



16 June 2023

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
FIRST SESSION**

2 February 2023

Record of decisions

The Chairperson of the Union Committee declared the first session of the Annual General Meeting open and welcomed the participants to this hybrid face-to-face and virtual session.

1. Election of a Chairperson of the AGM

Mr José Tossa, a member of the Staff Union for about 30 years, former Union representative and member of the Staff Union Committee, was proposed by a member of the Assembly. This proposal was seconded. He was elected Chairperson of the Assembly without opposition.

2. Adoption of the agenda (doc. [SU/AGM/2023/1/D.1](#))

The Chairperson of the Assembly asked if there were any other items to be added to the agenda, as communicated, which the Assembly also wished to discuss.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee wished to add an item on the draft resolution on the impact on salaries of the amendment to the Statute of the International Civil Service Commission (doc. [SU/AGM/2023/1/R.1](#)), submitted on 31 January 2023. She also wished to announce, under Miscellaneous, a change in the composition of the Staff Union's Assistance Fund (SUAF).

The Chairperson of the Assembly proposed to add the item on the draft resolution under item 3bis, after the discussion on the Staff Union's draft programme and strategy for the year 2023.

The General Assembly adopted the agenda as amended.

The Chairperson of the Assembly gave the floor to the Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee began her address by announcing her appointment as Chairperson of the Staff Union by the Staff Union Committee as of 1 December 2022, her predecessor having decided to step down. The latter becoming First Vice-Chairperson in the Bureau. She expressed the great honour and responsibility of this mandate and thanked her colleagues in her Department, her team and her manager for having quickly freed her to take up this challenge. She also thanked the entire Bureau, Secretariat and Committee for their support and backing.

3. Discussion of the draft Programme and Strategy of the Staff Union for the year 2023 (doc. [SU/AGM/2023/1/D.2](#))

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee announced the presentation of the draft Programme and Strategy for 2023, which is in line with the Union's five-year strategy and the lessons learned and progress achieved in recent years.

A [video](#) introducing the Committee members was shown. Several members of the Staff Union Committee [presented](#) the project and its main actions, mentioning in particular industrial relations, job security, career development, staff security, health and safety at work and health and well-being, as well as issues specifically affecting field staff.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee took the floor again to provide details of the negotiations underway. The year 2022 was marked by a lot of preparation and discussions, without prejudice, with the Administration to make progress on certain issues, which in the end could not be concluded in 2022. With the arrival of the new Director-General of the ILO in October 2022, the Staff Union and the Administration were able to make progress on two important issues:

The first, which both parties have committed to finalize by the end of January 2023, corresponds to the new working-time policy. Its final version should be shared in the next few days. This policy goes beyond telework by proposing a broader application of what working-time arrangements mean, and by taking into account the work-life balance in a more modern way. It applies to everyone, in the field and in Geneva, for both professional and organic categories. The policy strikes a balance between the necessary flexibility in the organization of working time and the need for collective team time, given the dynamics of the duty station. We are waiting for the Director-General's decision as to whether or not to grant us certain outstanding points. The months of February and March will be dedicated to training and awareness-raising, to the implementation of a new IRIS module and the necessary logistics. Implementation and its monitoring and evaluation are expected in the first quarter of 2023.

The second issue is the new policy on parental leave, with the aim of aligning with the advances at the level of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), while moving from a maternity leave policy to a parental leave policy offering coverage for all staff (regardless of the source of funds) and extending the duration of parental leave. It contains a number of advances of which the Staff Union and the Administration can be proud. The Administration has already put in place transitional measures to allow colleagues who are about to become parents to benefit from it. We are in the process of finalizing the final elements of the article of the Staff Regulations that will be amended, a new collective agreement, and a new IGDS.

In addition, new IGDS guidelines on health and safety at work, and on new job descriptions for P and G categories at headquarters are also being negotiated.

Interruption due to a connection problem cutting off contact with remotely connected Assembly members.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee, after consultation with the Committee, informed the members of the Assembly in the room that the decision had been taken to continue the General Assembly in view of the availability of the room, the interpreters, the lack of a quorum, and regretting the impossibility for those who were connected online to continue to participate.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee continued by announcing the next major priorities for future negotiations, decided in agreement with the Administration and with the Joint Negotiating Committee. These are

- mobility policy, including a discussion on recruitment and selection. The Staff Union would also like to address the aspect of career development and career paths;
- contractual policy and harmonization of contractual conditions.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee described the current negotiating climate as constructive, seeking solutions that make sense for us and the colleagues we represent, and for the Administration, taking into account its constraints.

Another priority of the Staff Union concerns the functioning of the Staff Union, with a view to better representation and mobilization of our members. Managing the role of legal adviser last year was complicated, but we were able to mobilize additional support to continue representing staff. The new legal adviser, Natalia Delgado, will arrive on 1 May. She is currently a professor at the University of Southampton and has been a legal adviser to several unions and trade union federations. She has worked at the ILO for SafeWork, ACTRAV and COOP. She speaks Spanish, French and English and is the mother of two children.

The management of elections, which take place every two years in the field (this year in Asia and Europe and Arab countries) and at headquarters with the Union Stewards, is also an important issue. The Office is aware of the key role played by local representatives, who are on the front line on a daily basis, and of the need to support and equip them to carry out their duties. As the training routine had suffered during the Covid-19 period, the Committee was determined to provide more training and capacity-building activities in the programme.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee also mentioned, internally, the need to improve communication. The practice of monthly newsletters will continue to share developments and the Union is open to suggestions for improvement. We want to conduct more surveys, including the major survey on Technical Cooperation (TC) contracts that took place in 2022. Reflections are underway to be more in touch with colleagues' concerns and to keep the

links with the Section of Former Officials with the Interns' actions. At the international level, the link must be maintained with the ICSC.

The Chairperson invited the Assembly to ask questions or make comments.

A question was raised concerning the willingness of the Administration and Human Resources to provide more support for colleagues' careers, as a means of combating contractual insecurity in the ILO.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee replied that the issue of the contract policy had been the subject of several initial negotiations in the past. The Union could not guarantee that negotiations on the subject would be concluded by the end of 2023, but would do its best, in particular by taking the opportunity of the arrival of the new Director-General, who had been elected on the basis of a speech that included a commitment to harmonize contracts. At the end of 2022, several meetings with the Administration have already taken place to understand the respective positions. The Union has also worked on its own positioning, arriving at this stage at the elaboration of principles to defend, but the details of what this implies in terms of staff rules remain to be worked out. The Director-General's rhetoric has evolved from harmonizing contracts to supporting mobility. The Union is willing to negotiate with the Administration on mobility issues, but does not want to give up on addressing the issue of contractual insecurity. It is difficult to know whether the Administration is ready to evolve, but an agreement has indeed been reached within the Joint Negotiating Committee, a social dialogue body, to address this issue.

Another member of the Assembly added that the Union's Technical Cooperation (TC) Subcommittee was understaffed, with regular departures due to the contractual situation of colleagues. The Staff Union was looking for volunteers to help compile the information needed to formulate the Union's position on this subject.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee said that the Union had mobilized resources to strengthen this union work. The results of the survey carried out in 2022 are the subject of a report that will be published. A call for candidates to join the TC Subcommittee had recently been made.

The Programme and Strategy of the Staff Union for the year 2023 was adopted by consensus.

3bis. Discussion on the draft resolution on the impact on salaries of the International Civil Service Commission reform (doc. [SU/AGM/2023/1/R.1](#))

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee wished to present the background to the process leading to this draft resolution. The Union was informed by the Administration in early 2023 of their intention to implement the ICSC statutes changes with salary implications in all country offices affected by the post adjustment changes as early as February 2023, in accordance, in the Administration's words, with the orders given by the ILO Governing Body at its November 2022 session and the Director-General's commitments to the UN General Assembly. The Union was able to obtain a delay for implementation of the decision in March rather than February, with the commitment that mitigating measures would be negotiated with the Union for the most

affected Offices. According to the Country Offices, there was a freeze on the post adjustment of up to nine points difference from the new post adjustment to be applied.

Following this commitment by the Administration, the Director General informed colleagues of this decision by e-mail. We felt that sending this message on a Friday and in the terms used was not the most appropriate way to inform colleagues, as it created a wave of anxiety and fear. The Union therefore sent a communication to colleagues in return, asking the Administration to provide us with the legal elements justifying their decision following the ILO Administrative Tribunal's judgment of a few years ago, to communicate better with colleagues on the impact of the decision, and to be able to agree as soon as possible on the mitigating measures to be put in place. When we get our first pay slips reflecting the application of the decision, we will have six months to lodge an appeal. This gives us time to study the possible legal arguments that could be invoked, in particular for the most affected Offices. At the same time, we are awaiting the Administration's proposals on mitigation measures which the Administration has undertaken to communicate to us as soon as possible, but which have not been received to date.

In view of this, the Committee has prepared this draft resolution for discussion today.

The draft resolution was read by the General-Secretary of the Union.

The connection with the participants following the remote General Assembly is restored.

The Chairperson of the Assembly welcomed back the online participants and invited the Assembly to provide any comments on the draft resolution.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee informed the reconnected Assembly members of the decision taken earlier to continue the debate, regretting their absence, and offering to come back to any previous points that might have raised questions.

A member of the Assembly suggested that other UN staff associations be made aware of the resolution, via the ILO staff representatives, so that further pressure could be put on the International Commission via the Coordinating Committee of Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA).

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee explained that other UN agencies had already been affected by a reduction in salaries. Indeed, currently a P2, Step 3, colleague at the ILO in Geneva is better paid than a P2, Step 3, colleague at the Palais des Nations. Solidarity has been expressed by staff associations in other agencies, who feel that the ILO Union is fighting for something they have already lost, but it is difficult to get more support. However, it was quite possible to amend the item in the draft resolution to refer to efforts to work with other federations and staff associations through the CCISUA on ICSC governance reform.

Another member asked how, on the basis of Articles 10 and 11 of UN General Assembly Resolution 77/256 adopted on 30 December 2022, which amends Articles 10 (b) and 11 (c) of the ICSC Statute, the Commission could claim a mandate making its recommendations binding. The two articles seem contradictory.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee replied that the Staff Union is of the opinion that there may be a contradiction between these two articles. However, the Administration does not see any. This was one of the legal points on which we had asked for clarification.

The ICSC Secretary General pointed out that the ICSC has always been a force for recommendations to the UN General Assembly. Following the ILO Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) ruling in 2018, which did not recognize the ICSC's decision-making power, the ICSC amended its statutes to declare itself not only a recommending body, but also a decision-making body. From the Administration's point of view, the ICSC has therefore met the ILOAT requirements on this main point of action of the ruling. By decision of the ILO Governing Body in October 2022, the ILO therefore had to apply the post adjustment multiplier decided by the ICSC.

A remotely connected member of the Assembly asked whether the change in salaries concerned the basic salary or the post adjustment. It was clarified that it was the post adjustment.

A member of the Assembly proposed to strengthen the argument, in connection with the paragraph starting with "Considering further". ILO staff must be paid a decent wage, especially as we need the financial means to cope with the lack of access to unemployment and health cover and, more generally, to social security in the event of job loss. We are increasingly vulnerable in a context where our contracts are becoming more precarious, which makes it all the more important to preserve our wages. This vulnerability could be reflected in the report.

The Chairperson of the Assembly gave the floor to the Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee, who invited the participant to make a proposal for a text. A reference was also made to the risk of increasing the precariousness of colleagues in the following paragraph beginning with "Deplores".

A remotely connected Assembly member explained that in South Africa, a country with a high level of unionization, local staff were aware of their rights— including the law that any worker could join a union – and would like to organize with the Federation of United Nations Staff Associations (FUNSAs). He wished to know whether management was in a position to dialogue with other unions at the local level, enabling local staff not to be terrified and to be able to dialogue. The ILO should provide guidance on how staff can organize themselves.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee gave the floor to the First Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, who explained that the Union was indeed proposing to encourage local unions to join FUNSAs. FUNSAs brings together associations of staff unions. At the global level, we are a member of CCISUA, but FUNSAs works differently at the local level. It is remarkable that workers in South Africa know their rights very well, including civil servants, and we can work together to strengthen FUNSAs in Pretoria, and work with it.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee proposed that the resolution be voted on with the following amendments:

- Under the "Considering further" and subject to appropriate legal rewording by the Union, but following the same principle, add: *"Considering finally the importance of offering a decent salary to UN staff, which should also cover situations of loss of*

employment and other risks with financial consequences, and in view of the growing proportion of staff in precarious contract situations, in particular at the ILO" and referring to "the importance of being able to provide income security to all staff, whatever the type of contract or source of funding".

- at the end of the paragraph starting with "Deplores", instead of "risk of increasing the precariousness of colleagues", prefer: "*risk of increasing the precariousness of colleagues' situation*".
- at the end of paragraph (f), add: "*and with the participation of the federations of United Nations staff associations and trade unions*".

The draft resolution as amended was adopted unanimously except for one vote.

4. Adoption of the budget for the financial exercise 2023 (SU/AGM/2023/1/D.3)

The Treasurer presented in detail the budget for the financial year 2023. With estimated expenditure equal to estimated income, the budget should be balanced.

No questions were raised from the floor.

The budget for the financial year 2023 was adopted by consensus.

5. Miscellaneous

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee announced that Craig Russon had stepped down from the Board of the Staff Union Assistance Fund (SUAF). Céline Moiret, working in the ILO Secretariat, had been appointed as the 5th member of this Board. All members of the SUAF were thanked for their commitment. It was pointed out that the SUAF was not managed by the Staff Union, and that it had its own management. The Chairperson of the Assembly thanked Craig Russon for his dedication.

The session closed at 3.30 p.m.
