

ILO STAFF UNION

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13 OCTOBER 2022

Annual Report of the ILO Staff Union Committee
for the year 2022



ILO Staff Union Committee

Annual Report for the year 2022

Introduction

A strong union inspires respect.

The Staff Union Committee is pleased to present you with an overview of all its activities for the year 2022, the Staff Union's year of the colleagues in Technical Cooperation projects.

It has been an eventful year, although with much unfinished business. While we have successfully defended the rights of staff, agreed to implement the rule on equivalence in experience for advanced degrees when required, revised the OSH governance system, and relaunched the discussions on the contracts policy and the Generic Job Descriptions in Headquarters, among many other tasks. However, important issues like the Flexible Working Arrangements and parental leave have been unnecessarily postponed. We hope that with the arrival of the new DG, these negotiations will take the necessary urgency.

For a number of our colleagues in certain parts of the world, military, political or economic events have completely disrupted not only their professional lives but have sometimes seriously literally endangered their lives. The Staff Union has actively sought to protect them through active dialogue with the Administration, and the support of the excellent colleagues in charge of security. The Committee has taken great care to defend colleagues of all categories, in particular the increasing number of colleagues on technical cooperation contracts. Indeed, when one is a "TC", all the problems encountered at the general level are always amplified by situations of contractual insecurity, generating a lot of stress, the feeling of not being part of the community and sometimes paralysing any desire to fight for one's rights. The Committee has continued its efforts in this area by supporting all colleagues who request it.

Throughout the uneven and difficult return to the different offices, the Staff Union has advocated for the confidentiality of medical information and the proper consultations on the health measures. Unfortunately, the existing telework policy, which was supposed to be revisited, has proved woefully inadequate and managers have handled the requests for telework unevenly and poorly.

The recently completed survey on contracts received 1,734 responses, which will help us have a better picture of the current situation about the many colleagues, especially in technical cooperation projects, who spend years in precarious contracts with very short duration. It will also assist us in advocating for these colleagues in the context of the contracts policy negotiations and the transition.

As every year, as you will discover in the following pages in more detail, the Staff Union has actively represented the interests of the staff, through all of its thematic working groups, in the many joint bodies established through collective agreements: on personal promotions, titularization, recruitment and selection, compensations and disability, and the Joint Negotiating Committee. With

the usual zeal, the Staff Union has sought to enforce the Staff Regulations. This effort has been fruitful, calling attention and challenging many arbitrary decisions made by managers, and ensuring respect for due process.

The challenges presented this year include the rising number of complaints for harassment, denial of reclassifications and unfair non-renewals of contracts, among many other disputes. The Staff Union's legal adviser handled them diligently and, upon her departure, the Staff Union has continued to handle them.

In summary, members can rest assured that the Committee has once again spared no effort to defend their interests in these turbulent times, and that it will pursue the objectives set with determination, particularly in the transition period.

Part 1 – Objectives and priority areas of action for 2020 - 2025

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.*

Part 2 – Objectives for 2022

I – 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.

Joint Chair of the Joint Negotiating Committee: Carlos Carrión-Crespo

Joint Secretaries: Sophie Guerre Chaillet, Clara Van Panhuys

Members: Harvey Addo-Yobo, Séverine Deboos, Yvan Poulin, Eva Mihlic

Technical Advisers: The Staff Union Legal Adviser and all the members of the Committee, according to the subject on the agenda of the Joint Negotiating Committee

- The Staff Union and the Administration, in the framework of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) have again this year established a joint action programme by setting priorities. The following priorities were agreed for 2022: (1) Flexible Working Arrangements; (2) contracts policy; (3) Recruitment and selection; and (4) Compensation Committee. Other areas of consultation included disability, Reports Board, parental leave, Review of the Generic Job Descriptions for Professional job families, and a learning strategy.
- After the lockdown was lifted in 2021, the Flexible Working Arrangements proposals have been a recurring topic of discussion with the Administration. In January 2022, the Staff Union submitted its comments on the Administration’s proposal and the parties held several discussion sessions to examine the needs of the different modalities. However, the Staff Union has been fruitlessly insisting that the Administration submit a new proposal, the Administration has continuously postponed their response. This resistance increased after the election of the new DG in March.
- The Staff Union and the Administration have held several “without-prejudice” discussions in 2022 searching for common ground on a new contracts policy, a process that has made slow progress in the last decade. The parties have agreed in principle to address the proposed changes using an interest-based approach. The Staff Union hired a facilitator to assist in the formulation of a statement of interest, which it submitted to the Administration in August. The Administration submitted questions in September, which the Staff Union is working to address.
- The Administration proposed that the parties review the recruitment and selection procedure, but has not submitted its proposal.
- The Staff Union requested a review of the Compensation Committee to address gaps in the procedural rights afforded to claimants, as well as the roles of technical advisers. The Administration submitted a draft IGDS, which the Staff Union commented. The Staff Union awaits further action.
- The review of the Generic Job Descriptions has advanced at a brisk pace, with consultations with staff who were jointly recommended. As part of the process, the parties agreed on an IGDS that recognized the equivalence in experience that would replace any required advanced university degree. This has been implemented starting with RAPS 2 for 2022.
- The Staff Union has proposed reforming the Reports Board to provide guarantees of due process in the review of performance appraisal, and we expect a proposal from the Administration.

Currently the proceedings of the Reports Board are considered secret, which the Staff Union considers violates basic rights of staff and beyond the mandate provided by the Staff Regulations.

- The Administration has proposed to amend the IGDS governing the Personal Promotions process to reflect the implications of ILOAT decision No. 4480. The Staff Union has proposed to recognize the right of TC staff in the personal promotions exercise, and the negotiations are ongoing.
- The negotiating capacity of Committee members has been strengthened in practice by including them more regularly in the various thematic negotiations or through working groups, with the old hands leading the new. The report last year identified the need to strengthen the basic trade union skills of newcomers, both at headquarters and in the field, in order to be fully effective in the future. This was addressed through training provided in September, on negotiation skills for Committee members and representation skills for union stewards.

II – Job security

A – Recruitment and selection

Objective: Advocate for a recruitment and selection process that 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**, in accordance with the existing and current Negotiated GJDs and offer a real possibility of career development of already employed ILO officials.
- The Committee is convinced of the importance for the Organization of a system of recruitment that seeks a broader and more **authentic diversity** of staff while at the same time respecting Article 100 of the United Nations Charter, the Declaration of Philadelphia and the Staff Regulations. It is on this basis that the Committee is participating, jointly with HRD, in the review and update of the current generic job descriptions for the Professional and GS job families at Headquarters.
- 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.
- 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.
- Besides the normal involvement of ILO staff representatives, the staff union will bring to the attention of the Administration any recruitment or selection issues affecting officials, more particularly concerning short-term contracts. The Staff Union will review recruitment and selection procedures in the field in order to negotiate a coherent and fair agreement.

Titular Member of the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC): Carlos Carrión-Crespo

Technical Adviser: Manuel Céspedes Ocampo

Substitute: Sophie Guerre Chaillet, Clara Van Panhuys

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

Members: Carlos Carrión-Crespo, Andrew Christian, Sophie Guerre Chaillet, Chantal Nahimana, Ana Catalina Ramirez, Azza Taalab, Clara Van Panhuys

Achievements:

In 2022, the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC) met 8 times in connection with General Service (GS) competitions and RAPS sessions. Since January 2022, and at the time of writing, two RAPS sessions have taken place and RAPS 3 was in preparation by HRD.

In the 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 the Staff Union's position as regards a competition.

Request for the opening of 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 GS competitions – Over 40 JDs have been reviewed by the Staff Union so far. The SUC aims at ensuring that vacant positions are real career opportunities for qualified colleagues.

The SUC reached an agreement on the minimum education and experience requirements with HRD. The equivalent experience for candidates possessing a first degree but lacking an advance degree is now recognised, from RAPS 2 of 2022.

The Staff Union representatives are extremely vigilant in the review of job descriptions (JDs) and at each of the three (3) procedural stages in the filling of vacancies (see also Annex I of the Staff Regulations):

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 interests of staff at this stage one of the process.

Stage 2: transfers in the same grade or through mobility.

The SUC takes into account very seriously the apparent frustration noticed because of this second stage, as some colleagues considered it as a brake on 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 vigorously the interests of colleagues participating in competitions, when reviewing the files, drawing attention to irregularities in long and short-lists.

Challenges ahead:

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 noticed once again the confirmation of the trend of the decrease and downgrade of General Service and P positions being advertised. What about the career development for ILO colleagues?

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

The role of the Independent member of the technical panel is key in the third stage of the selection process. The organization of sessions to share experiences and guidance with independent panel members is still pending.

The SUC participates in the review by HRD of the Generic Job Descriptions (GJDs) for General Service staff at headquarters and the Professional category. The agreement with HRD on the minimum education and experience requirements will also be part of the new GJDs. Our aim remains real career development opportunities for colleagues.

Eight years after the signing of the collective agreement on a procedure for recruitment and selection, it is about time that we clarified and improved the recruitment and mobility procedure so that diversity really does become a hallmark of the Organization.

The Staff Union is participating in the review of recruitment and selection procedures in the field in order to negotiate coherent and fair agreements.

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: management change, 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 who bring key competencies to 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.

Coordinator: Carlos Carrión-Crespo

Members: Séverine Deboos, Laurence Dubois, Guillaume Filhon, Yuka Okumura, Ian Orton, Yvan Poulin and Clara Van Panhuys

The Staff Union has worked throughout the year to defend the existing jobs of colleagues, at the individual and the collective level, according to the rules in force and whatever their type of contract. Situations vary greatly. This year, the Staff Union has been able to successfully support the actions of several colleagues in end-of-contract situations, both at headquarters and in the field. It is clear that when colleagues – particularly those working on technical cooperation projects – manage to come together for joint action instead of fighting in isolation, then solutions are always more likely to succeed.

On a more general level, the issue of the review of the contracts policy was put as the second priority of the Joint Negotiating Committee. For more information, please see the section on the JNC

III – A career development path for all

Coordinators of the working group on career development: Carlos Carrión-Crespo

Members: Manuel Céspedes Ocampo, Ian Orton, Chantal Nahimana, Yvan Poulin, Azza Taalab

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.

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

The joint group on personal promotions has finalized the 2021 exercise for G staff and the 2020 exercise for P Staff, which has two stages. The Staff Union will do its utmost to ensure that the group catches up as soon as possible.

The Staff Union has provided support to colleagues who have asked for review of the reclassification exercise in the field.

The harmonization of the Recruitment and Selection process is also an important matter to ensure equity and transparency. The Staff Union and the Administration have agreed on a terms of reference for the review of Job Descriptions (JDs) for staff in headquarters.

The titularization exercise for all staff is up to date.

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

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

Members of the Joint Training Council: Chantal Nahimana, Olga Strietska-Ilina, Azza Taalab

Training policy: After several years of hiatus, the Joint Training Committee (JTC) has discussed the proposed ILO learning strategy. In this framework, 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. 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. The Staff Union hopes the learning strategy will be implemented early in the tenure of the new DG.

Performance Management: The merit increments are now tied to the performance reports and those corresponding to the past three years were published. This has increased transparency in the process, and it is now possible to point out its flaws and suggest improvements. The Staff Union has underlined its aim to preserve the interest of the staff in this exercise to ensure that the Performance Management Framework constitutes a real tool to help colleagues in their career development. The full-time telework and suspension of duty travel has increased the use of the mid-term review process in order to adjust the outputs proposed at the beginning of the year. 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. This issue will be part of the overall review of the contracts policy.

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.

Coordinators: Laurence Dubois, Guillaume Filhon

Members: Séverine Deboos, Clara Van Panhuys

In accordance with the decision of the First Session of the Annual General Meeting in 2019, the Working Group on Technical Cooperation was established on the basis of a first ad hoc group, which was itself the result of a call for participation, and is composed of Staff Union members from headquarters and the field. The group organized its actions on the basis of the findings of the previously compiled report, which highlighted the differences in employment conditions, including career development and recognition, between staff under the development cooperation budget and those under the regular budget. These actions were carried out in 4 areas:

- Information and communication actions on employment conditions and staff rights for staff on technical cooperation and regular budget; these actions were to be organized by the Working Group on Technical Cooperation with the support of the Bureau and the Staff Union's Communication Team. In this context, the group first conducted consultations on the basis of the report presented, in order to illustrate the elements gathered therein with concrete testimonies. On the basis of these testimonies, it then set up a questionnaire to determine the frequency of the inequalities observed. This questionnaire is currently being finalized and will be distributed to all staff shortly.
- To address illegal management practices with HRD and, if necessary, to support colleagues who wish to take legal action in accordance with ILO rules and procedures. At the basis of all the Staff Union's demands and responses is now the permanent demand for equality between technical cooperation staff and regular budget staff. This has been the case, for example, in ensuring equal access to support measures under COVID, in providing support to staff on technical cooperation contracts in the Algiers Office, or in preparing the IGDS on telework.
- Call for changes in the Staff Regulations to address unjustified and unfair differences between TC and regular budget staff that may result from the currently applicable rules. This was the case for the discussions on the preparation of the IGDS on maternity or the merit step.
- Submit to the Working Group on the Contracts Policy the report which, together with the reports/notes from the other working groups, will feed into the contracts policy and other negotiations to ensure non-discrimination between categories of staff with equal seniority, in particular after a certain seniority set at 5 years, and respect for "One ILO".

The contracts policy is still awaiting negotiation with the Administration in the framework of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC).

However, initial contacts have finally taken place in the framework of "without prejudice" (non-binding) preparatory meetings between a delegation of the Staff Union, led by its Chairperson and in which the two coordinators of the group are represented, and HR/POL. During these first exchanges, encouraging convergences of views emerged on the legal analysis carried by the two parties, in the context of the preparation of the arrival of the new Director-General, who also committed himself during his campaign to iron out the existing differences in treatment between officials with equivalent job profiles and seniority, whatever the modalities of their financing.

In view of the upcoming negotiations, a few volunteers from the working group have been working with great energy and professionalism on the preparation of a questionnaire on working conditions in relation to status and type of contract. The idea is to collect anonymously many testimonies and opinions on the situations encountered, both in the field and at headquarters. More than 1,700 colleagues have responded to this study, and the data is now a mine of information for the Staff Union, and a source of legitimacy for the arguments it will be called upon to produce. **The whole team dedicated to this project is thanked for their professionalism and the time they devoted to this project, in a collective effort that impressed both the Committee and the Bureau.**

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;
- 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.

Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (COSH)

Titular members: Christiane Wiskow (until August 2022), Ana Catalina Ramirez, Andrew Christian (from August 2022)

Substitute member: Carlos Carrión-Crespo

Working group on occupational safety and health and environmental issues

Coordinator: Christiane Wiskow (until August 2022), Ana Catalina Ramirez (from August 2022)

Members: Carlos Carrión-Crespo, Azza Taalab, Andrew Christian, Zoltan Gegeny

Technical Advisers: Tzvetomira Radoslavova

Achievements:

2022 continued to be influenced by the COVID-19 related measures and their effects on safety and health of ILO staff. In ILO offices, measures have shifted between mandatory telework; recommended telework;

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

partial and full Return to Office (RTO) according to the epidemiological situation as well as to the changes in local COVID-19 measures, among other factors.

The Staff Union has participated in all HQ COSH meetings that exchanged information on the COVID-19 situation as well as RTO preparations and adaptations. Further, we continuously provided comments and inputs to guidance documents prepared by the Administration and made sure that concerns voiced by colleagues across the world were transmitted to the Administration.

The Staff Union actively participated in the bi-partite technical working group (TWG) mandated by COSH to review the IGDS 48, 286 and 385 on occupational safety and health at the Office. The TWG reviewed the IGDS in the light of the current practice of their implementation. As a result of the work, the proposed IGDS revisions as well as the accompanying recommendations on how to improve the internal OSH management system were endorsed by COSH and submitted by the COSH Chairperson to the DG mid-July for feedback from the DG on those proposals and on the way forward.

In terms of training, the Staff Union, collaborated with the Administration and the OSH Coordinator to build the capacity of local OSH committees in the African region. All members of the local OSH committees took part in the first discussion session on 25 May, to briefly introduce the OSH management and the roles of joint OSH committees. This training is the first to involve an entire region and will serve as a model to be duplicated in other regions, after an assessment of its implementation

The Staff Union also provided general as well as specific OSH information to staff representatives. We further responded to requests from staff representatives in country offices – both COVID-19 related and concerning general OSH issues – and facilitated communication and information exchange with the ILO OSH Coordinator and the ILO Medical Service.

Where possible, we organized virtual meetings with colleagues and staff representatives, to listen to their questions, concerns and needs to identify meaningful support measures. Furthermore, at HQ, the Staff Union continued communication with the building renovation project to bring staff concerns to their attention.

Challenges to come

Despite progress made on the OSH training in the African regions, many representatives from all regions have flagged OSH training needs as urgent. There is an urgent need to integrate OSH training at different levels of the Organization, including as part of the general training provided to staff.

The recognition of the importance of internal social dialogue and its effective implementation even during crisis response, i.e. the consultation of staff and their representatives, still needs enhancement in many offices. Further, the involvement of COSH in shaping OSH measures in the context of a COVID-19 response and RTO procedures has still to be strengthened in many offices.

We would like to reiterate that creating a culture of security, safety and health is a long-term challenge requiring the awareness and action of everyone in their day-to-day work as well as commitment to the active implementation of the ILO OSH policy.

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.

Coordinators: Ian Orton, Yvan Poulin

Members: Guillaume Filhon, Sophie Guerre Chaillet

Technical Advisers: François Kientzler (Former Officials' Section)

Staff Health Insurance Fund (SHIF)

This year the Staff Union was again active and maintained close links with the SHIF. Two of the Staff Union's Committee members are also elected members of the SHIF Management Committee, which allows the Staff Union to be better informed about decisions concerning the health coverage of SHIF participants. "SHIF online", the system allowing policy-holders to make their claims online, has reached a steady state with a positive satisfaction rate, but colleagues in the field are still complaining about the delays in reimbursements. The black spot still remains access to care for all these same colleagues. It seems that the new system put in place concerning the approved establishments in each place of employment has not yet been properly communicated and the Staff Union will have to insist on the Fund ensuring that colleagues, mainly in the field, can fully benefit from this tool and help it to evolve, if health-care providers are missing from the list. This series of tangible improvements reinforces the Committee's conviction that this health fund is indeed adequate for the size and specific nature of the Organization, provided of course that the Administration invests in sufficient means, whether in terms of financial or human resources. But the feedback from colleagues in the field, which is much more mixed and sceptical, must be taken into account and brought to the attention of the Fund so that it can continue its efforts to provide information and to make improvements if necessary. In addition, an actuarial study was carried out this past year which will lead to further discussions in which the representatives of the participants in the Fund will do their utmost to make the best decisions to guarantee its sustainability. The members representing the insured have also participated in internal working groups of the Fund to improve its governance and sustainability.

Pension Fund

With regard to the Pension Fund, the participants' representatives were present at the annual meeting, which was held entirely virtually, as required by COVID, and defended, as usual, the interests of ILO staff. One item on the agenda threatened the future of the ILO's representation on the Pension Board, but our representatives did their best to limit the damage. The financial situation of the Pension Fund is good. For more detailed information on the Fund, the Staff Union encourages its members to go directly to its

website (<https://www.unjspf.org/fr/the-69th-session-of-the-un-pension-board-concludes-confirming-excellent-performance-of-the-un-pension-fund/>).

In spring 2022, following an information broadcast from the CCISUA (our federation), the Staff Union also raised important questions and concerns to members when the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) Office of Investment Management (OIM) was considering outsourcing a portion of the fund and there were concerns that such action would compromise the security of the pension fund with more exposure to volatile risk portfolios. After seeking clarification as to whether this was the right course of action the OIM agreed to postpone this action for 3 months and committed to holding further clarifying information sessions. To date, no further outsourcing action has been taken.

VI – A diverse, inclusive, equal and equitable workplace²

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 a workplace free from violence and harassment.

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 aspires to create a working environment where diversity, equality, equity, inclusion and work-life balance is respected and leveraged to improve organizational performance and the well-being of ILO officials.

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. This will include negotiations on:
 - the effective implementation of the Action Plan for improving the diversity of the ILO Workforce (GB.337/PFA/11).
 - a new maternity and paternity leave policy as well as inclusive parental leave policy in line with the objective of promoting gender equality and equity in retention and access to career opportunities.
 - the new Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA) Policy, with particular attention on the promotion of work-life balance for all staff and an appropriate inclusive work environment, free from violence and harassment.
- 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:

² 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.

- recruitment and selection on geographic representation;
- OSH on mental health and harassment;
- Development cooperation.

In partnership, when relevant, with GEDI, FUNDAMENTALS and HRD, organize awareness-raising/information sessions/activities on International Days to exchange views/concerns and share information, knowledge and good practice and exchange with ILO Staff and Union members.

Coordinator: Clara Van Panhuys

Members: Work-Life Balance: Severine Deboos, Yuka Okumura, Clara Van Panhuys, Andrew Christian, Zoltan Gegeny; Diversity and inclusion: Ludovic Caprini, Chantal Nahimana, Severine Deboos, Yuka Okumura, Clara Van Panhuys; Disability: Séverine Deboos, Yuka Okumura, Azza Taalab; Parental/paternity/maternity: Clara Van Panhuys, Ian Orton, Yvan Poulin, Andrew Christian.

Technical Advisers: Ilka Schoellmann, Lou Tessier, Maria Prieto, Fabio Thoma.

The working group continued to engage in relevant activities whenever possible to reach the objective of improving 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 a workplace free from violence and harassment.

Disability inclusion

The Staff Union welcomed the launch of the first Employee Resource Group (ERG) on Disability. A joint broadcast was sent by the ILO Staff Union and the Human Resource Department for this purpose. The ERG on Disability is a voluntary independent group of ILO colleagues with disabilities and/or with dependents with disabilities who join together in their workplace to drive organizational culture change, provide mutual support, and help shape inclusion policies to improve the workplace. Joint collaboration and activities are being planned with the ERG including training. The Staff Union also supports the ILO Disability Champions Network, and has and will be participating in its meetings on a regular basis.

The UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) “is a comprehensive strategy for ensuring that the United Nations system is fit for purpose in relation to disability inclusion. It provides a foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of the United Nations’ work”. The UNDIS has a component on organizational culture, including employment and capacity development for staff. In March 2022, coordinated by GEDI, the Office prepared its contribution to the UNDIS (progress) report by reporting and rating its own achievements and progress in disability inclusion made in the course of 2021. The SUC gave its observations and suggestions on the Office’s draft reports and requested to be consulted also when the office identifies and implement the future expected results.

Promoting diversity inclusion and gender equality

All Staff Union actions take into account diversity inclusion and gender equality, including in all consultations and negotiations with HRD and management. The Staff Union supports the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality (2022-25) and reiterated the importance to ensure gender equality among ILO staff, in particular for P5 staff and above where equality is far from being achieved.

This year the Staff Union commemorated International Women’s Day through various actions including with video interviews of Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, previous SUC Chairperson, and Gurchaten Sandhu, previous SUC Coordinator of the Diversity working Group and president of UN GLOBE, and a video of committee members sharing their views and experiences with respect to promoting equality in the workplace for women, disseminated through social media. The Staff Union further communicated their support during International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) for LGBTI colleagues and continued its collaboration with and support for UN GLOBE.

New Flexible Work Arrangement

Based on the commitment of the Administration to finalize a new FWA policy as soon as possible, the SUC mobilized the relevant working group and technical expert for providing inputs on a draft IGDS and make specific inputs related to the scope of the policy, the funding, and the field perspective. After a round of consultations between the SUC and the Administration, the process halted, and the SUC has repeatedly asked to see a revised proposal to be able to move forward and finalize the new IGDS. In the meanwhile, and in a context of Return to Office for a number of offices, the SUC has been calling the attention of the Administration to take into account lessons learnt, and changes in the work modalities and mentalities of staff and stay away from the temptation to go “back to the old normal”.

An inclusive parental leave policy

On the proposal 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: negotiations with HRD were planned to continue in 2022 as agreed at the first joint negotiation committee meeting of the year. HRD indicated their wish to postpone the negotiations till after the ICSC decision on the matter. In July, the ICSC approved the recommendation of the Working group to introduce a unified parental leave, with additional provisions for the birth parents. SUC members involved have been on standby and are ready to resume negotiations upon receipt of a revised proposal from HRD. In parallel, the working group drafted a set of questions that were included in the SUC global survey on contractually arrangements. Results will feed into an update and revision of the SUC position on this matter and support negotiations with HRD. The Staff Union also supports U.N. Parents, in particular the recommendations that were developed for the ICSC session.

U.N. Parents is a network that advocates for equal parenting and fairer parental policies within the UN in the best interest of the child.

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).

Coordinator: Carlos Carrión-Crespo

Members: Manuel Céspedes Ocampo, Yvan Poulin

This year, the Staff Union Committee continued to strengthen its presence within the federation to which it belongs, CCISUA, by extending the mandate of General Secretary of the federation of one of its members. This increased presence allowed the ILO Staff Union to have greater visibility of the issues at stake within the UN common system and to participate more actively in the work of the International Civil Service Commission, and to bring its objectives (to establish a real negotiating system within the UN) to the forefront. A lot more meetings and commitment are needed for the Staff Union to make progress in this area. The benefits of such a presence was felt, for example, in the working groups to revise wage-setting methodologies or in the substantive discussions on the future of work at the United Nations.

The Staff Union has also been present in defending the rights of colleagues in the field, using all the synergies that exist between it and the local staff unions. It also continued to support the local Federations of UN Staff Unions and Associations (FUNSA) in order to be better equipped for future campaigns to defend conditions of employment and work in the field.

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, monthly bulletins, 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 (SUAF), the use of members’ dues, and 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.
- 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 Staff Union’s centenary year, and in light of planned events throughout the year.
- 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.

- As the UNION magazine remained very quiet last year, the communications team solicits contributors with topics from the Field and HQ to produce the magazine's annual publication this year. Do not hesitate to visit us: <http://unionmag.ilostaffunion.org>.
- The Website has been revamped and is currently being updated with content (thanks to the secretariat). It is a long-term work but the team wants the information to be as complete as possible and especially in the three languages.
- The Union will continue to build on this momentum 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.

Coordinator: Harvey Addo-Yobo, assisted by Séverine Deboos, Yvan Poulin and Céline Moiret

The communications team met every week virtually to prepare the weekly headlines and press releases. The team also added monthly bulletins to inform staff on what the Committee had done within a month. The members of the team kept in close contact with one another so that the Staff Union and the staff could get in touch very quickly in the event of an emergency. This rapid-response capability has proved crucial and has ensured that staff are informed of developments on time.

The Staff Union communicates mainly by means of headlines and bulletins and broadcasts and the communications team has helped by providing the design and material for posters and publications on welcome screens in HQ, the website, Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms.

UNION magazine (now *Union Blog*) has been fairly quiet this year, as the editors have been busy with other matters. Besides that, there were not many contributors. That said, contributions from members of the staff who have something to say are still very much welcome, and we can only encourage you to visit our site at <http://unionmag.ilostaffunion.org>.

The migration of content to the revamped website has been done. A lengthy process, but necessary for the team to provide fully comprehensive information in the three languages, English, French and Spanish.

The Staff Union plans to keep up the hard work and to do everything it can to improve communication with the staff. To do this, it shall make use of every means at its disposal and of all the expertise of the members of the team.

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 2022 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.

Coordinator: Yvan Poulin assisted by Carlos Carrion-Crespo

Supporting Union Stewards in their work

Over the past year, the Staff Union Committee has steadfastly supported its network of Union Stewards at headquarters by making increased use of the WhatsApp group and Teams, where Stewards have been kept informed of developments and have been able to share their needs and news. Monthly meetings were held to ensure that communication was as effective as possible and that the voices of all our members were heard in the best possible way. A real synergy has developed between the Committee and the Union Stewards which has allowed the concerns and interests of all to be taken into consideration more quickly and effectively.

In addition, regular meetings by Teams have helped to strengthen the sense of belonging to a network. Everyone benefited from each other's experiences and the spirit of collaboration between Union Stewards took on a new lease of life.

Campaigning and organizing Union membership

By this point in the year, in October, the Staff Union has welcomed 155 new members – 133 in the field offices and 22 at headquarters.

Part 3 – Periodic and regular actions

I – 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 various challenges we continue to face under the COVID-19 pandemic, such as mandatory teleworking, 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 effective social dialogue, including 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 consultation with the management and training, including the ability to make recommendations as required on the working methods (full, partial RTO or WFH, etc.) 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 Africa and in Americas.

Coordinator: Severine Deboos, assisted by Sophie Guerre-Chaillet

- The ILO Convention No. 190 has been promoted in the field offices to avoid violence and harassment and strengthening the grievance handling mechanism for a fair and equitable judgement for the complainants. This has been done through sensitization and capacity building during the regional meetings in Africa and in America. Regional titular and relevant representatives have also supported members when relevant and few cases have also been transmitted through the relevant channels.
- The planned review of safety and evacuation policies to respect equal treatment for the staff in high-risk duty stations has not been yet considered, unfortunately, due to other priorities. The Staff Union Committee has been following very closely the actions and support for the offices in Ukraine and keeps monitoring the situation in Myanmar, Haiti, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan ensuring that the safety and security of all colleagues has been taken into account.
- Given the continuation of the mandatory telework and medical situation in the world, the role and functions of the COSH in all duty stations have been strengthened through more information-sharing and training. OSH committees in several offices are involved in the RTO exercise following the COVID-19 lockdown. Activities were planned and implemented in coordination with the SU. The degree of this cooperation varied from office to office but was satisfactory in general. In Africa, the need to strengthen the OSH committees at all duty stations is being discussed during the monthly meetings with the Regional Director's team (the Deputy Regional Director and the Regional Human Resources Coordinator).
- The alignment of the recruitment and selection procedures through the implementation of the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC) is under discussion with the Administration. In the meantime, progress has been made in a number of field offices to promote transparent and fair processes and promoting a mobility policy guaranteeing mobility for long-serving staff in a duty station.
- Great attention has been given to ensure that field reality is being taken into account in all discussions and negotiations. In particular, through the Regional Titulars, feedback and contributions were collected to inform the inputs provided by the Committee on the future Flexible Work Arrangement policy.
- Regular discussions take place on a monthly basis 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.
- The regional meetings for the Americas and Africa were successfully organized in July and September in person, but with online sessions with the rest of the Committee.
- The elections for the regional titulars and their substitutes have also been completed.

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.

Treasurer: Yvan Poulin

As in the previous year, the level of expenditure for the year 2021 is well below the forecasted budget with savings on all missions, hospitality, costs of communication and regional meetings were held virtually. The number of members has also increased significantly in 2021, and the level of contributions has reached an all-time high, which allows us to look forward to the future with confidence.

For those field offices that cannot open an "Association" account (for reasons of national legislation), no effective and inexpensive solution has been found. Alternative means have been put in place in some offices to allow them to use their funds with some flexibility.

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.

Members: Carlos Carrion-Crespo, Guillaume Filhon

Despite the enduring pandemic context, the Staff Union has continued to provide advice and legal assistance throughout this very special year. We observed an increase in individual grievances from the second half of the year onwards. The Staff Union had recorded a clear diminution in the number of formal complaints submitted to HRD and to the Joint Advisory Appeals Board ("JAAB") during the second half of 2020, while noting an increase in the number of cases subject to informal discussions and resolutions with the Administration. The year 2021 thus seems to mark a return to "normality" in terms of the number of formal complaints.

The Staff Union deplores the fact that several conflicts or labour relations issues seem directly related to the contracts policy and in particular the lack of consistent working conditions between officials assigned to technical cooperation projects and those appointed to posts on the regular budget and the situation of

precariousness of the former towards the latter. While this situation is not new, with the continued rise in the number of so-called "TC" staff – which now exceeds that of staff on the regular budget (50.2% versus 49.8%) – it is more important than ever to address this issue. The Staff Union believes that this will go a long way to ensuring a healthier and more equitable workplace for all.

Over the past year, most of the consultations resulting in interventions of all kinds by the Staff Union, including assistance with formal grievances, have been on the following topics:

- Claims to the Compensation Committee;
- Requests concerning job grading and recourses;
- Questions on terms and conditions of employment for staff on TC contracts including cases of successive precarious contracts;
- Recruitment and selection processes;
- Workplace accommodation measures;
- Salary and benefits after promotion and/or appointment.

I. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Africa

Titular member: Remy Bertrand Kama Kama

Substitute member: Leillah Abdallah

RECLASSIFICATION AND GRADE REVIEW

Staff in the region have strongly felt that there is a lack of transparency and computerized workflow in the reclassification process, which prevents staff from easily submitting and tracking their reclassification request online.

We request the ILO Administration to put in place an online system to submit and track the processing of reclassification requests according to pre-determined deadlines.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The participation status of staff union representatives differs (from mere observer to full member in the recruitment and selection panels). The basic principles of recruitment and selection vary considerably from one office to another in the region.

Staff in the region are calling for a revision of the 2014 collective agreement between the Staff Union and the ILO Administration on recruitment and selection to allow the Staff Union to participate fully in all stages of the recruitment and selection process both at headquarters and in the field offices.

SHIF: STAFF HEALTH AND SAFETY

Only 25 per cent (from the July/August 2022 survey result) of ILO colleagues in Africa are satisfied with SHIF local health-care providers. The SHIF is not recognized by the majority of local care providers.

We call for the SHIF to provide a framework to guide negotiations and conduct direct negotiations with health-care providers at the national level to ensure access to quality medical services for its staff.

Health-care systems in Africa need to be assessed in order to develop a tailor-made, pre-funded insurance system for staff. Positive practices implemented by other UN agencies to ensure access to quality pre-funded medical services can be adopted by the SHIF in Africa.

The SHIF should allow for reimbursement of medical expenses from the UNFCU account and/or other salary accounts used by staff.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH (OSH)

As part of the ongoing collaboration between the African Unions and the Regional Office to build the capacity of OSH committees, all members of the local OSH committees participated in the first discussion session on 25 May 2022, to briefly introduce OSH management and the roles of the joint committees. This training is the first to involve an entire region.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW GROUP (IRG) FOR AFRICA

The Independent Review Group (IRG) for the African Region was formally constituted and operational in February 2021 for a two-year term. Discussions are underway between the Regional Management and the Staff Union for the renewal of its mandate. The members of this group will be appointed on a consensual basis.

In addition, the mandate of the IRG is to be extended to all reclassification appeals for G and NO grades.

Americas

Titular member: Maria Elena Lopez-Torres

Substitute member: Ana Catalina Ramirez

Since the AGM in February 2022 to date, our region had an important event. The VIII Regional Meeting of Staff Unions of the ILO, held in Montevideo, Uruguay from 27 June to 01 July 2022. The meeting was attended by SUC Chairperson Carlos Carrión-Crespo and our colleague Ana Catalina Ramírez, Substitute Regional Member.

This meeting was held in person after almost two years of confinement, all safety protocols were complied with, in order to guarantee the health of all participants.

Throughout the week the presidents of the field offices participated, reviewed, exchanged and discussed issues related to Human Resources, Personnel Recruitment and Selection, CAPS/SHIF, Flexible Working Arrangements, Teleworking, Career Development, Return to Office, Performance Evaluations, Training, among others.

ELECTIONS IN THE REGION

Local elections were held in March 2022 to constitute the new Staff Union committees throughout the region, whose mandate runs from April 2022 to April 2024.

TELEWORKING AND COVID-19 PANDEMIC SITUATION IN THE REGION

The region is in a telework situation from March 2020 to date. While in many countries the pandemic is under control, and there are fewer infections, in others there are still worrying figures. However, most countries are already reactivating and workers have returned to the face-to-face mode.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Since the end of last year, a review of the Local Staff Selection Procedure has been underway in our region. This procedure, approved in 1992, is still in force and is an example of good practice.

The Regional Committee has reviewed the new proposal sent by the Regional HR colleagues, and has sent comments on the document. We are awaiting the response in order to start negotiations.

RECLASSIFICATIONS AND STAFF SELECTION

During this period several reclassification processes have been carried out with positive results, some others are in the process of review. We hope they will be resolved in a short period of time.

RETURN TO OFFICES

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

Offices face situations and contexts in terms of their preparedness for the full return of staff. We underline the importance of ensuring compliance with protocols. Staff must feel absolutely confident in their return to the workplace.

FUNDING FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In these times of quarantine, the regional human resources team encourages staff to take individual or group training courses on topics related to their professional and career development, including group language courses. Requests are processed through the Human Resources Units in each office in coordination with the Training Committee.

The Competency-Based Interviewing Workshop (CBI) is currently underway with the participation of several colleagues from the different offices in the region. This workshop will provide them with the tools to conduct interviews with high quality standards.

STAFF UNION BANK ACCOUNT IN OFFICES

We reiterated the consultation on the Staff Union bank accounts, whose ownership is still in the name of some members, usually the President and Treasurer, which entails tax issues with the authorities in some countries for these officials and problems of immobilization of funds in case of death of one of the holders until the succession process is completed. This is an issue that continues to arise and we do not yet have a clear solution to it.

SHIF

We have seen a marked improvement in the processing time of reimbursements. Staff are more satisfied with this, and we commend the efforts made. The implementation of the new SHIF ON LINE system is quite simple and useful. It is now possible to better follow up on reimbursement requests.

SALARY SURVEYS

We note with concern that several offices in the region are facing delays and have not achieved positive results in wage surveys.

We are concerned that the CIASLS (inter-agency salary committees) are not acting more actively as in several countries there have been no salary increases for some time.

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

RECENT APPOINTMENT OF THE HEAD OF REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The Regional Delegation warmly welcomes our colleague Andrea Botbol, who took up her duties as Head of Regional Administrative Services of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean in August. During this period, colleague Thomas Wissing was appointed as Deputy-Director for the Andean Countries Office, to whom we also extend a warm welcome.

It is with concern that we see the high turnover of the Regional Human Resources Coordinator position. What has happened over the last few years with the people selected for this position and their departure from the Organization merits a rigorous analysis.

As representatives of the Staff Union for all local and internationally recruited officials in the Americas and the Caribbean, we reaffirm our commitment to work for a stronger Union, protecting and seeking to improve working conditions and the working environment.

Asia and the Pacific

Titular Member: Pong-Sul Ahn (outgoing) / Gwendolyn Fabros (incoming)

Substitute Member: Yuka Okumura

The report was based on the activities conducted in 2021/2022 and discussions that transpired in the most recent Staff Union Representatives' meeting.

Staff unions in the region

The COs in the region are open and the staff have returned office. According to IGDS 141, most of the offices are combining on and offline work arrangements. Staff unions such as in Jakarta, Hanoi and Colombo have conducted staff retreats in person during the June-September period when the pandemic risk has shrunk. The SU members in the region have been stable even though some SUs have gained new memberships. Physical and economic security has been a concern of the staff in Afghanistan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

Dialogue with the management

During the pandemic period, a dialogue mechanism between the SU and management across the region has helped discuss staff's concerns and exchange views. For instance, on 20 April 2022, the SU representatives met with Ms Chihoko Asada-Miyakawa, RD, accompanied by Jinah Lee, RHRP. The meeting was organized to have dialogue with the RD in respect to national and regionwide issues and get her feedback. The issues raised by the SU reps included future office layout in ROAP, salary surveys, flexible work arrangements, staff development fund, participation of SU reps in recruitment and selection, RTO and potential cuts in RB posts. The SU reps raised their concerns on certain issues and also wanted to get more information from the RD and RHRP on some issues. Pong-Sul expressed his appreciation to the RD for her engagement in dialogue.

Local salary survey

Inflation is getting high, lowering real income in several countries including Sri Lanka. In addition, the results of interim local salary surveys conducted in a few countries, including Vietnam were not promising. Still worse, it is very common and difficult to have high-paying comparators in local salary surveys. It is necessary to take a joint action with CO Directors and Administration when the negative result of a local salary survey was announced. Also, there is a need for a global solution on the finding of high-paying comparators.

Stronger staff union participation in recruitment procedures (best practice model for CO-Bangkok)

In a number of Country Offices in Asia, there are recognizable gains towards strong participation of the Staff Union in the recruitment process. In fact, CO-Bangkok is leading the way as a model in terms of best practices in the region, wherein the SU is part of the grading panel and selection. While this is true for some country offices, uniformity across the region has not yet been achieved. There are country offices where participation of the Staff Union is still as an Observer or is negligent. The standing in each country is still based on bilateral agreements achieved with the Management by respective Staff Union Committees in each county office. There is the need for an improvement with the active participation of the SU reps in recruitment and selection in order to ensure its accountability and transparency.

Geographical and functional mobility (each ILO Staff must have the opportunity of a mobility for motivation, career path, and work experience in the Field – HQ (vice-versa))

The majority of the staff feel that the existing mobility policy needs to be improved to motivate the morality of the staff, accelerate knowledge and work experience and better understand the interest and expectations of ILO constituents. The Staff Union continued to lobby the qualms of members for this advocacy. There are a number of cases where it has become successful in some country offices wherein the Regional HR and senior management have been supportive of approval for secondments. While this is still at very early stage, the SU in AP will continue to brainstorm with members, share ideas and strategies on how these processes can be more popularized in the region, that ensures coverage in discussions with local and professional staff in the region. The motto of One ILO can be truly achieved only when the

geographical and functional mobility policy was effective. The staff in AP highly anticipate that the new Administration of the ILO consider this policy as a priority and put it forward shortly.

Creation of a culture that every grade – P, NO and G staff – can equitably apply Flexible work arrangements when the policy is agreed and signed by the SU and Management

The modality of work has been changed, augmented by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. While having experienced WFH during the pandemic, the staff now understand personal and unity workplans and are able to deliver their tasks. The level of staff's satisfaction and productivity from teleworking seem to be high. The staff in AP anticipate that a new flexible work arrangement policy be put in place. Different opinions and good practices have been shared that aim to improve what is currently available for members across every grade- P, NO and G staff, regardless of grades and positions. The SU in AP views that the FWA policy should be widely applicable in relation to performance and productivity, environmental safety, career development, and work-life balance.

Challenges on Direct Recruitment for ST, SSTs (becoming an entry point for Fixed Term Contracts' recruitment)

This is a challenge identified by one of the country offices in AP. This practice and strategy should be at an early stage openly discussed with the Management and countered by the Staff Union as this does not promote at all transparency and equality in recruitment.

Proper measures on compensatory leave from missions undertaken during the weekend

While the IGDS on Travel is well-established, there is still a need to apply proper measures on CTOs from missions undertaken during the weekend. The correct interpretation of the guidelines in some country offices will continue to be lobbied by the Staff Union to ensure work-life-balance for members who have dedicated their weekends on work.

Safe Return to Office amidst lingering threat of Covid-19

While the phased approach is now being implemented, the Staff Union continues to monitor the situation in each country office in AP, ensuring that Staff will feel safe and protected each time they will be called to report for work. Strengthening of COSH and collaborative discussions will still have to be continued.

Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting of Staff Union

The Regional Meeting was held virtually during 11-14 October 2021 with the participation of approximately 25 people (2 persons from each SUC – Chair and Secretary/or an alternative member). Around half of the participants were newly elected at the April election. On top of this, the Regional Titular has organized online regional SU meetings periodically to consolidate concerning issues and exchange mutual experiences.

Europe and Arab States

Titular member: Eva Mihlic

Substitute member: Ludovic Caprini

The report was compiled based on limited information supplied by offices with SU representatives in the region (Brussels, Moscow, Beirut, and Budapest including focal points in Sarajevo and Kyiv). Due to the dissolved SU Committee at the Ankara office, data for this office was compiled by the titular member.

Where specific locations are not mentioned, comments may be considered as applicable to the whole region. The report focuses on the following aspects of work in the ILO:

1. Staff security
2. Job security
3. Salaries

4. Post-COVID teleworking
5. Pension payments with particular focus on retirees in Russia
6. Work environment/ organizational climate

1. Staff security

Due to the invasion of **Ukraine** by Russian military forces, colleagues stationed in Kyiv, Ukraine, evacuated the city. All international and some national staff left Ukraine, while locally recruited colleagues left for the countryside less affected by the armed conflict. Colleagues in SECURITY provided invaluable assistance in the process. Even though the UN has commenced a conditional and staged return to Kyiv, security considerations remain paramount. The recruitment of a local security officer is high on the priority list in Ukraine.

The war also impacts colleagues stationed in **Moscow**. International staff remains vigilant of the developing situation and the ever-changing classification of foreign countries by the Russian authorities. By the introduction of the partial mobilization in Russia, the situation has become even more fragile due to numerous protests, the forceful intervention of authorities and staff members being potential targets of the mobilization efforts.

Due to economic hardship and the energy crisis, the security situation in **Lebanon** has also deteriorated. Higher incidents of robberies and kidnappings and worsened crime statistics in general characterize the past period in Beirut in particular.

2. Job security

Despite the war in **Ukraine** no ILO staff contracts have been terminated due to discontinued projects. After the outbreak of the armed conflict, the ILO approached donors and suggested the reprogramming of projects including devoting project funds to humanitarian aid and extending project completion deadlines. Such requests were fully met by donors with project funds even topped by additional donations for supporting humanitarian efforts.

International sanctions against the **Russian Federation** severely affected ILO activities in the country. The project operating in Russia was discontinued (staff contracts included), but since ILO Moscow is a DWT/CO office servicing numerous countries in the region, the office remains operational to date. The GB request to the Administration for presenting different options for the immediate and short-term future of the Moscow office causes severe anxiety to the complete Moscow staff. Involving staff in exploring different scenarios and sharing information in an adequate and timely manner would lessen staff insecurity and anxiety and contribute to improving industrial relations.

More transparency in the hiring process, better management of ongoing projects, and improved feedback on project management could eliminate some of the anxiety and stress reported by colleagues who faced terminating contracts and potential re-hiring on DC projects managed from the **Beirut** office.

3. Salaries

The war in Ukraine coupled with rising energy prices and inflation rates has an adverse effect on the whole of the region.

Post adjustments for international staff are wildly fluctuating while colleagues receiving salaries in local currencies are facing diminishing purchasing power, devaluating currencies, and soaring inflation.

Interim salary surveys have been carried out in several duty stations resulting in slight increases in salaries of locally recruited staff which do not match the rate at which inflation and devaluating local currencies threaten the livelihood of UN personnel.

In addition to problems listed above, the **Russian Federation** faces employers exiting the country *en masse* due to sanctions and working principles of a market economy being replaced by administrative measures serving the war effort.

In **Belgium**, the deadlock following the local salary survey from 2017 has been finally resolved and the salary rates are being adjusted accordingly.

Following the collapse of the Turkish lira, several emergency measures were implemented in **Ankara** including administering non-pensionable bonuses for local staff.

Despite interim and ad-hoc measures listed above, offices in the region are lobbying for the methodology used for local salary surveys to be re-examined and revised by the ICSC. The region reports extreme difficulties in finding comparators (any comparators, let alone *suitable* comparators), declining purchasing power of local staff, unrealistic discrepancies between results obtained for NO and GS staff, and high inflation rates diminishing the potential positive effect of salary surveys.

4. Post-COVID teleworking

The mandatory return to IGDS 141 from 2010 on teleworking does not cater for the processes and workflow developed and adopted during the period of the pandemic. A new policy on flexible working arrangements is long overdue.

5. Pension payments with particular focus on retirees in Russia

After the introduction of sanctions against the Russian Federation or its officials/entrepreneurs including those by the United States Treasury, Office of Foreign Asset Controls, and the suspension from the SWIFT platform, pension benefit payments to UN retirees residing in Russia were suspended and delayed. The UNJSPF has been exploring alternative payment channels and the situation is currently quite stable. However, to avoid/prevent the same situation occurring in the future a contingency plan could be developed by the office.

6. Work environment/ organizational climate

From the isolation and anxiety of a dwindling COVID pandemic, the region has basically plunged into the uncertainty caused by the war in Ukraine.

In **Budapest** management and colleagues have joined forces to solve issues like vaccination, RTO, and the aftermath of the pandemic including work processes and telework. The recent retreat, the first off-line all-staff meeting following the outbreak of COVID-19 was a huge success, team building activities were appreciated by reconnecting colleagues.

Defying life-threatening situations **Kyiv** colleagues have shown extraordinary resilience, team spirit and adaptability.

Moscow staff has been jointly exploring possibilities on how to cope with the uncertain future of their office and their positions. Still, more opportunities to collectively discuss common issues of concern to everyone would be welcome by staff.

The **Beirut** SUC was elected during a period of extreme isolation and frustration in the office due to the COVID lockdown. The SUC continues to engage with each field office with a goal to build trust and manage country-specific issues.

Due to staffing and internal changes the **Ankara** SU has been going through some turbulent times within the last year, elections for a new interim SUC are planned.

Turin**Titular member:** Cristina Pierini**Substitute member:** Laurence Dubois (focal point)

During the period the Staff Union has repeatedly underlined the significance of the current moment in the history of the Centre (affected by the pandemic and its reform process), reiterating the importance of the JNC as the institutional channel for discussion on the staff implications that may arise as a consequence of the business process review.

Our view was that the Centre's position would be strengthened if the proposals made to the Board were the result of genuine and transparent consultations and had the support of the Staff Union. Unfortunately, this view was not shared by the Management, which repeatedly stated in many of our meetings that "... details and technical information will be available only once the extraordinary Board Meeting takes place and the business review is finalized".

During the Board meeting on the 25th of October 2021, the SU representative underlined that thanks to the ITCILO Staff (176 members) and its extraordinary ability to work and adapt, the Centre has been able to obtain excellent results and has faced the current crisis by acting diligently, efficiently and effectively.

Several proposals were submitted via the JNC regarding the review of the current rules on teleworking arrangements, flexible working and work-life balance that were still pending consultation. Some from as far back as 2017.

The SUC was also concerned about other references made regarding future contracts policies in ITC: "the Centre may decide as part of the process to increase its use of consultants, short-term contracts and service contracts to maintain agility, to adapt expertise and profiles to meet evolving needs and to reduce its fixed cost structure".

The Staff Union maintains its position that the Centre should avoid creating precariousness and hiding labour-dependent relationships behind other "flexible formulas" which do not ensure respect for labour rights.

Key elements for the ITCILO Reform implementation, from the Staff Union point of view

The Staff Union Committee of the Centre is committed to the collective bargaining process stemming from the Board decisions, referring in particular to, the meaningful involvement of staff in the following:

- .../... changes in the staffing profile and the distribution of staff between support functions and training delivery roles.
- Profile definition for current and new vacancies.
- Update job descriptions.
- Challenges regarding procedures, and how the work process is changing.
- Recruitment of temporary staff fairly and transparently.
- Regarding the working time, a clear policy needs to be in place to provide a common framework, clarify the rationale, and establish boundaries, while also making sure that availability outside of more traditional working time does not lead to inequities (e.g. due to family or personal life situations), and this is true both for G and P staff.
- Design of a Staff development programme (linked to the re-skilling approach) with a vision and structure to promote the career development of current staff.

In light of the new business model adopted, the revision of the staff regulations on these and other issues becomes urgent. It is clear that working conditions may be strongly affected by this revision, so the participation of the SU is essential.

The Roles and responsibilities of staff should be defined based on a careful analysis of workflows and processes in the life cycle of activities. The nature of the tasks and functions has certainly changed, but the volume of effort required to achieve it has never really been assessed. This remains critical for all parts of the Centre and in particular the training department.

The SU will continue to speak out against these inequities in keeping with the remarks made at previous Board sessions.

Meeting with the Transition Team

On 24.6 the members of the ITCILO SUC met (online) the members of the Transition Team. The following Key issues for sustainability were discussed with them:

- The campus should be maintained in its current form.
- Implement the role of the Centre in the support of projects managed by ILO Offices.
- Maintain existing staff levels.
- Alignment with existing ILO HR policies and tools.
- Promoting Staff well-being.

Pay attention to the priorities most felt by the staff are:

- A) career development.
- B) fight against precariousness.
- C) reduction of the pressure of business logic.
- D) fight against agility. Agility does not come when you overload colleagues without being consulted.

III. OTHER BODIES

Former Officials' Section

Executive Secretary: François Kientzler

Since April 2020, the Section Board members have continued to fulfil their responsibilities towards retired colleagues. The demand for information and communication has remained high since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and we have responded to all personal requests. Unfortunately, no social activities could be held.

Continuation of our activities

From our home, working remotely for more than two and a half years now, the continuation of our activities has consisted in regularly updating our files: new members, changes of address and deaths. This has been possible thanks to access to our ILO email and to the files we were able to copy during our short stay at the ILO at the end of 2020. Information is sent to us by the HRD secretariat and also directly by members of the Section. We have been able to contact all the people retiring and send them information material about our activities and encourage them to join the Section. We have responded to individual enquiries, either by e-mail, letter or telephone, concerning the SHIF and taxation in particular. Some retirees thanked us for our continued commitment to them.

We have continued to inform and communicate with retirees by publishing our regularly updated Members' List and by publishing an issue of Message. Our Facebook page (Alumni ilo-bit) now has about 380 active and retired members. Our website: <https://www.anciens-bit-ilo.org> where we post relevant information about retirees receives between 600 and 1000 visits per month.

By video-conference, members of the Bureau attended the AAFI-AFICS Committee meetings. We participated in the Pre-Retirement Seminar in November 2021. We were able to participate in the Pension Fund's video-conferences.

ILO access

According to the note issued by the ILO Administration (INTSERV/SECURITY), in force since 1 August 2022, the members of the Bureau of the Former Officials' Section can now enter the ILO for planned meetings, but access for all retirees remains prohibited for the time being. The Section's Board was able to meet in the ILO premises on Tuesday 30 August. During the past year, it had met outside the ILO. We will continue to work to ensure that all retirees have access to the ILO as soon as possible and we hope to resume social activities.

Our mode of operation has thus been profoundly modified since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we have been able to maintain regular contact with the Staff Union's secretariat and its respective Chairpersons, namely Catherine Comte-Tiberghien and currently Carlos Carrión-Crespo in office since January 2022, as well as with the ILO's HRD department.

Relations with ILO Management

The Bureau of the Former Officials' Section sent a letter of congratulations to Mr. Gilbert F. Hougbo, the elected Director-General. We have requested a meeting with him to inform him about the Section and to share our concerns. We also sent a letter to Guy Ryder, outgoing Director-General, thanking him for the attention he paid to retirees during his two mandates, especially during the ILO Centenary Celebration in 2019. We wrote to André Bogui, Director of Human Resources, to raise the situation of retirees and the activities of the Section's officers who are in quarantine outside the ILO.

International Civil Servants' Mutual Associations (MEC/AMFI)

Staff Union representative: Pierre Moulet

During the year 2021, GPAFI and La Mutuelle have continued their collaboration since the GPAFI team has moved to the offices of La Mutuelle. This regrouping allows, among other things, to diversify the competences of the employees as well as their work, and to reduce certain costs. The remaining issue is the reunification of the information systems, currently separated, on which AMFI is working.

Concerning La Mutuelle, the installation of an update of the operating system revealed a lack of space preventing the servers from functioning properly. Knowing that the servers are old and that it is no longer possible to find new disks to increase their memory, only their complete replacement would solve the problem, even if the cost of the operation is around CHF 150'000. The question therefore arose as to whether La Mutuelle could accept to take the risk, however small, of not upgrading and of suffering a possible temporary blockage of services, when the computer system must be changed in the short or medium term. The Board of Directors, opting for prudence and risk minimization, agreed to the purchase of new servers, implying an increase in tangible and intangible assets.

Negative interest rates in CHF have a significant impact on operations since an amount of CHF 743,000 has been recognized in expenses and is paid by all depositors in CHF. It should be noted that when the 2022 budget was drawn up, this expense was estimated at CHF 1 million. Based on the current distribution of assets, the Mutual Association has:

- a. 182 members with assets of CHF 400'000 or more, representing a total of CHF 99 million, i.e. an average deposit of CHF 544'000,
- b. 4'527 members with assets below CHF 400'000, representing a total of CHF 289 million, i.e. an average deposit of CHF 64'000.

The Fund's income in CHF is down by 9% compared to 2020, and thanks to a tight management of expenses, these have decreased by 3%. The Board of Directors has therefore proposed the same remuneration as in 2020, i.e. an interest rate of 0.10% plus a bonus of 1.25% by taking the deficit generated from the extraordinary reserve fund.

The Fund's income and expenses in USD are down by 21% and 25% respectively compared to 2020. The result for the year is down by 6% compared to 2020.

For GPAFI, revenues are down by 9% compared to 2020, a year in which, it should be remembered, a surplus participation was recorded. Expenses are 2% lower than in 2020. The excellent news, recorded during the year 2021, concerns the extension of the contract for supplementary health-care insurance, offered by our partner UNIQA, for an additional period of 3 years without any increase in premiums and with an option to extend it for two more years under the same conditions if the claims experience does not evolve unfavourably. Given that premiums have not changed for several years, this renewal can be considered exceptional.

Since the ordinary reserve funds of both entities exceed 12% of the balance sheet total minus reserves, the Board of Directors felt that a portion of the extraordinary reserve funds could be redistributed to members. The change in the computer system will, however, require a significant drawdown of reserves given the size of the investment which, it should be noted, will also improve service to members. Furthermore, in an environment of low returns on investment and declining revenues, it is important to remain prudent.

The year 2021 recorded an increase of 14.48% in housing loans granted to reach an amount of CHF 29'120'413. This increase shows the interest of the members for real estate investments whose prices are nevertheless very high in Switzerland, particularly in the "valdo-genevoise" region, and in neighbouring France.

With regard to ordinary loans, demand remained stable in 2021, but loans outstanding at year-end fell by 7%. Prepayments have increased by 137% (CHF 1,316,000 in 2020 vs. CHF 555,000 in 2021) and are certainly linked to the explosion of savings during the pandemic.

From an investment valuation point of view, the year 2021 will have been stable compared to 2020. But this quick observation masks the difficulty of investing members' assets.

Covid's pandemic and the shutdown we recorded in the first half of 2020 have created bottlenecks in some supply chains, one of the consequences of which is a significant decorrelation between supply and demand. Nevertheless, as far as the bond portfolios managed by the Mutual Association are concerned, given that the bonds are held until maturity, the impact will be felt on the annual valuation, with the recording of an unrealized gain or loss. This is what we have seen in 2021 when valuing La Mutuelle's management mandates, as the unrealized gain recorded in 2020 has been reduced from CHF 1,578,000 to CHF 956,000. The members of the Investment Committee therefore expect that the valuation of the investments at the end of 2022 will generate allocations to provisions, thus increasing the expenses and negatively impacting the result.

Negative interest will have a significant impact on La Mutuelle's results for the year 2021 as it is 26% higher than in 2020 (CHF 743,000 compared to CHF 591,000 in 2020). The budget forecasts for the year 2022 show an estimated expense of CHF 950,000, i.e. an increase of 28% compared to 2021. The discussion on the impact of negative interest on the accounts of members with significant net assets.

The increase in interest rates has made it possible, at the end of 2021, to invest part of the cash in CHF of La Mutuelle and GPAFI in bonds and securities allowing to obtain a net return close to 0% and higher than the negative interests (-0.75%). However, it is important to realize that, for La Mutuelle's assets, the reinvestment of maturing bonds will impact the income. Taking into account the next bond repayments, of which CHF 14 million in 2022, it is undeniable that revenues will continue to decrease over the next few years while expenses are expected to increase (IT changes, negative interest), hence the importance of the presence of reserves which serve as a safety cushion.

During the year 2021, the members of the Investment Committee have also started to review the investment policy in order to revise and modify, if necessary, the strategy adopted until now, the objective remaining the minimization of risk. This review will continue in 2022.
