



14 September 2022

After the holidays –new Staff Union Bulletin

Dear colleagues,

It has been a long time since we've been able to publish a "real" back-to-school newsletter! Let's blame the pandemic. So, it is with both enthusiasm and some emotion that we are sharing this newsletter with you to get the new school year off to a good start. Here's hoping it is a peaceful year, filled with nice projects.

We are aware that this newsletter is quite lengthy, but it does reflect all the investment and the work accomplished by the entire team of the Staff Union Committee during the past months and for the months to come. So, we are sure that you will not hold this against us.

The month of June:

1) The Staff Union was saddened to learn of the earthquake that struck the central region of Afghanistan and was reportedly felt in neighbouring provinces – including Kabul, as well as in Islamabad, Pakistan and India – and caused the loss of many lives. We were relieved to announce that all our colleagues and their families have been found.

2) During the month of June, colleagues in Geneva returned to the office as did many colleagues in the field who had been back in the office partially or fully for some time. However, we deplored the lack of empathy of some managers. While we are still waiting for the Administration to submit revised proposals on a new working time policy, we are witnessing the limits of "making new with old" without correcting what is not working. For us in Geneva, it now seems that this provisional period will be extended until the end of the year. For example, telework requests are approved very unevenly, with no clear reason as to why some managers approve them while others do not. The information that staff receive – when they receive it – is very confusing. The Staff Union, both at headquarters and in the field, remains ready to support you in your demands for flexibility.

3) The Conference had some very strong moments, such as the validation of OSH as a fundamental right and the launch of a recommendation on apprenticeships, as well as the huge effort of colleagues who supported the constituents in these tasks. However, the Staff Union was dismayed by the disregard for health protocols during the Conference. These protocols had been determined by common agreement. This recklessness unnecessarily spread the COVID-19 virus

among participants and colleagues – including the ILO's most senior officials! We urged the Administration to enforce measures to protect staff.

4) The ILC was followed by a tumultuous session of the Governing Body during which the Office presented a document on the future of the Moscow Office, without any prior consultation with the Staff Union (under the preposterous argument that the Administration considered that it did not concern the staff). This has become an unacceptable habit and violated the recognition agreement which provides the framework for the proper functioning of industrial relations in the House. The Staff Union is taking steps to prevent this from happening again. A new document will be presented at the November session of the Governing Body, and we will ensure that the voice of the staff is heard, as set out in our agreements.

5) From 27 June to 1 July the biennial regional meeting for the Americas took place in Montevideo. This meeting was an opportunity to discuss the situation and concerns of colleagues in each office. After our virtual regional meetings last year, it was good to meet "in real life"! However, we could see that the world is closer, having had a hybrid session anyway. You can find the report of this meeting by clicking on this link: [Report](#).

6) During this month, the Recruitment and Selection working group examined 14 job vacancies for an addendum to the first RAPS, which was published in mid-June 2022. As always, we ensured strict compliance with the procedure and with the objective job descriptions (JDs), which must offer a real possibility of career development. The fifth meeting of the RAMC for 2022 took place on 23 June. The SUC representatives ensured that a transparent and fair treatment of candidates was applied, with special attention given to candidates who are ILO officials.

7) With the strong involvement of the SUC, the bipartite OSH technical working group completed the revision of the IGDS on OSH. Suggested changes for the revision of the IGDS, as well as a draft text for recommendations on how to improve the ILO's OSH management system, were submitted to the COSH for consultation and adoption. The Chairperson was requested to convene a meeting of the COSH to discuss this issue.

The month of July:

1) The ongoing transition to the new Administration manifested itself to all of us through the DG-elect's Orientation Letter, and the Staff Union had exchanges with the Transition Team Coordinator to raise some of the many concerns we had received from you about the impact of the proposals and integrated messages. In addition, the Staff Union insisted on the finalization of the agreement on working-time arrangements; however, the transition period we are experiencing seems to leave a gap in the decision-making process. After the Administration indicated to the Joint Negotiating Committee that the current Administration was in a position to finalize the negotiations, we must now ask: who is in charge? The Staff Union needs an appropriate interlocutor in such an urgent matter which affects the work-life balance of all.

2) The Staff Union and the Administration finalized the search for a new Mediator this month. At the same time, the search for a new Staff Union legal adviser is underway, with the application period now closed. Our legal adviser, Chloé Charbonneau-Jobin has left for a new phase of her

personal and professional life, and we cannot thank her enough for the years she spent defending staff rights.

3) The Technical Cooperation working group focused on the development and testing of a survey that the Staff Union launched on 8 August, and which will close on 16 September. The design of the questionnaire will allow us to raise and discuss the issues and realities of TC staff, which will feed into discussions with current and future Administrations.

4) After a year of work by a bipartite technical working group appointed by the Occupational Safety and Health Committee (OSH) last year, the review of the ILO's internal OSH governance has been finalized. All the members of the COSH have been consulted and all support these revisions. The revisions concern IGDS 48, 286 and 385 and the accompanying recommendations on how to improve the ILO's internal OSH management system. They were submitted by the President of the COSH to the DG in mid-July. We are waiting for the COSH to receive feedback from the DG on the proposals and on the way forward.

5) The Staff Union and HRD issued a joint communiqué welcoming the launch of the first Employee Resource Group (ERG) on Disability. The ERG on Disability is an independent and voluntary group of ILO colleagues with disabilities and/or with disabled dependants, see here for more information: [link](#)

6) The RAMC held its sixth meeting for 2022 on 14 July, and the Staff Union Committee representatives continued their efforts to ensure transparency and fair treatment of colleagues who have applied for mobility. For RAPS/2, HRD has so far submitted 18 JDs to the Staff Union Committee for consideration. In line with the Staff Union's objectives for 2022, we have reached an agreement with HRD to recognize equivalent experience for candidates with a first degree but without an advanced degree in the next RAPS.

7) Another hot topic was the proposal to hire an external manager for part of the UN Pension Fund. After a number of public meetings, letters and a petition signed by 14,000 colleagues, the Pension Fund agreed to meet with CCISUA, the federation to which the ILO Staff Union belongs, and agreed to reduce the percentage of outsourced asset management from 18% to between 5 and 7% (75% to 22% of the fixed income portfolio), with a commitment to review the situation in March 2023. In the meantime, the fixed-income team will recruit additional investment officers with the necessary expertise. However, the Chair of the fund's Board has written a [letter](#) to CCISUA threatening to suspend its observer status for raising your concerns. CCISUA's response to this threat can be found [here](#) and we encourage you to read it in order to understand the governance issues that our Pension Fund continues to face. In addition, at the Pension Board meeting, the Chairperson began with a speech reiterating these threats, causing CCISUA to leave the meeting, which means that it cannot provide us with any feedback on the session.

The month of August

The month of August and its heatwave were not idle for the Bureau and the Committee who, nonetheless, stayed by your side and on track:

1) Also this month, the Staff Union actively exchanged views with the Transition Team on our concerns regarding recruitment and selection, diversity, working methods, working-time arrangements, field presence, technical cooperation and mobility. During these information and exchange meetings, we affirmed our strong commitment to represent staff according to the terms of the Recognition Agreement (2000) and the JNC Restructuring Guidelines. These basic texts establish that social dialogue must be the basis for the implementation of any proposal for change that has an impact on staff, and that it must be organized at the earliest stages of such proposals. We hope that the proposals that will be formulated will be based on statistical data that will help us to move forward with the discussions on staff, decentralization, technical cooperation and job security, which will be priority topics in the transition. Finally, we also stressed the need to prioritize discussions on the contracts policy, in the light of the ongoing activities concerning the year of the TC staff.

2) Post adjustments: we can only thank HRD for its decision to protect the salaries of officials and to ask the ICSC to continue to provide us with post adjustments corresponding to our situation, in line with previous years. This decision has been applied this time for international salaries in Geneva, having been applied in the recent past to other duty stations. The ILO thus reaffirms its position, based on the Tribunal's ruling, that the ICSC has no authority to make binding decisions on post adjustment multipliers. The Governing Body will discuss this issue at its November session, and the Staff Union will be present and attentive to these discussions.

3) Finally, the Staff Union launched a collection among ILO staff in the week of 5 September 2022 to address the recent calamities in Bangladesh, in particular the tragedy of the BM Container Depot fire and the historically severe floods in the Sunamganj, Sylhet and Netrokona districts.

Upcoming events:

1. The Annual General Meeting to be held on 13 October 2022. As with all of its sessions, the Staff Union looks forward to seeing many of you at this important meeting.
2. On 5 September the nomination forms for the Staff Union Committee elections were sent out. Perhaps you have already thought about getting more involved in your Staff Union? Don't hesitate – come and enrich the team of the Staff Union Committee with your presence.
3. The 8th Regional Meeting for Africa (12-16 September) is currently being held. We will inform you about the discussions and decisions in our next broadcast.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this long, but necessary, September newsletter.
