



**8th Regional Meeting of the ILO Staff Union for the Americas  
27 June to 1 July 2022, Montevideo, Uruguay**



In the framework of our 8th Regional Meeting of the ILO Staff Union for the Americas , held from 27 June to 1 July 2022 in Montevideo, with the participation of all the Staff Representatives from the ILO Offices in the region, the Regional Titular and Substitute Members, and with the presence of the Chairperson of the Staff Union based in Geneva, we express our gratitude to the CINTERFOR Office for the facilities granted so that this meeting could take place in the best possible conditions of health and safety at work respecting the COVID 19 protocols.

During the five days of the meeting, the sessions held allowed us to have an intense and interesting exchange of experiences and knowledge. In turn, this meeting has allowed us to reflect on the role we play as Staff Union representatives, share the diverse realities in the offices in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the goal of contributing to the ILO mandate, regional priorities, the 2030 Agenda and the Decent Work Agenda, ensuring compliance with collective agreements, and continuously improving working conditions in the Organization.

In our working sessions, we have reached the following conclusions:

### **Technical cooperation staff**

The ILO Staff Union has named 2022 as the year of technical cooperation (TC) staff with the objective of paying particular attention to the conditions of recruitment currently operating under Technical Cooperation funds. 52.6% of ILO staff fall under this type of funding.

We highlight:

- The source of funding for a contract does not entail differences in the employment relationship between staff and the ILO.
- Despite the above, we note that those on TC-funded contracts face some important limitations in their integration into the work of the Office and the full development of their actions. Some examples are:
  - a) They cannot participate in the Recruitment Committee;
  - b) They cannot access training funds, until after 3 continuous years of service;
  - c) They are not eligible for merit increments;
  - d) Their candidacies are considered as external in the selection processes if they do not have 5 continuous years of service.
- This differential treatment limits access to rights which impacts on relations within the office.

We advocate for equal working conditions and treatment for all ILO staff without distinction.

### **Salary survey and double or triple scales**

We note with concern that several offices in the region are facing delays and have not achieved positive results in salary surveys, in some cases for 10 years. We call on management to take steps to improve the next exercise, and to enhance the respective wages to compensate for the rise in the cost of living in those countries that need it.

We also draw attention to the existence of more than one pay scale within the staff of an office, which is a violation of one of the central pillars of decent work, namely, equal pay and non-discrimination.

We must strive for maximum respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work that our Organization promotes, ensuring that people are treated equally and fairly at the ILO.

We also need to promote a process of internal strengthening and exchange of experiences to manage these processes effectively.

### **Recruitment and selection process**

We acknowledge receipt of the first draft of "Selection process for local staff in Latin America and the Caribbean". The Regional Committee will review, analyse and comment it.

### **Flexible working arrangements**

Negotiations on a new flexible working policy have been progressing and a draft proposal is already in place and, as of the end of January 2022, is awaiting review by the Administration at Headquarters. The Regional Committee is looking forward to the next steps.

The general spirit of this proposal is focused on:

- Establishing a framework to respond to the current needs of the world of work, extending the measures beyond telework.
- This includes flexible working hours, compressed working week, possibility to telework outside the duty station, right to disconnect, among others.
- Environmentally friendly measures.
- All staff should be able to benefit from this policy, without distinction.

### **Teleworking**

We recall that the teleworking policy (IGDS 141 and 142 – Flexible working arrangements: teleworking) in place in our Organization, dates from 2010, and that, despite having been established as a pilot, it continues to be the reference framework.

### **Career development**

There is concern about the lack of career development opportunities for local staff, which is why it is necessary to think of innovative ideas.

Some of the suggestions shared include the possibility of creating opportunities for voluntary transfers between offices in the region for defined periods of time (for example, when there are situations of maternity/paternity leave, study leave, sick leave, regional events, etc.). New recognition mechanisms should also be incorporated, beyond those that the Organization has implemented in recent years.

We note that when a position becomes available due to retirement or departure of the individual from the Organization, the position is often opened for recruitment at a lower grade than the post that has become vacant, limiting opportunities for career development.

Additionally, we note that reclassification requests do not receive a response within the timeframe established by the procedure (Circular 639, Revision 2), which discourages staff.

### **Return to office**

The offices in the region are mostly in phase 3, with a hybrid model of work and staggered return, and with the expectation that, in the coming months, they will be reaching phase 4.

Offices face different situations and contexts in terms of their preparedness for the full return of staff. We underline the importance of ensuring compliance with the protocols established for this purpose.

Staff must feel absolutely safe in their return to the workplace.

### **Performance evaluation**

The Regional Committee considers that this tool still has room for improvement.

- The rating criteria need to be unified to avoid discrimination and conflict with staff, the rating scale could be revised to be more objective and to limit supervisory discretion. The Human Resources Department should ensure these conditions.
- Supervisors must comply with deadlines.
- Evaluations should be a mechanism for recognizing achievements.
- The distribution of training funds should consider the training expectation expressed by each staff member.

## **CAPS/SHIF**

We recognize the progress and improvements made in the reimbursement process in recent years. However, delays persist in our region (on average between 3 and 4 weeks to be processed) and there are some difficulties regarding the management of emergency situations. Also retired people face difficulties in using this online format and need support.

It is also important to update and inform about the national agreements made between SHIF and the health care centres of each country, in order to speed up people's access to health care and to know how to use the mechanisms available.

Due to the relevance of alternative medicine, we welcome the inclusion of various treatment options; however, homeopathy, which is widely used in the region, needs to be included.

## **Training**

We request that training be conducted in the 3 official languages of the ILO and take into account the different time zones in order to ensure equal access for all staff.

We mention two recent examples:

1. The Retirement Preparation Seminar is available only in English and French and its agenda includes activities corresponding to the early morning hours of most countries in the Americas.
2. The course on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse is available on ILOPEOPLE only in English and French.

## **Human Resources Department**

The Human Resources Department has a strategic role to play in creating healthy work environments and promoting the integral development of people.

We draw attention to the high turnover in the regional human resources position. What has happened in recent years with the people selected for this position and their departure from the Organization merits a rigorous analysis.

Bonds and relationships of trust are built up over time. Changes and advances in this field take time, a certain process, and several phases, and require knowing who each staff member is, visiting the offices, knowing their physical spaces, needs and potential.

This situation demands the design and implementation of a strategy to strengthen local HR units to respond to their specific needs and contexts.

In this context, the participation of the Union's Regional Titular Member in the Regional Meetings of Directors to share the needs of the staff is also relevant.

Finally, we reiterate our willingness to hold regular meetings with the Administration and Management to continue a fluid communication and genuine social dialogue.

Montevideo, Uruguay, 1 July 2022