



4 February 2022

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

**21 October 2021**

***Record of decisions***

The Chairperson of the ILO Staff Union opened the second session of the Annual General Meeting and welcomed the participants, who were on Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following social distancing guidelines in the HQ building, some of the Committee members were physically present in Room V on R3 where the meeting took place.

**1. Election of the Chairperson (of the AGM)**

The Chairperson of the Staff Union reminded participants that the Chair of the Annual General Meeting when elected for the first part is also de-facto for the second part. Customarily, a Chair is elected for the two sessions of the year, as well as for the Extraordinary General Meetings, hence Mr Sandhu Gurchaten (Nanoo) will continue to chair the meeting for the day.

**2. Adoption of the Agenda (doc. SU/AGM/2021/2/D.1)**

The Chairperson of the AGM thanked the participants for being present in person or by Zoom and then moved on to the adoption of the agenda. There was a proposal to move the statement of the Former Officials to item 3 and include it under the report of the Staff Union Committee.

***The Annual General Meeting adopted the agenda as amended.***

**3. Report of the Staff Union Committee (doc. SU/AGM/2021/2/D.2)**

Turning to item 3 on the agenda, the Report of the Staff Union Committee's activities for 2021, which is the essence of the meeting, the Chairperson brought the Assembly up to speed on the main report. The following comments on a few important issues that the Staff Union Committee has worked on over the past year were made before the Chairperson dived into the report:

(i) ***The situation of colleagues in “high risk” countries***

The lives of our colleagues in Afghanistan, Haiti, Myanmar and Lebanon have been turned upside down as they have faced political and economic hardships. The direct network with SU members and their representatives has helped the Staff Union to alert the Administration as to what may be going on in a particular country. The Staff Union has asked the Administration to take exceptional measures, thinking outside the box, and going a bit beyond the formal institutional framework (for example, involving advances of money and extensions of contracts or evacuation).

The Staff Union recognizes that the ILO has spearheaded many of the very diverse actions that have been taken in different parts of the world and acknowledges that the ILO Administration has done a lot better than many other international organizations. The Staff Union has asked the Administration to identify what steps can be taken to improve the situation of our colleagues; what can be put in place to allow us to provide a better and coordinated response to these crises, which seem to come one after the other. A reply from the Administration has been received and the Staff Union are of the opinion that the committees that have been set up to deal with these crises should be integrated and incorporated within decision making as the Staff Union has close contacts with colleagues that the Administration does not.

(ii) ***The pandemic COVID-19***

It seems to be going on and on... Globally things are getting a bit better, but we have seen how the situation gets better in one place and then worse in other places. The Staff Union has encountered a couple of challenges linked to COVID-19. What the Staff Union wants is to have clear directives, and to have these instructions and directives applied in the same way across the board, whether you are in the Americas or Headquarters or other parts of the world. Achieving that has not been as easy as it could have been, and it has become increasingly challenging, given the health situation in each country and the different national directives and instructions.

The COSH is working better this year than last year and the Staff Union representatives have been active. The Staff Union has received all the issues about vaccination, vaccination certificate, vaccination status and, for now, some being physically present and others still working from home. The Staff Union has often had to speak up strongly in order that all the instructions and directives are applied across the board, and that certain basic principles are abided by regardless of all situations and circumstances. One cannot have one instruction – one directive in Bangkok, for example – which is different from some kind of local directive, which has been negotiated by the Staff Union for the organization globally.

The Staff Union is having many discussions with colleagues in the field in order to have the best approach in consultation with the Administration and looking at the broader picture.

(iii) ***Situation of TC staff***

A working group, which is part of the Committee and has many colleagues as members, has worked tirelessly and exhaustively to explain to staff what has been done and what is being done with particular regard to TC colleagues.

The activities that have been undertaken by the group have been summed up in a one-page leaflet at the following link: [Activities for TC Staff](#)

There are, for the first time, more people on the TC staff side than on that of the RB staff. The ILO has many challenges to face, as there are still unfair practices and still perceptions of some discrimination, as a TC contract is different from an RB contract – but at the end of the day, the staff are all working for the same Organization.

There is a very widespread perception that our TC colleagues are being discriminated against. The diagram and statistics actually allude to that. The ILO needs to look into this in more detail.

Whenever there were thematic negotiations on anything, the Staff Union systematically included the situation of staff working on TC projects or on TC contracts and made the Administration aware if what they were proposing could be extended to TC staff. In some situations, the Staff Union Committee did succeed. In other cases, the Administration's response was to say that we needed to revise at a global level the contracts policy. In other areas, like training, etc., there was a much more positive response, and it was easier to see how certain benefits could be extended to all staff.

(iv) ***Salary surveys***

Salary surveys are always important for all staff and it needs to be recalled that this aspect of terms of conditions is running at the global UN Common system and the ICSC level. General Service salaries are at the stage of a review of the methodology and the Staff Union is trying to negotiate through the federations, standing firm, so that the methodology really reflects what's on the ground, either at Headquarters, or wherever else they may be working. It is hoped that the methodology will be ready by the summer of 2022.

On Professional salaries, the methodology has been reviewed and the cost-of-living survey should start this year. Your representatives within the ICSC's sessions have managed to maintain power to local salary committees, which is made of administrative representatives and staff representatives at a given city or duty station, meaning that six criteria are met in order for a survey to take place. This has come within the context of COVID-19 and the local salary committee has the power to decide whether a survey will take place or not.

It has been decreed in New York that the survey can take place, as all the criteria has been met. Geneva is under discussion. The local committee is reviewing the criteria to

see whether the survey should take place in Geneva or not. Even if the ICSC pushes for it to take place, and acts as if it was going to take place, the federations are going to take it step-by-step. If the decision to go ahead with the survey were to be taken, it will then be up to the ILO Staff Union Committee in Geneva to hold a general assembly and decide whether all colleagues should take part in the survey or not. Currently, the only information that is available is that the salary survey may be pushed back for about a month or two.

**(v) *Current state of play on negotiations with the Administration***

**New forms of work** – It was clear from the beginning of the year that COVID-19 has changed the way we work. The Staff Union has informed the Administration on how essential it is to look at the conditions for the new forms of work. Comments on a proposed document were sent to the Administration in May of this year, and then ... nothing. The Staff Union brought this up again at the last joint meeting with the Administration and the answers received were not acceptable. The impression is that the Administration is trying to drag its heels on this issue, and it needs to be pursued further as the Staff Union does not want a situation where the next DG turns the whole idea upside down.

**Contracts policy** – The Staff Union is still negotiating to get the ILO's policy in place just in case the common UN system takes a different path.

**Disciplinary measures** - Through the Legal Adviser, it has come to the Staff Union's attention that there is a need for review of the ILO's disciplinary rules and practices. For example, a few of our colleagues have been caught up in both administrative investigations and disciplinary procedures, which raised the issue of the presumption of innocence, the right to be heard and the application of other general principles of international administrative law. The Staff Union is pursuing this as well with the Administration.

**Parental leave** – The Staff Union has begun some preliminary discussions on the parental leave policy. The first proposal from the Administration was not even considered by the Staff Union, as it had the impression that it had not been seen to be as progressive as it could be. Tackling the issue of parental leave from a modern point of view was just non-existent so the document was sent back to the Administration with the Staff Union's comments. The Staff Union is still waiting to hear back from them.

**Persons with disabilities** – The DG's policy on this came out and the Staff Union made a number of comments on it. Once the policy is adopted, the Staff Union will be more involved in the concrete application of this policy.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union then informed the general assembly that it was her last speech at the AGM as she was retiring, having given over 30 years of her career for the interests of staff. She thanked the members for putting their confidence and trust in her, electing her year after year. She continued by saying how it had been an honour to work with all the members of the Committee and the Staff Union's respective representatives, and how happy she was to work with a strong Union.

She urged the members to help keep the Staff Union strong and keep the solidarity amongst all ILO SUC members. If only one Union remains in the world, it has to be that of the ILO.

The Chairperson of the AGM thanked her and made her know how she had been an inspiration and a good example, teaching members how to believe in themselves and standing up for their rights.

There was then thank you messages from the Director-General and from the Staff Union Titular representatives in the regions of Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Middle East, and the ITC-Turin.

The Chairperson of the AGM then explained what the report was made up of and asked colleagues to give comments or feedback. There were no questions, comments or feedback from members concerning all the parts of the report.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union took the floor and presented the new web site of the Staff Union.

### **Summary from the Regions:**

**Africa** – Many from the region are working from home and remote work has now become a common practice. There is commitment from both staff and managers, with flexibility to achieve the ILO's goals and objectives. Alongside that, the internal social dialogue between the Staff Union and management has improved and the region has made much headway, managing the difficulties of the times we are living in with its negative impact on activities. The Titular Member for the region expressed thanks for all that had been achieved in 2021 and thanked the Substitute member for the region and the Chairperson of the Staff Union for all she has done for it.

**Americas** – Due to the difficult situation in the region with regards to the pandemic, many continue to work from home. The Union in the region has been very active, having a series of meetings regarding some colleagues who have gone back to their offices and the increasing burden on them having to work longer hours. This has been discussed with the new regional director and management of the region. The Committee was thanked for further assistance to the region.

**Asia and the Pacific** – The region is still struggling due to the pandemic. Almost all country offices are closed, and staff are still working from home. The vaccination roll-out is increasing but still slow, so RTOs are still to be decided through proper consultations between management and the Staff Union Committee using the respective health guidelines. There are some offices where management decisions have been taken without consulting the Staff Union.

The Staff Union has asked for new flexible working arrangements in this new normal of work to help with the work-life-balance of the staff. In order to help the staff to be equipped with various technical knowledge, experience, and motivate long serving staff, a policy of geographical and functional mobility should be practically enhanced and promoted for the region. The Staff Union should also be included in the region concerning recruitment and selection procedures, as the system now is prone to being sometimes biased.

The Staff Union in the region is very concerned about local salary methodologies in the region as survey results often come out negatively due to high paying comparators that are not willing to participate in the survey.

Discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment and the abuse of authority, are the most serious. Some Staff Union representatives feel harassed in performing their duties because some managers do not recognize their role. Existing policies needs to be applied to all cases of

complaints.

Staff unions in the region are concerned with the security and the well-being of colleagues in Afghanistan and Myanmar and welcome the Office's initiative of establishing a country crises cell for the welfare of staff. They convey their warm and strong solidarity to staff and their families in these difficult times and wish them the best in their safety and security.

**Europe and Arab States** – Due to the very different set-up of offices in the region, ranging from almost a single person RB office to offices of more than 20 TC staff, issues highlighted also differ greatly. Several questions have been flagged though as overarching.

With regards to COVID-19 issues like RTO, mental health, vaccination and teleworking, colleagues have reiterated the need for the new IGDS on teleworking. Offices in the region are lobbying for the revision of the methodology used for local salary surveys. The region is coming across extreme difficulties in finding comparators, let alone suitable comparators. Unrealistic discrepancies between NO and GS staff are unaccounted for in inflation rates.

Performance appraisals remain an informal exercise and the system is not used to its full potential despite limited management attempt to make it more meaningful. GS staff, in particular, are not motivated because the exercise is bureaucratic and has no impact on their career development, as merit increments are not an option for offices in Western Europe. Thus far, only Professional staff have received merit increments.

In general, management makes an effort to meet the training needs of staff members. However, Staff Development Funds rarely support staff who have been with the ILO for a long period of time and DC funds also rarely include funds for training.

National Coordinators in the Budapest office had raised the issue for reclassification with management in 2019, as their work goes far above and beyond their pay grade. The NCs have not received a formal reply and no action has followed from the Administration.

There has been overall improvement in the reimbursement system for electronic health insurance claims. Offices in Western Europe noted general satisfaction with the SHIF whilst other offices reported significantly more problems. Major delays in reimbursements for up to 6 to 7 weeks for instance meaning requests that were not rejected in the past are regularly rejected.

Moscow and Ankara have lobbied with SHIF to sign contracts with local clinics because colleagues must pre-finance medical treatments using a substantial portion of their salary. Colleagues are also reporting higher stress levels in Moscow and Ankara due to the pandemic and poor communications in the office.

The new local Staff Union Committee in Beirut was elected during a period of extreme isolation and frustration due to COVID-19 lockdown measures and all the other sad events taking place at that time. The local committee is working on improving internal relations and the office climate.

**International Training Centre (Turin)** – The SUC focused on respecting the principle of social dialogue, and to ensure that all decisions, or policy for that matter, which may affect the working conditions of staff were the subject of prior consultation with the Staff Union Committee. The fact of the COVID-19 crisis could not justify that the practices of social dialogue were disregarded.

The situation in Turin is serious as the Centre is financially exposed. It needs to deliver training services, which is how the Centre generates the majority of its revenue. The Centre had to minimize spending and become creative on how to generate new and innovative on-line products that resulted in new revenues.

In line with the ILO mandate, rather than a reduction of staff, the SUC in Turin are advocating to reinforce the current staff in Turin, also empowering staff with new competences, whose extensive experience in training provides the basis for a MAIN HUB (both physical in infrastructure and human skills in Turin) for further development of the ITC-ILO worldwide. To continue to have a high level of

delivery they must maintain the current number of staff. ITC-ILO staff strengths are: professionalism, flexibility, and a high commitment to the ILO mandate.

Staff recommendations on human resources are based on “No reduction of personnel”, but rather a medium and long-term restructuring.

**Former ILO Officials** – The group’s representative also added his voice in thanking the Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee on her great service to the Staff Union, and saying that they are looking forward to seeing her working with the Former Officials as she retires.

COVID-19 protocols have made things tough for them as, for example, they have not been able to enter the HQ building because they are considered as vulnerable. They comprise approximately 2,500 members, and they have a website which has been a source of information for them.

They have managed to have meetings outside the ILO, and have met with the Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee and Florian Léger from the SHIF, which has been much appreciated. They are also in touch with HRD who gives them information on retired officials and of staff who are deceased. There have been slightly less deaths during this time than at any other time, and they were happy to say that none of the former officials has fallen ill to COVID-19. They have also maintained contact with other sister agencies, with New York, and have had fun.

They are involved in and encourage staff to attend the pre-retirement seminars.

***The Annual General Meeting unanimously approved the Annual Report of the ILO Staff Union Committee for 2021.***

**4. Financial Report and the Report of the Auditors (docs. SU/AGM/2021/2/D.3 and SU/AGM/2021/2/D.3/Add.)**

The Treasurer of the Staff Union presented the financial report of the Committee for the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020.

***The financial report was unanimously adopted.***

***The report of the Auditing Commission was presented, and it was unanimously adopted.***

**5. Election of the Auditing Commission (doc. SU/AGM/2021/2/D.4)**

On behalf of the Annual General Meeting, the Chairperson thanked the auditors, Mr Clery Bègue, Mr Daniel Rojas and Ms Christine Ecuivillon for their work. Noting that all three were willing to continue in their roles, the Chairperson proposed their reappointment for a further year.

***The Annual General Meeting approved by consensus the appointment of the auditors.***

**6. Report of the Board of the Staff Union Assistance Fund (doc. SU/AGM/2021/2/D.5)**

The report was presented by Mr Daniel Rojas, who clarified matters concerning the Fund, including its role and purpose.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union reminded the meeting that this Fund only exists thanks to voluntary contributions from Staff Union members, and she encouraged members to participate.

***The report was approved by the General Assembly.***

**7. Arrangements for the elections to the Staff Union Committee**  
**(doc. SU/AGM/2021/2/D.6)**

The President introduced document SU/AGM/2021/2/D.6, which contained the timetable and arrangements for the next Committee elections, to be held in 2022.

The Annual General Meeting approved the timetable and the arrangements.

**Returning officers:** The Returning Officers play a very important role during elections, therefore on behalf of the Annual General Meeting the Chairperson thanked the current Returning Officers, Mr Samir Koufane (Chief Returning Officer), Ms Jessika Muñoz and Mr Franco Amato for their work. Mr Koufane and Ms Muñoz wished to continue in their roles, so the Chairperson proposed that they be reappointed for a further year. As Mr Amato has left the office, Ms Rima Moussaoui has been proposed to replace him.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union gave special thanks to Mr Samir Koufane on behalf of herself and the Committee for the work done and for his professionalism and constant willingness to support the secretariat in organizing the election process.

The Former Officials will also be holding their elections and therefore asked if the Committee would allow them to have an electronic voting system. As not all of them have access to the Internet, it becomes difficult, so they will have to continue using ballots by envelopes and stamps and later find a hybrid solution.

The Annual General Meeting approved by consensus the appointment of the Returning Officers (Mr Koufane, Ms Munoz and Ms Moussaoui).

**Composition of the Electoral Commission** – The Chairperson asked if there was any opposition or any counter-proposal to the proposed composition. On behalf of the Annual General Meeting, the Chairperson thanked the Titular and Substitute members of the Electoral Commission for their work: Mr Gabriel Brun, Ms Karen Curtis, Ms Anne Sullivan, Mr Gérald de Smidt and Ms Martine Humblet (Titular members), and Ms Cristina Campayo, Ms Julia Lee, Ms Céline Moiret, Ms Angelika Mueller and Mr Sylvain Delaprisson (Substitute members). All of them wished to continue in these functions and the Chairperson proposed that their mandate be renewed for another year.

***The document was approved by consensus.***

**8. Addendum: List of candidates for elections to the Staff Union Committee**  
**2021-2023 (doc. SU/AGM/2021/2/D.6/Add.)**

This document contains the list of candidates for the elections to the Staff Union Committee for 2021-2023, which are already underway. Members are encouraged to vote, and ballots will be resent to those who did not receive the invitation to vote. Members were urged to check their spam folders as well for ballots.

***The document was approved by consensus and adopted.***

The Chairperson of the AGM thanked the Chairperson of the Staff Union again for her dedication



and service and getting the Staff Union out of crises, and thanked the Committee, the Secretariat, the legal officers and the interpreters. The AGM session was adjourned.

**The session closed at 3.25 p.m.**