



5 June 2023

## **A review of events of the past month**

Dear colleagues,

We hope that you and your respective families are all well. May was another very busy month for the Staff Union, both at headquarters and in the regions. It started with the participation of dozens of Staff Union members, including interns, in the customary 1st of May parade. It was a great opportunity to express our solidarity with the workers of the world, and to enjoy each other's company on a sunny day.

Also as usual, the month ended with many colleagues gearing up for the ILC. Below are highlights of the Staff Union's activities in May.

### ***FWA (Flexible Working Arrangements)***

The FWA Policy and Procedure have been published this month! It has been the result of extensive and constructive negotiations, and we should all be committed to be ready for the implementation as of July 1<sup>st</sup>. This will require certainly consultation, coordination and dialogue within the teams to ensure that the Policy is understood and used in all its modalities, with the spirit of combining and balancing individual needs with team dynamic and needs. Please go to the relevant webpages to look, read the IGDS, listen to the recordings of the webinars and look at the FAQs and presentations. If needed, HRD can respond to your questions, and your Staff Union is of course available.

### ***Parental leave***

The parental leave negotiations are still ongoing, as a Collective Agreement with more details on the implementation of the new policy is yet to be finalized and agreed.

### ***Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC)***

The Staff Union and the Administration held the second meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee for this year, with a packed agenda that included the annual reports of the JAAB and the Mediator; the revised priorities of the JNC for 2023; the current situation and anticipated changes to the organizational structure; the upcoming negotiations retreat on mobility and the harmonization of the working conditions of RB and TC colleagues; the pending IGDSs on OSH; and support to staff in crisis response.

The Staff Union called for the Administration to fully apply the guidelines on restructuring, in light of the ongoing changes to the structure of the organigramme and the creation of action programmes. The JNC agreed to prioritize the implementation of the Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA), the new Generic Job Descriptions, and the Parental Leave policies, as well as the subjects for the upcoming (October) retreat. After the current negotiations are completed, the parties will undertake discussions on disciplinary measures, anti-harassment policy, the review of the terms of reference for the compensation committee and the Learning strategy.

The Staff Union also underscored the importance of providing support during and after the increasing crises situations with adequate structures in place, and our concern with the increasing use of project staff to run offices without due support and recognition. The Staff Union and the Administration agreed to quickly select a team of facilitators for the retreat and to meet again in September.

### ***Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA) Meeting***

The Staff Union participated in the meeting of the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA), which took place the second week of May in Budapest. Carlos Carrión-Crespo, Guillaume Filhon and Eva Mihlic attended on behalf of the Staff Union. The representatives of the members met with the Chair of the ICSC; the Chief of the Compensation and Classification Section of the UN; the Head of the UN Global Service Centres; and the Chairs of the other two main federations, UNISERV and FICSA. The meeting discussed the worrying decision of the ICSC to conduct a new compensation package review for professional staff, after the previous one reduced overall compensation for budgetary reasons alien to the real purpose of the international civil service. It also discussed the growing security challenges facing field staff; the proposals to launch a review of the compensation package for National Officers, which we welcomed; the proposal to create a joint chamber of the two administrative tribunals, which the CCISUA opposes; and the growing attention paid to racism in the UN, which we regret has not been enough.

The CCISUA adopted resolutions on each subject, expressing these views. In addition, the participants discussed the agenda of the upcoming meeting of the ICSC (Montreal, July 2023), mental health issues, health insurance schemes, and pension fund matters. Finally, the members elected its new board, of which Carlos Carrión-Crespo will serve as Vice-President for Communications and Outreach, ensuring the continued presence of our Staff Union in the leadership. The new President will be Nathalie Meynet from UNHCR. The members thanked the outgoing board, including our treasurer Yvan Poulin as General Secretary. We join them in thanking Yvan for his great contribution to the effective representation of the interests of all international civil servants.

### ***Collective Agreement on the new Generic Job Descriptions (GJDs)***

As we mentioned in the last monthly broadcast, the Staff Union and the Administration signed, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May, the Collective Agreement on the new Generic Job Descriptions (GJDs), which launched the process of replacing the current twenty-year-old GJDs. The new GJDs will represent the only list of duties, with flexibility to add job-specific information. The new generic job descriptions will be developed through a consultative process involving a large number of serving officials of all grades from the regions and headquarters and within this, a smaller number of designated subject-matter experts, managers, HRD and the Staff Union, and they will be annexed

to the agreement as they are approved. The agreement establishes that every official will receive a new template, which they will discuss with their responsible chief. Importantly, they provide an important benchmark for positions funded from extra-budgetary resources and seek to ensure overall consistency and alignment of grade levels and required qualifications between regular budget and extra-budgetary positions.

The Staff Union and the Administration have jointly agreed on the GJDs for the job families of technical officers and, for the first time, evaluation specialists.

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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 first Union Day in Africa took place on Wednesday, 17 May 2023, via Zoom for 2 hours. It was a resounding success, exceeding all expectations and surpassing initial forecasts. The historic day was marked by an unprecedented mobilization, bringing together more than 200 colleagues and becoming the largest union gathering ever organized in Africa. This triumph demonstrated the determination and strength of solidarity within the Africa region.

Initially, very few people believed that it would be possible to hold a Union Day on this scale in Africa. However, against all odds, the turnout was overwhelming, testifying to the commitment and determination of colleagues to make their voices heard. The massive turnout was surprising, and was seen as a tangible sign of the importance attached to Union issues and staff welfare within the ILO in Africa.

The presence of the Director-General, the Regional Director for Africa and the President of the Global Staff Union added an exceptional dimension to the day. Their active participation and support reinforced the legitimacy and scope of the event. Their presence also testified to the institutional recognition given to the concerns and demands of colleagues in Africa.

The opening speeches underlined the vital importance of the Union Day and expressed deep gratitude to all colleagues for their valuable contribution. They praised the determination and courage of the participants, who dared to believe in the possibility of creating meaningful change. The organizers, namely the regional titular member for Africa (**Remy Bertrand Kama Kama**) and the alternate member in Geneva (**Leillah Abdallah**), were warmly congratulated for their brilliant initiative and their ability to mobilize so many colleagues from the region. As an African proverb says: "Alone, we go faster; together, we go further".

The organizers truly embodied this wisdom by bringing staff together to create meaningful and lasting change. Their exemplary collaboration paved the way for greater solidarity and a stronger collective voice for ILO staff in Africa.

An open and constructive dialogue was established, allowing colleagues from the region to ask questions and obtain precise and concrete answers. Concerns about pay, restructuring, mobility, SHIF and other important issues were addressed with seriousness and commitment. The members of the Staff Union Committee played a key role in providing practical solutions and allaying concerns.

In conclusion, the Union Day in Africa will remain engraved in the annals of the Union and the Africa region as a totally unimaginable success. As Africa's regional titular member Remy Bertrand Kama points out, ***"This day was a historic turning point, proving that when we unite, we are capable of achieving the impossible"***. Despite initial doubts, colleagues proved that mobilization and solidarity can create concrete change. The day strengthened the voice of ILO staff in Africa, demonstrating the crucial importance of Union issues and ILO staff rights. The success of this historic event is a reminder of the importance of perseverance and belief in the possibility of making a difference.

## **Asia and the Pacific**

### ***Request of constituents for improvement of SHIF services***

The Staff Union recently had two opportunities to meet with the Director-General and his senior management. First during the Town hall Meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May, which was followed by the Staff Union Committee Meeting with the DG held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May, wherein Regional Titulars had the opportunity to join both meetings online.

The request of the constituency in Asia and the Pacific and other regions on improvements of our SHIF system was shared with the DG and highlighted that colleagues face real challenges on some of the components of the SHIF coverage, in particular the need to better support outpatient medical needs for all staff, especially staff in lower salary grades. There is a need to rethink through how the Organization can ensure that our colleagues do not have to advance – or even not to be able to get the medical support they need – for reasons of limited financial capacity upfront.

The second point shared was the need for claims to be processed faster through endorsement of additional support to the capacity of the SHIF Secretariat.

### ***SU Mission to CO-Dhaka***

The Staff Union conducted a successful mission to the ILO Country Office in Dhaka. The mission was represented by the Deputy Regional representative for Asia and the Pacific, Yuka Okumura, from 15-18 May. Yuka was able to meet with all the newly elected SUC Officers of CO-Dhaka and had a bilateral meeting with the new SU Chairperson, as well as the outgoing Chairperson. Thanks to the great support of the SUC Chairperson, Ms Shipra Choudhury and other colleagues, she met and had discussions with many SU members and non-members individually and in groups.

Additionally, she paid a courtesy call to the Country Director and discussed issues of common interest to promote gender equality, inclusion and diversity, career and development opportunities as well as assurances of healthy and safe working environment for all. There was also a discussion to improve the planning of recruitment and selection and the internal communication of the vacancies. There was also a consensus that the Staff Union will collaborate

with the management closely for current initiatives on technical cluster restructuring of the country office, coordinating with the Regional HR Partner.

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Thank you for having taken the time to read this bulletin. We wish all our colleagues working for the Conference the very best and let's look forward to a bright and positive month of June.

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