

ILO STAFF UNION

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING **FIRST SESSION**

25 February 2021

Programme and Strategy of the Staff Union **for the year 2021**

The first session of the Annual General Meeting will be requested to examine the attached proposal as per article 14(b) of the Staff Union Rules.

The attached Programme and Strategy of the Staff Union for 2021 will be open for discussion, modification and adoption.



Programme and Strategy of the Staff Union for the year 2021

The Staff Union Committee is pleased to outline its Programme and Strategy for the year 2021.

This is the first draft of proposals from the Staff Union since the virtual Global Meeting held in September 2020, which brought together ILO Staff Union representatives from all over the world. This international event provided us with an opportunity to update the vision, mission and objectives of the Staff Union for the next five years, at the dawn of its second Centenary.

The year 2021 began against a highly unusual backdrop – a world pandemic – that has led to a significant decline in working conditions for staff at large. The Staff Union was inevitably and constantly forced to seek creative solutions and reinvent itself in order to face the many challenges that arose from these new ways of working.

At the same time, the Staff Union must not lose sight of age-old concerns such as the push towards achieving real equality between the different categories of ILO staff, and maintain – come what may – a conducive framework for internal, social dialogue, so that negotiations can be held in good faith on a whole range of subjects relating to the employment and working conditions of ILO staff. It also has to keep a grip on more general but equally important issues that lie outside the narrow realm of the Organization, such as the future of the International Civil Service and working conditions in the UN system, in addition to preserving an appropriate, independent legal system that is capable of dealing with labour disputes.

The newly elected Staff Union Committee has worked hard to provide you with a programme and strategy document that is in line with the large amount of feedback received from our members. We hope that you will enjoy reading it with a view to adopting its contents, so that your representatives can begin their work without further ado.

**OUR VISION, OUR MISSION,
OUR OBJECTIVES AND MEANS OF ACTION
2020-2025**

VISION

A global Staff Union, at the dawn of its second Centenary, which accompanies the transformation of the ILO and ensures a decent work environment, by representing all staff* as an equal and strong partner in social dialogue.

MISSION

**We promote social justice, equity and equality for all staff* in order to have
ONE ILO**

by:

- mobilizing and organizing for an even stronger and better equipped Staff Union;
- safeguarding and improving decent working and employment conditions for all ILO staff;
- negotiating fair, transparent and effective collective agreements with the Administration

*“All staff” includes all, without distinction what so ever.

Industrial relations:

- ✓ *Ensure sustainable well-functioning social dialogue and collective bargaining through the effective implementation of the Recognition and Procedural Agreement (2000).*

Job security:

- ✓ *Negotiation of a protective, fair and inclusive contract policy to put an end to recurring precariousness and reduce disparity between different types of contracts,*
- ✓ *Working for a fair and standardized joint recruitment process for all staff through improving or creating joint bodies for mobility and redeployment.*

A career development path for all staff:

- ✓ *A fair and transparent performance appraisal system - with equal access to the staff development fund - and connected to adequate training*
- ✓ *A negotiated and adequate job classification process*
- ✓ *A fair recruitment and mobility system that respects staff diversity*
- ✓ *A transparent rewarding mechanism.*

Enhancement of staff security, Occupational safety and Health and both physical and mental health and well-being for all ILO staff around the world:

- ✓ *in the context of multifaceted crises and ensure equal treatment of all staff as well as support crisis response initiatives in fragile contexts*

Full social protection:

- ✓ *Ensure effective, efficient and sustainable health care and pension funds,*
- ✓ *Advocate for and negotiate the creation of unemployment and maternity / paternity / parental insurance schemes.*

A diverse, inclusive, equal and equitable workplace:

- ✓ *Through combating all forms of discrimination, and promoting an ILO free from violence and harassment: Drawing inspiration from recently adopted C.190 and aligning with UN system wide rules and regulations against all forms of violence and harassment at work.*

Protection of the independence of the international civil service:

- ✓ *Defend and support the exclusively international character of the staff (Article 9, paragraphs 4 and 5, of the ILO Constitution), promote its impartiality and defend the integrity and independence of ILOAT.*

An even stronger and better equipped Union:

- ✓ *Maintaining and expanding our membership, enhancing solidarity, strengthening capacities of Union representatives*
- ✓ *Improving internal operations, communication and coherence in its actions.*

I – Improve industrial relations

Objective: To ensure sustainable and efficient social dialogue and collective bargaining through the effective implementation of the Recognition and Procedural Agreement (2000).

Means of action

- Making sure, in the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC), that every decision or proposal coming from the ILO Administration is based on substantiated information and is subject to consultation or negotiation if necessary.
- Establishing Internal Rules of Procedure for timelines, deadlines, and terms of reference for each negotiation.
- Strengthening the negotiating skills of staff representatives.

II – Improve job security

A – Recruitment and selection

Objective: To ensure that the recruitment and selection process is both equitable and transparent, so as to strengthen the collective agreement on mobility and recruitment by focusing on career mobility, career development, greater motivation and job satisfaction.

Means of action

- The Staff Union Committee's review of job vacancies aims at ensuring that **job descriptions are objective** and offer a real possibility of career development.
- The Committee is convinced of the importance for the Organization of a system of recruitment that seeks a broader and more **authentic diversity** of manpower while at the same time respecting Article 100 of the United Nations Charter, the Declaration of Philadelphia and the Staff Regulations.
- The Staff Union is assisted in its work by the presence of two of its representatives on the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (**RAMC**). Its efforts are based on strict observance of the recruitment and selection procedure and of the principles of transparency, on following standard procedures and on just and fair treatment. Particular attention is paid to the recruitment of internal candidates so as to offer them an opportunity of career development and of DC+5s so that they can benefit from employment security, as well as to a knowledge of more than one language so as to promote French and Spanish and thereby the interests of the Organization's truly multicultural nature.
- The Committee also intends to make sure that the staff is properly informed about any issues relating to the agreement on recruitment and selection procedures, especially since the introduction of a new computer programme that must not be allowed to undermine the 2014 agreement or to limit the role played by the staff representatives and independent members in the recruitment process.
- If it is to carry out this crucial work successfully, the Committee must make a point of establishing good relations with the appointed **independent members of the technical**

panels. The objective will be to share the working parties' experience, to offer practical advice and to devise ways for them to fulfil their responsibilities properly, as far as possible in conjunction with the Human Resources Department.

- The Committee will insist, as stipulated in the ILO Staff Regulations, that **equivalent experience is recognized** as such and that the basic tenets of the Organization and of its mandate are preserved.

B – Contracts and employment security

Objective: To safeguard and promote job security and working conditions, particularly during ongoing or forthcoming negotiations with the ILO Administration, irrespective of the contractual status of staff, in order to give effect to the vision of “One ILO.” To take necessary measures to eliminate all forms of precariousness and seek to achieve greater equality and equal treatment between the different categories of staff (RB-DC, P-G, Headquarters-Field).

Priority areas include:

- Defending existing jobs by facing current and future challenges: potential budget restrictions, constant search for increasingly flexible types of contracts, need to be particularly wary of permanent changes and innovations used as an excuse to reduce workforce numbers.
- Successful outcomes of contract negotiations focusing on three main elements:
 - Maintaining social gains that are organization-specific, such as sustainable contracts, incorporation by statutory channels of staff employed on TC projects (beyond a certain seniority) into the regular workforce of the Organization.
 - Integration of non-statutory staff who have been employed for years on consecutive contracts and perform essential tasks for the Organization.
 - Making sure that the ILO Administration strictly applies and brings necessary improvements to existing rules in order to ensure better job security and working conditions for TC staff, particularly with regard to recruitment, career development, performance recognition and access to training.

Means of action

- Ensuring that designated priority areas are included in new contract policy negotiations.
- Closely cooperating with all Staff Union members with different contractual situations, in order to ensure that their views and interests are fully taken into account.
- Supporting the Staff Union's position on the contracts policy with an appropriate strategy and legal arguments.

III – A career development path for all

A – Personal promotions and reclassification

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 implemented, and Independent Review Groups are established and are active in all regions for the examination of job-grade review appeals.

Means of action

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

B – Training policy and performance management

Objectives:

- To ensure that staff concerns are taken into account in ILO training and in the performance management systems of the ILO;
- To ensure that training and performance management policies are implemented in a fair and transparent manner, including through a review of the Reports Board;
- To promote career development through the training policy;
- To promote transparency in merit increments so that it reflects performance evaluation results;
- To ensure that the implementation of the new job descriptions in the field is fair for all staff; and
- To ensure that the proposed review of job descriptions in headquarters is fair for all staff.

Means of action

Training policy

- Implementing the training policy in line with the needs of staff at all levels and categories in an equitable manner, in the context of the JNC;
- Participating in the Joint Training Council 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

- Addressing the staff's concerns regarding the implementation of the performance management system and assessing the introduction of how a new cycle has responded to staff needs and concerns;

- Ensuring that the Performance Management Framework (PMF) supports the career progression of staff; and
- Negotiating improvements through the JNC.

C – Conditions of employment of staff with technical cooperation contracts

Objective: To promote equal treatment of all staff on technical cooperation contracts (TC staff) – including PSI – (“Development Cooperation” according to terminology used by the ILO Administration) and regular budget staff in ongoing or future negotiations with the Administration, in order to give effect to the vision of “One ILO”. Defend the equal rights of staff performing equivalent functions, and promote equal pay before the ILO Administration, in keeping with the spirit of ILO Convention No. 111 condemning all forms of discrimination between workers, in compliance with ILOAT jurisprudence, which considers it to be a fundamental principle of the context of work for civil servants. Promote the views of and ensure a continuous career development path for staff on TC contracts.

These objectives are in line with the conclusions of the 2020 report by the working group on technical cooperation.

Priority areas include:

- Safeguarding existing job security by dealing with issues such as the potential reduction of technical cooperation budgets, developing proposed priority action plans for persons already on a post, paying particular attention to TC staff with seniority, particularly those who have accomplished 10 years of service at the ILO.
- Taking into account staff seniority, particularly with regard to application of the same rights and general guarantees for TC+5s as those granted to regular budget staff, including recruitment, selection, and redeployment processes;
- Guaranteeing that staff, especially TC staff, are treated with respect, focusing on three main elements:
 - The strictest respect for already existing rights and guarantees for technical cooperation contracts, independent of budgetary justifications (budgetary limits should not be used, for example, to justify that staff should pay for their own security arrangements or those of their family or to justify the non-respect of mandatory notice periods in case of renewal or non-renewal).
 - Identification of rights and guarantees that do not yet apply to TC staff. Promotion of identical treatment and application of the same rights to TC staff as regular budget staff, taking into account seniority (in-post promotion, merit, training, severance pay, family support, applications for ILO job openings).
 - Development of proposals to enable better safeguards for contracts in order to ensure career development at the ILO, with the implementation of tools that facilitate recruitment and redeployment of technical cooperation staff in jobs corresponding to their skills.

Means of action

- Ensuring that the priority areas mentioned by the TC group are included in new contract policy negotiations.
- Maintaining close contact with technical cooperation staff to ensure that their insights and interests are fully taken into account in forthcoming negotiations.
- Supporting analysis of case studies identified by the TC working group in the form of appropriate legal arguments, supported by legal advice from the Staff Union.
- Strengthening communication and information on the rights and guarantees of staff, whether they are TC or RB, with a view to increasing awareness of often overlooked challenges and inequalities that colleagues are forced to deal with.

IV – Enhancement of staff security, occupational safety and health and both physical and mental health and well-being for all ILO staff around the world

Objective: To collaborate with the Office to ensure effective COSH are operationalized in all duty stations and calling for administration accountability through strengthening Staff Union representatives' knowledge, capacity and resilience to defend the rights of staff concerning security, occupational safety and health, as well as mental health and wellbeing at work.

Means of action:

- Supporting the implementation of the occupational safety and health (OSH) policy, directive and procedure (IGDS 48, IGDS 286, IGDS 385¹) through active participation in the Committee on Safety and Health (COSH) promoting compliance with the actions and requirements of IGDS 385;
- Participating in the COSH working group on stress at work and mental health and contributing to advancing the implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) in 2016;
- Reaching out to Staff Union representatives in the field offices to promote and support the creation and functioning of OSH committees and mechanisms, including, where necessary, the identification and appointment of OSH representatives;
- Reaching out to Staff Union OSH representatives in field offices and at headquarters to support them through information, advocacy activities, technical assistance and training developed by the union or the office;
- Contributing to capacity-building among SU representatives by developing user-friendly guidance for OSH representatives on how to fulfil their OSH duties;
- Supporting SU representatives in their crises response capacity, on matters concerning safety and health in public health crises and consultation of return-to-office policies and security and well-being in fragile contexts;
- Ensuring a staff voice in the building renovation processes (planning and implementation), through Steering Committees or other consultation mechanisms, so that the highest standards on staff safety and health and well-being apply during the renovation of the headquarters' and field buildings, in consultation with Staff Union representatives, union stewards and focal points;
- Supporting climate- and environmentally friendly initiatives within the ILO.

¹ Available from the COSH website : https://www.ilo.org/dyn/osh/intranet.home?p_lang=en

- In collaboration with the Administration, ensuring that staff are kept informed of developments concerning security and occupational safety and health through communications and/or information sessions.

V – Full social protection

Objective: To ensure effective, efficient and sustainable health care and pension funds. To advocate and negotiate for the creation of unemployment and maternity/paternity/ parental insurance schemes.

Means of action

- Ensuring the application of the Regulations and Administrative Rules of the Staff Health Insurance Fund, particularly with regard to information provided to insured staff, timely publication of annual reports, etc.
- Continuing discussions with the ILO Administration to consolidate services and benefits for insured staff working in the field, in remote duty stations and technical cooperation projects.
- Increasing awareness of staff with regard to health care and pension issues in order to strengthen the position of staff representatives on joint bodies. This objective will be attained through regular, close communication between the Staff Union (including the Former Officials' Section) and the insured staff representatives of the SHIF Management Committee and the representatives on the Joint Staff Pension Board.
- Promoting and organizing information sessions, General Assemblies and referendums in order to ensure that any proposed changes to the structure, programme, benefits or premiums are explained clearly and fully to insured staff and participants so that no decisions are taken without extensive consultation.

VI – A diverse, inclusive, equal and equitable workplace

Fair, equal and equitable conditions of employment for all staff, without discrimination based on, inter alia, age, race, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, languages, religion, ethnicity, colour, national extraction, social origin, caste marital status, pregnancy, personal and/or family status and responsibilities, disability, HIV status, union membership or political conviction, grade, type of contract, and duty station.

While we all uphold the common UN charter and work towards the promotion of a Decent Work Agenda for all, 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, equity, inclusion 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 by combating any form of discrimination, and promoting inclusion, equality and diversity whilst facilitating the pursuit of a healthy work-life balance in an workplace free from violence and harassment.

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 groups (on diversity and inclusion, maternity and parental leave, teleworking policy) and ensure that all negotiations are conducted through a gender equal, non-discriminatory and an intersectional lens.
- In consultation with GEDI and HRD, support the implementation of the Disability Inclusion Policy in the ILO, particularly in the areas of employment and non-discrimination.
- Work with the ILO SUC working groups on;
 - recruitment and selection on geographic representation;
 - OSH on mental health and harassment;
 - Development cooperation.
- Collaborate and negotiate with HRD for the development and effective implementation of an updated teleworking policy and other working arrangements to promote work-life balance and an appropriate inclusive work environment, free from violence and harassment.
- Hold consultations with HRD to revise the maternity and paternity leave policy for a more inclusive parental leave policy in line with the objective of promoting gender equality and equity in retention and access to career opportunities.
- Work with HRD on the implementation of the Action Plan for improving the diversity of the ILO Workforce (GB.337/PFA/11).

Partner with, when possible, GED, FUNDAMENTALS and HRD on International Days, including International Women's Day, IDAHOT, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, etc.

VII – International affairs and protection of the independence of the international civil service

Objective: To strengthen alliances with key players involved in the improvement of working and employment conditions in the international civil service (international staff union federations, CCISUA, civil society, etc.) and to work in the long-term for the introduction of collective bargaining to the United Nations.

Means of action

- Strengthening ties with major international unions and those with whom the Staff Union is affiliated in order to benefit from their logistics and influence, and create a better framework for labour relations in the context of UN reform.
- Working towards the sharing of knowledge, resources and activities in advocacy campaigns led by the staff federations of the International Civil Service to address the potential threat of contractual reform throughout the whole of the UN common system.
- Continuing activities with already existing FUNSAs. Encouraging ILO staff representatives to participate in or create local FUNSAs in the field in order to better respond to the interests and needs of international organization staff locally.

- Strengthening ties with various inter-agency groups (such as UN-Globe, UN + or the UN Feminist Network) in order to improve the working and employment conditions of certain categories of workers in the United Nations who may be subject to discrimination (based on race, ethnicity, social origin, national extraction, nationality, sex, family status, family responsibilities, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, political opinions, religion, disability, HIV status or trade union membership).

VIII – An even stronger and better equipped Union

A – Communication

Objective: The communications group will ensure that the Staff Union communicates with the staff more effectively and efficiently, on activities, ongoing problems and progress made, in close collaboration with the relevant working groups.

Means of action:

- Keeping the staff regularly informed of developments through the Union’s new totems in HQ, broadcasts, website, social media, etc.
- Redoing/revamping the Staff Union's website in English, French and Spanish, bringing it up to date.
- Improving the wording of Staff Union materials (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.

The communications team will meet weekly to prepare the week’s headlines (“Manchette”) and press releases. All members will be in close contact in the event of an emergency to ensure responsive communication between the Union and staff. This responsiveness is going to be crucial in light of the pandemic and vaccination plans with collaboration with the Administration.

Newsletters, broadcasts, headlines, providing material and design for signs and publications on social networks, particularly Twitter and Facebook, will be our main means of communication. The communications team solicits contributors with topics from the Field and HQ to produce the UNION magazine’s annual publication this year. Do not hesitate to visit us: <http://unionmag.ilostaffunion.org>.

The communications team will continue to help the Staff Union build on the momentum it has generated so far and will do its utmost to improve communication with the staff using all the means at its disposal and the knowledge of the team members.

B – Membership, staff representation and training

Objectives:

- **An even stronger and better equipped Staff Union:** by preserving and increasing the number of members, strengthening solidarity, consolidating the capacities of Staff Union representatives, and by improving internal operations, communication and the consistency of its actions.

Means of action:

- Organizing a 2021 Staff Union recruitment drive and information campaigns.
- Pushing towards Staff Union representation in all departments and all duty stations - as part of the elections for union stewards and local committees.
- Scheduling of regular information and training sessions for all Union representatives.
- Regular information sharing with the union stewards' network via emails, coffees and lunchtime briefings.
- Identifying and providing support to technical cooperation departments or projects subject to ongoing or planned restructuring activities.
- Organizing at least two “café-croissant” information sessions with departments at ILO headquarters during the course of 2021, in the presence of at least one union steward, in order to rally support for the Staff Union.
- Liaising with regional titular members and substitute members to share experiences and provide mutual assistance for better adhesion and Staff Union organization.

Part 3 – Periodic and regular actions

1 – Resolving the problems facing non-headquarters staff

Inspired by the Vision for the global staff union as adopted in September 2020, the Staff Union Committee, through its strong engagement from the regional representatives, and in close contact with country representatives, will voice the concerns and interests of field colleagues with the Administration and ensure that field staff working and employment conditions are safeguarded and improved.

Taking into account the specific context in 2021, the objectives for the Staff Union regarding field staff will cover the following issues:

- the safety and security of all categories of field staff, with the view to both preventing and addressing cases of violence and harassment at work and securing their health and physical safety;
- the fight against differentiation of treatment between international and local staff in safety and evacuation policies, particularly with respect to the rights and benefits of staff in high-risk duty stations;
- the promotion of the creation of OSH Committees in each duty station, and ensuring well-trained representation in OSH committees;
- the harmonization of recruitment and selection procedures in all duty stations, through the establishment of the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC);

- the promotion of career prospects under the mobility policy, bearing in mind the characteristics of each category of posts, especially TC, NO and NC posts;
- the assurance that greater attention is paid to the conditions inherent in staff employment contracts, notably by conducting periodic salary surveys.

Means of action

- Promoting ILO Convention No. 190 in the field offices to avoid violence and harassment and strengthening the grievance handling mechanism for a fair and equitable judgement for the complainants.
- Reviewing safety and evacuation policies to respect equal treatment for the staff in high-risk duty stations.
- Strengthening the role and functions of the COSH in all duty stations through more information-sharing and training, including the ability to recommend a RTO during the pandemic.
- Supporting the application of the Collective Bargaining Agreement signed in 2004 to the field, in respect to the role of the Staff Union in Recruitment and Selection (R&S), in order to ensure the effective involvement of the Staff Union in R&S and enhance the transparency and accountability of the R&S.
- Practically promoting a mobility policy guaranteeing mobility for long-serving staff in a duty station when the staff applied for vacancies and the clear mobility policy shall be stipulated in the Staff Regulations.
- Conveying the field reality to be taken into account in the negotiation on the contracts policy with the Administration.
- Assist members of staff in all duty stations to assert his or her rights vis-à-vis the Administration through dialogue with relevant parties and with the support, when necessary, of the Staff Union's legal adviser.
- Continuing to hold regular monthly discussions with all regional representatives on videoconference, as an effective means of facilitating the sharing of information and experience in the practical implementation of the priorities indicated above (meetings are currently programmed on a quarterly basis).
- Organization of the two regional meetings in Asia and the Pacific and in Europe and the Arab States.

II – Use of financial resources

Objective: To ensure maximum transparency in the use of financial resources.

Means of action

- Scrutinizing the control and monitoring process for all financial transactions.
- Continuing to search for efficient solutions for offices requiring bank accounts and putting procedures into place for transferring funds to these accounts.
- Drawing up proposals for reinvesting maturing investment funds, to be submitted to the General Assembly.

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

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

Means of action

- Providing headquarters staff and field staff with information and/or recommendations (on a collective or individual basis) relating to the application and interpretation of the Staff Regulations, collective agreements and IGDS documents, in addition to currently applicable policies and procedures.
 - Providing information and/or recommendations on collective rights issues.
 - Providing information notes on procedures applicable to officials.
 - Representing or accompanying staff members in the context of conflict prevention.
 - Organizing information sessions, at headquarters and in the field, relating to legal issues, especially during regional meetings or via Skype.
 - Monitoring recommendations made by internal bodies and identifying trends in order to be able to respond to questions from staff.
-