awaiting for answers from both ILO HQ and UN/HR. The ILO Ankara Staff believe that special measures could be considered to address the current challenges with the following suggested solutions:

- Consider the 2017 Salary Scale (latest interim revision) to calculate the USD equivalent of net salaries per annum of staff (using May 2017 exchange rate of 3.565), to be fixed at a USD amount.
- Apply a non-pensionable bonus in order to compensate staff members' losses.

In Russia, the ILO is represented in the LSSC and has been a Coordinating Agency for the last two salary surveys. They are currently finalizing the Interim Salary Survey which was approved in April 2018. Preliminary results show a positive trend, however, the duration of the process itself shows lack of interest of comparators to participate in such exercises, and there is a lack of knowledge of the local staff on the process itself which negatively affects the capacities to achieve better results.

In Budapest, a conflict on work-family life balance was successfully resolved after lengthy negotiations with management and the intervention of the Staff Union Committee in Geneva: a new family-friendly schedule of working days was agreed upon with management. Working days/holiday schedule will be negotiated with the SU in the future.

The SUC at ROAS conducted a staff survey at the end of 2017, the deadline of which was extended until end January 2018 based on staff request. The results of the survey and a summary of key issues of concern were shared with management in February 2018

The results of the survey pointed to important issues that warranted discussion with the management and brainstorming on possible responses and solutions. It managed to capture essential details from staff that helped address issues with management in a more focused and constructive manner. The key topics that were discussed with management were those that seemed to be of most concern to staff and included: recognition of good performance, information sharing, staff development, favouritism, recruitment policies, and physical working environment (noise/insulation). The survey results were also shared with all ROAS staff in an email in July 2018.

Management took on board some of the recommendations (staff meetings became less frequent and more thematic). Recruitment guidelines for TC staff were developed by the Administration Unit and shared with the SUC. Detailed comments were provided by SUC in writing and a meeting took place to discuss them. The SUC is still waiting for the feedback of the Chief/RAS on these guidelines. One of the most important issues raised is the need to establish a recruitment and selection committee where the Staff Union is represented.

#### Regional Meeting for Europe and Arab States in January 2018

The Regional meeting for Europe and the Arab States was held on 16-17 January 2018 in Beirut in the presence of all the SU representatives.

Introductory speeches were given via Skype by Mr Moussa Oumarou (Deputy Director-General for Field Operations and Partnerships), Mr Heinz Koller (Regional Director for Europe) and, in person, by Ms Catherine Comte-Tiberghien (SU President) and Ms Ruba Jaradat (Regional Director for Arab States).

Each regional representative presented the current state of affairs in her office, issues and challenges faced, possible solutions, and assistance requested. The presentations covered Brussels and Western

Europe, Budapest, Ankara, Moscow, and Beirut. The Staff Union President gave a general overview of the SU structure, activities and recent achievements.

A number of Skype sessions were conducted with colleagues in Geneva based on the priorities depicted for both regions. The first one was with the Staff Union Treasurer where the distribution and the use of SU funds were discussed and clarified, as well as the reporting requirements expected from each office.

The second Skype session was conducted with HRD. Issues discussed included teleworking, the status of staff in branch offices in Western Europe, the training of newly hired staff in Ankara, the situation of TC staff in Jordan, assistance with local salaries in Moscow, the review of job descriptions, and the status of National Coordinators assigned to the Budapest and Moscow offices.

The third and last Skype session was conducted on security of staff in the field. Applicable rules, challenges faced, and recommendations for future action were discussed.

#### **Meeting Conclusions:**

- Equal security measures should be applied to all staff regardless of grade and contract.
- Same HR regulations should be applied at HQ, field offices, and technical cooperation projects. HRD at headquarters needs to regularly share information and changes in regulations with field HR officers to avoid discrepancies.
- Prompt assistance concerning local salary surveys and salary calculation in emergency situations identified by staff is essential. The mechanisms and methodology used in local salary surveys should be examined.
- The status of National Coordinators should be examined and updated to provide equal opportunities to all staff.

The Staff Union president and legal advisor had the chance to meet with the ILO project staff working in Jordan prior to the Regional Meeting. Staff members complained about unhealthy working relations in the office, absence of support, guidance and information from the HR Unit at the Regional Office and abuses of power. A similar interactive meeting was held with staff at the Regional Office for Arab States where issues related to heavy workloads, demotivation, favouritism, precarious contracts and 'management by exception' were raised. The Regional Director was informed in order to initiate corrective measures.

#### Staff Union work in times of reform and uncertainty

In current times of reform and budget cuts, and following the salary cuts applied in Geneva, the Staff Union committees in both Ankara and Beirut joined other UN staff associations during their meetings to discuss the latest developments on the UN Reform and its implications for staff. These meetings also provide a platform to network and to share knowledge and expertise on common issues specifically pertaining to UN staff in Turkey and Lebanon.

During the few meetings held in Beirut, staff representatives recognized the following common concerns facing all UN staff in Lebanon, including: medical insurance coverage, status of UN staff vis-à-vis the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, physical security and safety, employment security and the impact of the Local Salary Survey on the remuneration of staff. The on-going UN Reform process and the potential budget cuts were also recognized as an issue of key concern to staff due to their impact on the quality and sustainability of jobs. Furthermore, the latest decision of the Government of the United States to halt funding for UNRWA and the expected repercussions on its staff members and beneficiaries emerged as a critical issue. A letter was drafted and will soon be sent to the UN Acting Special Coordinator and the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator to request an introductory meeting, seek views and support on the above-mentioned issues, and discuss future steps to ensure that sound industrial relations and bilateral dialogue remain at the heart of the UN Reform.

#### Other priorities

- Employment related issues remain of concern to the Staff Union in these critical times of the UN Reform. They focus mainly on the following:
  - ✓ Equality of opportunities and treatment of staff regardless of status. This is especially true in recruitment, security and accessing staff development.
  - ✓ 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. A clear response is expected from HRD on whether the G7 grade would be maintained. The new JDS are awaited. For the Western European offices, the limitation in the professional growth of G staff remains an issue especially when the duties performed are the equivalent to a NO level. An urgent need exists for the establishment of joint recruitment and selection committees in the field offices where the Staff Union is represented to ensure fair and transparent recruitments and avoid the 'management by exception' syndrome. Such a committee exists in the Moscow office where the staff union is also represented.

- ✓ 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.
  - ✓ Information sharing and update on the contracts policy under review remains a worry to staff members.
  - ✓ Exchange rate fluctuations and deterioration of staff's purchasing power. The ILO should consider a currency peg that remains fixed in times of inflation to safeguard staff's salaries.
  - ✓ Increased in workload and stress in times of reform and zero budget growth. Work life balance is being challenged with ambitious objectives and limited human resources.
- There is the concern in Branch offices (Paris, Berlin, Madrid, Lisbon, and Rome) that staff cannot be awarded WLT contracts, even if they are selected through open competitions and not detached by their respective governments.
  - The ILO staff in the Ankara office are not satisfied with SHIF reimbursement delays. Additionally, the ILO 80% coverage for hospitalization in private hospitals is questioned when compared to all other UN Agencies' Medical Programmes in Turkey that do not make any distinction between public and private and make a 100% reimbursement for all medical interventions. It also seems that some UN Agencies have standing agreements with hospitals (such as UNDP and UNFPA with the Florence Nightingale Hospital) where their staff only pay their 20% contribution and not the total amount charged for the services provided. Finally, the ILO SHIF policy that excludes dependants of staff whose personal income is higher than a certain amount should be revised especially in countries where the situation and services provided through social security systems are not suitable and where other UN agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNFPA, WHO, IOM, WFP in Turkey do not have such regulation.
  - According to ILO Ankara staff there is need for improvement in maternity leave and breast feeding regulations. According to Article 8.7, 1.d) of the Staff Regulations, "An official shall be entitled to two 30-minutes nursing breaks daily. In addition, she shall be entitled to reasonable time for commuting for nursing purposes up to a maximum time of 60 minutes per day until the child reaches the age of six months." Six months is a very short duration for breast feeding especially that the WHO and UNICEF both advise to breast feed for a period of 2 years. Moreover, most of the other UN Organizations like UNHCR, UNDP, UNFPA and IOM have longer periods for breast feeding compared to the ILO. It is also known that the maternity leave for UNICEF staff is 6 months and breast feeding is allowed until the child is 2 years old. Under these circumstances, it seems that the ILO has the shortest period for breast feeding. It is therefore proposed to extend this period at least until the child is one year old and provide more flexibility in the commuting to allow mothers to take proper care of their children. For example, in Brussels, at the UNHCR, after the completion of the paid maternity leave, staff work 80% and get their 100% pay until the child is one-year old.
  - Staff members at the Moscow office acknowledge the improvement of the SHIF services, despite some delays still encountered in a number of reimbursements that require additional justification. To resolve this issue in a speedy manner it is suggested that SHIF writes the official directly to voice concern on his/her claim and request additional supporting documents. This would ensure a timely process and avoid unnecessary delays.

- At the Regional Office for Arab States, staff have noted an improvement in the SHIF services over the past year. No specific complaints were raised to the SUC Beirut in the reporting period.

## Turin

**Titular member:** Jesus Garcia Jimenez

**Substitute member:** Enrico Cairola

2017-18 has been marked by slow and indeed limited progress on some as well as pending matters carried forward from 2016-17 (implementation of agreement on project-based contracts, working conditions of the staff of service providers working on campus, the opening of new regular budget positions, the career development of staff and SUC involvement in the definition of future human resources needs).

The SU remains dissatisfied with the state of social dialogue on campus. The trend previously observed of being merely informed, rather than consulted, by the Management of ITC-ILO on issues of concern, continued in 2017-18. There were many instances wherein the Management refused to engage in an effective social dialogue with concrete results, including immediately following the January 2018 visit by the ILO DG and DDG of Field Operations wherein the latter called on both parties to engage in a dialogue such that a negotiated solution could be found.

In 2017-18, the SUC has continued to implementing its programme following a transparent, participatory and democratic approach aimed at strengthening the Staff Union role. The staff were regularly briefed on the outcomes of discussions regarding collective issues. Staff have also been regularly informed of these discussions with the Management. General assemblies were held regularly with members and information meetings and extraordinary assemblies have taken place when necessary. Actions were also organized in order to demonstrate solidarity in cases where decisions have adversely affected colleagues on the Campus (as well as in ILO Geneva) and the staff of ITC ILO service providers.

Finally, three (3) calls for interest to temporarily fill the secretary vacancy were published. Unfortunately, in each case, no candidatures were received from the members of the staff of ITC ILO.

### Implementation of the Collective Agreement on Project-Based Contracts

On 25th of November 2016, the SUC and the Management met to formally sign the Collective Agreement Concerning Staff with Fixed-Term Contracts linked to Specific Training Activities Forming a Coherent Programme. The terms of the agreement took immediate effect and the staff concerned were issued new employment contracts on January 1, 2017.

The SUC maintains that the agreement implicitly recognizes the years of past service under Project Based contracts for staff appointed to the Variable Budget. It has reiterated its position in the numerous meetings held with the management during the period covered by this report. The full recognition of past service for the purpose of personal promotion is an essential issue in the implementation of the agreement, taking into account that the staff members concerned are working in the same departments, doing the same tasks and maintaining the same grade, some of them for more than 13 years.

The SUC has since indicated it would be open to consider a revision to the personal promotion scheme as part of a broader consultation on career development.

### Filling of Regular Budget and Short Term positions

The position of the SUC is that all posts in the Regular Budget shall be filled according to Chapter I of the Staff Regulations, that there should be adequate succession planning and that all vacancies for posts on the Regular Budget must be notified to the Selection Committee at least six months in advance as foreseen by the procedures of this committee.

Furthermore, it is the SUC's position that under no circumstances should short term contracts be used instead of fixed term contracts to fill a vacant regular Budget post. This is in line with HRS Circular 4/2015, par. 7 b).

During the reporting period, the SUC denounced communications issued by the Management that ran contrary to this principle and objected to the use of Short Term contracts to temporarily fill a Regular

Budget vacancy following retirement in lieu of the issuing of a call for expression of interest among existing staff.

The SUC also called for the revision of the selection committee rules, specifically the involvement of the hiring manager in the formulation and grading of written exams as well as the composition of the selection panels.

#### *Decrease of the Post Adjustment and Personal Transitional Allowance (PTA)*

As part of the ILO SUC No Pay Cuts campaign, actions were undertaken on the campus on 24 May 2017, 13 July 2017 and 22 March 2018 in order to demonstrate solidarity with ILO colleagues adversely affected by the decision to decrease the Post Adjustment. The SUC supported the decision of the Management to implement a mitigation measure following the decision of the ICSC to decrease the Post Adjustment. Following the March 21, 2018 decision of the ILO to apply the reduced post adjustment to Geneva based staff, the Management of ITC ILO ended the implementation of the personal transitional allowance (PTA) and moved to implement the reduced post adjustment effective April 1, 2018.

Following the initial decision by the Management of the Centre to implement the PTA in the case of Professional and Higher Categories of staff, the SUC requested the Management to adopt a similar mitigation measure in response to the repeated reduction of salary of the General Service Category. Failure to take similar measures in this case could be construed as a form of discrimination against this category of staff. Unfortunately, no response to this proposal by the SUC has been received from the Management.

#### *Motivation of the staff*

An ad hoc committee composed of members of SUC was created in order to propose revisions to the set of minutes and circulars that pertain to the issue of work life balance (teleworking, overtime and compensatory leave, travel arrangements, parental leave, etc.)

The committee will present its proposal regarding the amendments to the said circulars at the next Staff Union assembly. Once consensus has been reached on the changes, the SUC will propose to open a round of consultations with the Management with a view to revising the various circulars in order to take into consideration the work life balance aspirations of the staff.

#### *Greater accountability on gender and diversity issues at the Centre*

Inputs have been provided by the SUC to the Gender and Diversity Action plan 2018-21. Some but not all of its suggestions have been taken into consideration in the final version. The SUC is also represented in the newly established Gender and Diversity Advisory Council (GADC) wherein it will continue to advocate in support of the some of the measures it has called for in its programme for 2018-19 (specific targets and budgets included in the Gender and Diversity Action Plan).

While the Centre has reached a ratio of 48 % when it comes to the gender balance among the professional category staff, parity is not yet achieved. The SUC has therefore called for the continuation of specific measures in support of reaching full parity under this indicator to be foreseen in the Programme and Budget for 2018-19.

In addition, the SUC proposed that measures targeting parity at the grade level P5 and above be included. It will reiterate both requests during the deliberations of the GADC and will continue to monitor the progress of the Centre's efforts in both areas.

A specific objective regarding the hiring of persons with a disability will be included in the diversity action plan, with some specific targets and indicators.

The SUC is of the general view that the Centre needs a more diverse workforce.

#### *Internship policy*

Following the publication of HRS Information Note No. 64/2018 on the Internship Programme, the SUC requested a broader discussion with the Management with a view to reaching an agreement on a new policy on internship. The information note was not shared with the SUC prior to its publication. This is a serious oversight given that the working conditions and treatment of ITC ILO interns now fall under the remit of the SUC.

The SUC also held two consultative meetings with the interns working on campus. The purpose of these consultations was to obtain their views on the areas of the current internship policy that could be

improved, such as an increase to the stipend and the provision of material support to compensate for the relative low level of remuneration foreseen. The latter in particular could facilitate the participation of candidates from a greater number of countries, the participation of candidates with more diverse backgrounds, the participation of persons with disabilities and a more balanced gender representation among the participants to this important programme.

#### ONE ILO Staff Union

Regarding the question of the integration of the staff of Turin, SUC position is the same that we are claiming for many years: Turin staff must be considered internal candidates in ILO positions.

### **III. OTHER BODIES**

#### **Former Officials' Section**

**Executive Secretary:** François Kientzler

The Former Officials' Section has a 10-person executive Bureau (one post is currently vacant) which, except during the summer months, generally meets every two weeks. Its office (# 5-67) is next to those of the Staff Union on the fifth floor. Although the Section keeps in touch with its members by email, post and its twice yearly bulletin Message, as well as via its website (<http://www.anciens-bit-ilo.org>), there is still considerable room for improvement if it is to maintain close contact with retirees in the various regions.

Thanks to the Section's physical proximity to the Staff Union, its Secretariat, its Executive Secretary and the other members of the Bureau are able to maintain permanent contact and engage in regular cooperation with the Union. These exchanges concern mainly matters of mutual interest, such as the SHIF and the Pension Fund. The Section supported the Staff Union's crusade against salary cuts in Geneva and welcomed the broad mobilization of the staff during the spring of 2018.

The functioning and maintenance of the Staff Health Insurance Fund (SHIF) is a constant subject of concern and one which crops up at each of the Section's fortnightly meetings. And there seems to be every reason to be worried, what with the risk that the processing of claims could be farmed out to an outside agency and that the social protection of retired officials could be transferred to national schemes - which in many countries do not even exist. Eager though we are to see an improvement in the Fund's governance and management and in the social protection of retired officials in the various regions, we were also pleased to see the improvement in certain benefits on 1 July 2018 in terms of prevention and of the recognition of certain alternative medicines.

The Pension Fund, too, is going through a turbulent patch, not so much for reasons of finance or efficiency but rather because of a number of internal problems that are hardly conducive to a serene work environment. The Fund has introduced a new integrated computer system, and as a result some newly retired officials have had to wait months for their first payment; fortunately, current payments to retired officials have not been affected.

The Section has continued to work on improving its communications with retirees. Its website (<http://www.anciens-bit-ilo.org>) is regularly updated, not just with information that is of direct concern to retirees but also with the latest news from the ILO, such as the Staff Union's recent crusade and strike action mentioned above. At the same time, we are busy preparing the next issue of Message, which is eagerly awaited by a large number of retirees but which involves a lot of time-consuming work. We are sincerely grateful to all those who devote their spare time to the magazine and are always on the lookout for new volunteers to help with translation and proofreading and to write articles or provide documentation.

The Former Officials' Section always takes part in the annual pre-retirement seminar, where we can spend a few minutes with each participant so as to establish a personal contact with future retirees and encourage them to join the Section.

We are also involved with similar associations of other international organizations in Geneva, and a seminar under the heading "Comment bien vieillir – Stay younger for longer" was held on 14 May 2018 in the ILO's Governing Body Room in cooperation with the former officials' associations of WHO, the United Nations (AAFI-AFICS) and the ITU. The working documents for the seminar are available on our website (<http://www.anciens-bit-ilo.org>). Following a presentation dealing with the normal and pathological impact of ageing on mental health, interventions were heard from associations belonging to the "Plateforme des Aînés de Genève": Pro Senectute, the Geneva Red Cross, the Geneva home-care assistance institution (IMAD) and Cité Seniors (on the Swiss side of the border) and the gerontological information and coordination centre (CLIC) in the Pays de Gex (on the French side). The Seminar was attended by 200 participants and was the product of several months' sustained collaboration among associations of retired officials of international organizations in Geneva. The previous seminar of its kind, on loneliness and isolation, was held in October 2014, and we believe that events such as these show how useful such associations and groups of retirees can be.

As we prepare to mark the hundredth anniversary of the ILO in 2019, which is sure to be a memorable occasion, hundreds of tributes and other events have been planned to be held in Geneva and throughout the world. No doubt they will be closely followed in the media.

The Section is cooperating with the ILO as it prepares for the centenary celebrations, and the Director-General Guy Ryder has personally expressed the hope that former officials, who were the making of the Organization, will follow the event very closely. On two occasions in the first half of this year the Section met the ILO officials who are responsible for arrangements and it has been very pleased to be of help. Though the date has not yet been fixed, a special event will be held for retired officials in the presence of the Director-General. The Section has made a number of suggestions for the occasion that have been duly adapted for inclusion in the general programme of events.

In a circular sent out on 30 January 2018 the Section invited retired officials to send in contributions reliving some of the highlights of the ILO's history and the response has been encouraging, with over 40 contributions already. Some of the stories appeared in the June 2018 issue of Message, and others will follow. All these contributions will appear on our website (<http://www.anciens-bit-ilo.org>), as well as being passed on to DCOMM for use in their communications as they see fit.

The Former Officials' Section also supports the ILO's Arts and Decoration Circle, a member of the Sports and Leisure Association, whose some 30 plus members organized a fourth exhibition in the Colonnade at ILO headquarters from 1 to 12 October 2018.

The annual receptions for retirees that take place in May and December in Geneva at the invitation of the Director-General are an excellent occasion for former ILO officials to meet up on familiar ground, and the Director-General's attendance is always greatly appreciated.

### **International Civil Servants' Mutual Association (MEC/AMFI)**

**Staff Union representative:** Pierre Moulet

The Association's activities in 2017 can be summarized in two words: taxation and computerization.

The process of verifying that all deposits by the MEC's members comply with all relevant tax laws continued in 2017 with, as expected, a large number of closure of accounts. The Governing Body expects this trend to continue, though at a slower pace given that most of the larger accounts have already been processed. Looking at the volume of members' deposits compared with the number of members since

2013, when the Governing Body first informed them that the MEC could no longer administer accounts that were not in conformity with the relevant fiscal regulations, there is no getting away from the fact that the substantial decline in deposits is very largely attributable to their failure to conform. This shows unquestionably how important and useful the verification process has been; had it not been carried out the Association's continued existence might have been seriously compromised.

At this stage some 3,500 accounts remain to be verified, and the Governing Body has called on all members who have not yet supplied the necessary documentation to do so without delay, failing which the MEC will have no other option than to initiate the closure of the accounts concerned. Meanwhile, it invites members who have not yet complied with the fiscal provisions to which they are subject to think very carefully about the possible consequences of their not doing so, since closing their accounts and withdrawing from the MEC does not in any way signify that the problem of fiscal conformity is resolved. On the contrary, it is important to appreciate that, with the development of new technologies, with the more recent trends in fiscal legislation and with the advent of a cash-less world such as is already virtually the case in Sweden, Denmark and China, most transactions that pass through members' accounts can be traced even years after the accounts themselves have been closed. It will very soon be almost impossible to engage in any kind of financial transaction without leaving some trace. The MEC has already been contacted by several members who have experienced a tax adjustment for assets that they held with the Association and withdrew several years ago. This kind of situation is likely to become more and more common in the years ahead.

For the MEC to be integrated with the Provident and Insurance Group of International Officials (GPAFI), its database needs to be entirely revamped as integration is impossible in its present condition. In 2017 an external data processing company carried out a strategic direction study to determine which of three possible options was the best:

1. a partial integration of databases, in which the GPAFI's back office would be integrated with that of the MEC but not its website; this would entail an estimated investment of CHF 500,000 and an annual cost of CHF 100,000;
2. full integration, in which the GPAFI's back-office would be integrated with that of the MEC and they would have a joint website; estimated investment CHF 700,000, annual cost CHF 200,000;
3. migration to an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) purchased on the market which, though a turn-key solution, would not provide the MEC with all the possibilities it needs and would be expensive to develop; estimated investment CHF 3,000,000, annual cost CHF 700,000.

The Governing Body has opted for full integration which, though costing more than partial integration, offers a simpler structure, better follow-up possibilities and less risk. Computer technology meetings have been held every week since November 2017, at which a list is compiled of all the MEC's and GPAFI's data-processing requirements and the joint ventures they are interested in. It should be possible to issue a call for tenders before the end of 2018. Full integration, which will require a great deal of work and numerous tests to avoid future problems, is scheduled for 2020.

Once again, the audit of the internal monitoring system by PricewaterhouseCoopers last December raised no particular concerns other than those connected with the data-processing system, which have already been identified and will be resolved once the process of integration with GPAFI is complete. As in past years, PricewaterhouseCoopers made a random selection of 25 members who were asked to allow their account(s) to be audited at 31 December 2017. Of these, 18 members (a very satisfactory figure) responded favourably, for which the MEC is very grateful. The audit seeks to establish that the members' accounts are correctly administered by the MEC and that there is no evidence of fraud, and of course the collaboration of the members concerned is indispensable.

It had been originally intended to float a new loan in 2017 so that members of the MEC could borrow small amounts for short periods of time. However, the fiscal conformity verification process has entailed so much extra work for the Secretariat that it has not yet been possible to do so. Since 2018 is likewise going to be a particularly busy time for the staff, we will no doubt have to wait until 2019 to float the loan – a delay which the Governing Body very much regrets.

The MEC organized another "Bike to work" operation in May and June 2017 and, for the third consecutive year, helped to finance a container of bicycles that was deposited at the Place des Nations from April to October so that members could use a bicycle free of charge. A new partnership has been entered into with "Catch a Car", which is a simple, economical, eco-friendly and practical way of travelling by car from point A to point B in Geneva.

Since the CHF ordinary reserve currently exceeds the upper limit of 12 per cent of the balance sheet total less reserves, the Governing Body prefers once again not to raise it for 2017 as required by the statutes but to propose that the General Meeting agrees to distribute the annual statutory allowance of 12.50 per cent of the accrued interest among the MEC's members. In addition, it would like to use the extraordinary reserve to increase the return on deposit accounts in CHF and, at the same time, to thank members for their fidelity. The Governing Body thus proposes a rate of interest of 0.60 per cent and a bonus of 1.30 per cent, for a total return of 1.90 per cent, as in 2016.

With the integration of GPAFI for accounting purposes, the likelihood that members will go along with the wishes of the Governing Body, the renewal of the administrators' mandate, the design of software, four public tenders (external auditors, audit committee, software design and global custody) and the continuing verification process, 2018 promises to be yet another very busy year. Although there is therefore bound to be a great deal of extra work, we nevertheless hope to finish the job by the end of the year.

## **The ILO InternBoard**

### **Staff Union representative for relations with the InternBoard: Elisabeth Fombuena**

The Staff Union representative for relations with the InternBoard holds a meeting every two weeks to follow up on outstanding issues – stipends, diversity of the intern programme, integration of interns in the field, etc. – and to make sure that the interns' concerns and difficulties are taken into account. Close collaboration with the person responsible for the intern programme at HRD is ensured inter alia by the presence of the Staff Union representative at the induction meetings organized on the first day of the internship (the 1st and 15th of each month), and an "open doors" policy is already well established. An information note on the internship programme and on the rights and duties of interns has also been prepared at the request of the ILO InternBoard.

One of the InternBoard's main concerns this year has been social security coverage, and we shall have to discuss how best to provide ILO interns with satisfactory protection.

The interns took part in training sessions conducted by members of the Staff Union Committee, who made suggestions as to how the ILO's campaign against sexual harassment could be followed up.

Lastly, the representative was invited to attend Intern Development Day, which is one of the major events organized by the ILO InternBoard.

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