



1 March 2023

## A review of events of the past month

Dear colleagues,

Greetings. We hope that you and your respective families are all well.

The month of February saw a significant increase in Union membership, and we take the opportunity to welcome our new colleagues who have joined the Staff Union. We are grateful for the support and the trust you have placed in us, and we say thank you. United we become very strong and bargained, and divided we beg, as our motto goes.

On 2 February, the Staff Union had its first Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the year. Under the skilful leadership of your AGM chairperson for the year, José Tossa, the Committee presented for approval the [programme and strategy of the year](#). An Internet connection collapse in HQ for about an hour did not stop the functioning of the AGM. Our Chairperson, Severine Deboos, submitted a Resolution concerning the impact on salaries of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). The Internet connection came back just on time to allow members to massively approve the [resolution](#).

The AGM was also the opportunity for the Committee, including the regional titulars, to meet with the Director-General, for the second time since he took office. The exchange covered the concrete measures and commitments to promote diversity in the ILO; progress made on negotiations and ensuring a conducive environment for successful negotiations, which are expected to take place this year, on the contract policy, mobility, recruitment and selection, structural reform and the need to ensure cohesion and coherence; protecting salaries – both for local and professional staff – and the capacity of SHIF.

The SU negotiation team on Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA) is still waiting on the draft new policy, a result of intensive work between the SU and the Administration. The draft policy has been submitted to the DG for his final review and we hope it will be published sooner than later as the staff eagerly awaits. The procedures are also being finalized, and a programme of information sessions and training will be communicated to all staff to ensure a smooth implementation of the policy in the spring.

You will have noticed that the broadcast on Personal Promotion for General Service categories in HQ and the field has been released this month. A very nice and well-deserved opportunity to celebrate the hard and dedicated work of colleagues. The Staff Union at the same time wishes to express its regret that only colleagues funded from RB can access this recognition. We would wish that this exercise be opened to colleagues with “TC Contracts”, and we have reiterated this position at our last JNC.

### **Union blog**

The SU communications team "relaunched" its [blog](#) this month. As you may have already read, three articles have already been published for the month of February. The team has decided to publish one article per week (on Wednesdays at 2 p.m.) and hopes that you will enjoy this new weekly appointment. In order not to miss any episode, we encourage you to subscribe to the Union blog. The communications team has the ambition to publish all the articles in paper format in December, which will be available as a "real newspaper" for all those who wish to have a retrospective of the year 2023. In order to remain environmentally friendly, we will also offer pre-orders of this future journal.

If you would also like to contribute articles on a sporadic or regular basis, please contact us at [syndicat@ilo.org](mailto:syndicat@ilo.org).

### **From the regions:**

Here is an update on some events in the regions, while acknowledging that there are unfortunately many others that are not mentioned but that are affecting colleagues on a daily basis. We reiterate that we are in solidarity with all our colleagues in these difficult situations.

#### **Africa**

The SU representation in Africa is planning to organize its first ever “Union Day” in April 2023. The day aims to answer questions, listen to suggestions and simply converse with staff in the region about current activities, reclassifications, respect in the workplace, etc., and is very open to discuss any other topic.

For the colleagues who are not yet part of the Staff Union and are hesitating, this will be the perfect opportunity to talk about joining us.

An official communication will be sent to the staff in the region in due course aiming at a massive participation in this first edition in Africa.

#### **Asia and the Pacific**

Election time is up and running in the Asia and the Pacific region. Country Offices have started to organize their respective Electoral Committees and announce their election timelines. The target date to accomplish voting is by March 31 and hopefully come this April, we can announce the official new set of Staff Union Representatives in the region. SUC Global makes it possible for country offices to vote online as they prefer. Definitely, another exciting time for the region!

#### **Europe and Arab States**

A 7.8 magnitude earthquake occurred in southern Türkiye, which affected eleven provinces on 6 February 2023. Approximately nine hours later, another 7.5 magnitude earthquake struck.

Following this, on 20 February 2023, a 6.4 magnitude earthquake hit Hatay province affecting the surrounding provinces. These earthquakes were the most devastating to hit earthquake-prone Turkey in more than 20 years and was as strong as the one in 1939, the most powerful recorded there. Minor aftershocks have continued in the region.

Unfortunately, as of 26 February 2023, it has been reported that more than 18,000 buildings have collapsed, more than 90,000 buildings have been heavily damaged, more than 44,374 people have lost their lives and more than 63,000 people have been injured. Huge devastations in various parts of socioeconomic life are foreseen. Inclusive and equitable responses should be integrated into the recovery and reconstruction period.

There were losses of lives and serious injuries of our colleagues' family members and collapsed or highly damaged homes. Our implementing partners in the region have also experienced similar negative effects. Colleagues from the Türkiye office are all working to rapidly convert the resources of existing projects to aid earthquake victims. First-hand aid has been delivered and the programmes for decreasing socioeconomic negative affects with the main target of "decent work for all" are designed. We stand in solidarity with our colleagues and thank you all in advance for giving towards the fund-raising campaign being organized by the Staff Union.

Arab States' colleagues were also affected by the multiple earthquakes that caused severe damage in Syria and Turkey and which was felt in Lebanon, Jordan, and the Occupied Territories. Staff have been active to provide support in planning the response in Syria. In Lebanon and the Occupied Territories, where service disruptions, economic crisis, and security instability are on-going, the earthquake triggered an emotional response that put a strain on staff. However they are to be admired for their resilience and adaptability and they are engaging creatively to perform their duties. We stand in solidarity with them.

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

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