



2 May 2023

A review of events of the past month

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

Below are highlights of the Staff Union's activities in April.

Update on negotiations

Flexible Working Arrangements

Discussions with HR are nearing completion on the wording of the FWA and the procedure for IRIS. The first Town hall for the DG has been rescheduled for 11 May, during which the importance of the FWA will be emphasized, and the go live will hopefully be announced for 1 July 2023. Subsequently, three webinars will be held for staff to learn about the new policy.

Parental Leave

Collective Agreement negotiations are ongoing and various topics are being discussed. There is still confusion surrounding the replacement of staff, and the current process is not working effectively. In view of the release of the UN ST/AI, which followed HR's initial suggestion on the Collective Agreement, there are still important aspects that need to be addressed in the agreement (such as contract-related issues).

Generic Job Descriptions

On 27 April, the Staff Union Committee ratified without opposition the new Collective agreement on the introduction of the new generic job descriptions (GJDs) for regular budget positions in the Professional category worldwide and the General Service category at headquarters. The current GJDs are over 20 years old, and the tasks have evolved significantly in that period. The Staff Union and the Administration convened a group of subject-matter experts who reviewed the GJDs for technical specialists, and produced a new set of GJDs that will not require the dual generic-specific duties, with space for managers to specify the fields of work and other specificities of each post. Managers will need to consult with staff to adapt the job descriptions for individual positions, using the new GJDs.

We also drafted GJDs for a new Evaluation job family, and will continue reviewing the remaining job families. At the same time, the Administration committed to ensuring that the grading of all positions is coherent and consistent throughout the Office, regardless of the source of funding,

by benchmarking the JDs for extra-budgetary posts to the new ones, which is good news for our TC colleagues. In addition, “in the event that a change is needed in the content of a generic job description such as in relation to a structural change, a new system or a change in a process, the parties shall consult accordingly, and the relevant generic job descriptions shall be updated.” The Staff Union and the Administration will sign the agreement on 5 May.

A safe and healthy working environment is a fundamental right

On 28 April, the ILO celebrated the World Day for Safety and Health at Work to promote the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases globally. 28 April is also the International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers organized worldwide by the trade union movement, since 1996, to honour the memory of victims of occupational accidents and diseases.

This is the first World Day for Safety and Health since a safe and healthy working environment was included as a fundamental principle and right at work. As we know, Members of the ILO have an obligation to respect, promote and realize, in good faith and in accordance with the ILO Constitution, all fundamental rights including the fundamental right to a safe and healthy working environment.

The ILO itself must demonstrate leadership and show exemplary behaviour when it comes to ensuring a safe and healthy working environment within its operations. The Staff Union calls on the Administration and staff to practice what we preach and to reflect on what is required to ensure a safe and healthy working environment within our operations.

Staff Union lunch in HQ and online coffee

The Staff Union continues its “Join our table” lunch in HQ, a time for sharing both lunch and views. It has been really a rich experience so far and we hope to see more of you soon. We had another virtual coffee today where many from the regions participated and asked questions, to which the Chairperson responded. The next one is scheduled for 6 June, and we look forward to connecting with you online.

Below is an update on some events and actions 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.

From the regions:

Africa:

The need for solidarity with our colleagues in difficulty is at the heart of the Staff Union’s values. In the current context of armed conflict in Sudan, we wish to express our full support to our colleagues who are experiencing disruption in their professional and personal lives. We are aware of the challenges they are facing, and we are ready to offer them all the help they need to overcome this difficult period. We hope that the situation in Sudan will stabilize quickly and that our colleagues will be able to return to work in safety.

Union Day

In the run-up to Africa's Union Day, the local committees of the region organized some very interesting activities in April 2023 on various themes, mobilizing staff in their duty stations. For example, the Antananarivo office discussed the issue of cancer screening for both women and men. Dependants also took part in this activity. The Pretoria office discussed the issue of staff development funds.

After an initial postponement, the first session of Africa's Union Day will take place on Wednesday, 17 May 2023. A Zoom invitation will be sent to staff in the region in early May. The aim of the day is to allow staff in the region to come together and directly express their concerns and needs regarding working conditions and trade union rights. The Africa Union Day also aims to increase union membership by showing the practical benefits of union involvement. Union representatives encourage staff to become more involved in union activities on a global scale.

Americas:

On 3 April, Ms Sandra Rico assumed the position of Regional Human Resources Coordinator based in Lima. The Regional SU for the Americas wishes her every success in her new position. The Regional Titular Member will request a meeting in the next few days.

Our region is highly concerned because it has been almost a year with no Regional Director duly appointed. It is very important that the region has a complete management team.

Asia and the Pacific:

Congratulations to our newly elected local Staff Union Committees in the region. The new term serves as an opportunity for the new batch of Officers to uphold the mandate of the Staff Union and strengthen the cause in the Asia and Pacific Region. In order to make the transition go smoothly, a briefing session on their roles and responsibilities is in the pipeline of activities being organized for the region, in collaboration with the SUC at Headquarters. This training is a priority as it has been decided to move the Regional Meeting for Asia and the Pacific to September 2023.

The Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, Ms Chihoko Asada-Miyakawa, recently visited the Philippines and had the opportunity to meet with the local SU Committee in the country office. They openly discussed a number of matters to further promote staff welfare in the country. The result of the dialogue entailed a need for a closer collaboration with Management, the Human Resources Unit in the region and Headquarters, on a request particular to SHIF matters. The Staff Union will continue its efforts to strengthen the dialogue mechanism in the region.

Lastly, the Staff Union wishes also to applaud the Management's initiatives in CO-Islamabad for opening a day-care to support staff with parenting responsibilities. The article was published in ILO News on 12 April and full details are here: https://intranet.ilo.org/en-us/inside/pages/islamabad_daycare.aspx.

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