



31 January 2023

A review of events of the past month

Dear colleagues,

Greetings, and a happy and prosperous 2023 to you all.

This year is a return to and continuation of traditions; a mix of the “best of the world before and the best of the world to come”.

January was marked by the "return" of the "*galette des rois*" in HQ, and the Staff Union Committee would like to thank the many of you who came to this event. We were happy that, finally, we were able to share this moment together! (Click [here](#))

We would like to stress that the Staff Union is you and that we are nothing without your support and approval. We are strong with all our members, and every battle is fought on behalf of all.

The Staff Union would like, as the Chairperson said in her speech at the “galette”, that this year should be one of caring and support, with solidarity at the heart of work and professional relations.

With this in mind, the Staff Union looks forward to seeing many of you either in person or virtually at its Annual General Meeting, which will be held on **2 February**.

In addition to the 2023 programme, important topics such as "Work to be carried out/pursued with the Administration, How to better represent and mobilize members and Action plans for improving our international presence", will be discussed at the Meeting, and we'd really like to hear your thoughts on them.

New legal adviser

A new legal adviser has been recruited and will take up her functions in the coming months. In order to ensure that members have access to legal services in this transition period, the Staff Union has put in place a legal team, including the interim ad hoc legal adviser, legal assistant and a select number of Staff Union Committee members who are doing their best to reply to the

numerous demands for legal support and advice. The Staff Union thanks its members for their understanding and patience in this regard.

Parental leave negotiation

The Staff Union and the Administration have continued the negotiations on the new parental leave policy and hope to finalize them soon. While the spirit is generally collaborative and consensual, there are still some issues that remain of concern to the Staff Union and that are at the heart of the current negotiations. We remain committed to advocating for a fair parental leave policy, with major improvements for all ILO staff.

Flexible Working Arrangement negotiation

The Staff Union and the Administration have made very positive progress in the negotiations on the new Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) and we look forward to its implementation in the next couple of months.

Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) meeting

On 27 January, the Staff Union and the Administration met in the Joint Negotiating Committee for the first time this year. We discussed the JNC work priorities for 2023; a proposed new policy on electronic personnel files; proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations reflecting the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) decisions to be implemented in 2023 regarding pay scales for G staff; the implementation of the decisions of the ICSC regarding new parental leave provisions; proposed amendments to the IGDS on personal promotions; a proposal to extend the competence of the ILO Mediator to staff members of the ITCILO-Turin; the list of independent panel members for job interviews under Annex I of the Staff Regulations; an update on the transition to the new Administration; and the number of work-months allocated to the Staff Union Committee.

The JNC is the most important venue for social dialogue in the ILO, and this was our first opportunity to officially meet the new ADG for Corporate Services, Mr Hao Bin. We will give you more details in the upcoming AGM.

And an update from the regions...

Africa

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, and secondarily the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, there is permanent inflation worldwide. As a result of this inflation, African currencies are losing their value and the purchasing power of staff is decreasing. Staff in the African region are currently particularly concerned about this situation. In Egypt, for example, for the G5 step 1 grade: the salary in January 2022 was USD 1,309. In March 2022, it dropped to USD 1,063. In December 2022, the salary of a G5 is equivalent to USD 688. This means that in less than a year, the value of the wage has decreased by 47%.

The ILO, in collaboration with other UN agencies, could consider changing the US dollar salary scale for local staff in Africa on an ad hoc basis, as well as the possible inclusion of substantial bonuses, in addition to the standard remuneration mechanism of the salary surveys conducted at regular intervals by the ICSC.

Europe and Arab States

Colleagues working in Ukraine face even more difficult conditions with winter weather, power cuts, service disruptions and more frequent military attacks. Yet they are coping, restructuring project activities, undertaking missions, and showing incredible ingenuity and resilience.

As fresh economic indicators published at the beginning of the year confirm, most countries in the region are facing high inflation, depreciating currencies and decreasing standards of living – in Hungary alone, the price of foodstuffs increased by over 40% in 2022. In light of the newly approved ICSC salary survey methodologies, colleagues actively participating in their respective local salary survey committees will need all the support available to make the most of the salary review processes.

Americas

The Regional Staff Union for the Americas and the Caribbean started this year very positively. They returned to work in the office at 100%, which has been very rewarding for the staff after long periods of telework.

They have also continued working together with the Regional HR colleagues on the review of local staff selection procedures. The first review took place in August 2010 having had the selection procedures since 1992. They hope to finalize the second revision by March this year.

The staff in the region are highly concerned because it has been three years without a Regional HR Coordinator. It is hugely important that this post be filled. Even more critically important though is the need for a Regional Director, as they have not had one for almost a year. The region is important and requires having its management team complete.

Current political situation in Peru:

There has been a forced "coup d'état" and the dissolving of Congress in Peru. Peaceful protests in the country have been overtaken by violent acts targeted at police stations, public buildings, banks, etc. The police have reacted and, unfortunately, 50 protestors have been killed. The Government has announced the implementation of the "national emergency situation", restricting democratic rights, and allowing the armed forces to support the police. Protests still continue, which has brought uncertainty and insecurity in the country. In response to this, and as per the recommendation of the UNDSS, the Office in Lima for example, had to go back to telework for three days last week and will have to stay alert as to how this situation develops.

We are confident that we shall overcome this complex situation and a solution will be reached soon.

Asia and the Pacific

The Staff Union in Asia and the Pacific lobbies for stronger social protection and the promotion of staff health and well-being. A healthy workforce contributes to increased productivity and a more vibrant Organization. This can be achieved by ensuring ease of access to medical services for all staff and by forging stronger partnerships with reputable medical service providers, including in those remote duty stations far from field offices, and lobbying the Director-General to increase SHIF's support to enable it to widen and improve its operational capacity.

“United we bargain, divided we beg”.

Once again, the Staff Union in Asia and the Pacific has done justice to this mantra. The field offices in the region stand united and strong in protecting the welfare of members in the region especially in the more challenging field offices. They also benefit from the strong support of the Staff Union Committee at the global level.

Thank you for having taken the time to read this bulletin, and let's look forward to a bright and positive month of February.
