



20 December 2023

A review of recent events

Dear colleagues,

Here we are at the end of 2023, and everyone will have their own vision of this special year, with its share of bad and good news. The Union has chosen, without glossing over the difficult reality, to turn to optimism to bring everyone a little warmth and goodwill.

Before giving you the latest news from your Union for this last month of the year, let's take a quick look back at 2023:

In January 2023, we kicked off with our traditional "Galette des rois" in HQ by bringing the event to the ILO HQ restaurant. It was a resounding success; this new, warmer venue made it a much more convivial occasion. Make a note of the date in your diaries for 2024: 11 January 2024.

In February 2023, at the first AGM of the year, the members of the Union Committee presented their plan for the coming year. It was presented to you in a new, more interactive format. We have had good feedback and we are continuing to improve this fundamental moment in our relationship with our members to make it livelier and more attractive.

In March 2023, for International Women's Rights Day, your Union wanted to innovate once again and created a more interactive event, which was also a great success! We were able to confirm that the links between colleagues were strong and necessary.

In May, we had to brave the elements again for Labour Day, and as always it was a great opportunity to make our voice and our convictions heard! We hope to see even more of you on May Day 2024, and we promise that it will be a sunny May Day (as confirmed by Madame Irma!).

May also saw us finally see the fruits of negotiations on 2 important subjects: Flexible Working Arrangements, with the publication of a new policy and its implementation procedure, and a collective agreement on the introduction of new generic job descriptions for posts in the organic services category at headquarters and in the field and in the general services category at headquarters financed by the regular budget.

During the summer, we prepared the signing of a new collective agreement on Maternity Protection and Parental Leave with the Administration. This agreement was finally signed in November. We are proud and happy to see an improved work-life balance within the organization and for our colleagues! ([link](#))

The Union is committed to ensuring optimal working conditions for the organization's staff.

This year, the Union has also been able to approach certain negotiations with the Administration in a new way, putting aside positions that appeared to be irreconcilable, to identify above all our common interests and move forward constructively based on shared interests. This has enabled us to agree with the Administration on new measures, to negotiate on mobility and on the harmonization of contractual conditions for staff financed by the Development Cooperation with those employed by the regular office.

In November, the Staff Union created a stir with its first mini-festival in HQ of politically committed films. We are thinking about our next edition, which we will be fine-tuning and perfecting. Initial reactions have been very positive and this encourages us to create links within the workforce with events such as these.

At a time when the UN staff family has been - and continues to be - heavily affected by the casualties in its midst in the conflict between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, this year-end reminds us how fragile peace is and remains, and the importance of our commitment, as ILO staff, to promoting our mandate of social justice.

Solidarity is at the heart of our union. Our members confirmed their commitment and support by voting for a new Committee, which took up its duties on 1 December, also renewing the Bureau. It seems that for the Union, the watchword is also, to quote a high-level source, "change with continuity". As far as we are concerned, however, continuity remains predominant... providing a stable framework to innovate, to represent you ever better and to move forward.

In 2023, your [UNION Blog](#) will begin to enter the hearts (hearts?! We're delighted that it's finding its audience, and we'll be pulling out all the stops to make it even more interesting and lively in 2024!

That's what we can say about this past year before 2023 draws to a close.

CCISUA:

Throughout the year, we continued our active engagement with the representatives of the staff in other UN agencies and with the UN management through the CCISUA. We met with them in May and November, where we discussed the important common system issues such as safety and security, OSH, mental health, discrimination and so on. This way, we maintain worker solidarity across the UN common system and our ability to protect our working conditions from pending threats, although without the benefit of collective bargaining. We will keep pushing for an effective social dialogue at all levels, and use the information we receive to mitigate any negative impacts of common system decisions.

Africa

As the year draws to a close, we would like to update you on recent developments in our African operations. We are currently paying particular attention to major concerns affecting executive assistants, requiring in-depth discussion with our new Regional Director. At the same time, a reorganization of the Independent Review Group is required following staff movements in the region.

1. Analysis of Executive Assistants' concerns:

At the heart of our current concerns are the executive assistants. Our first objective is to conduct an in-depth analysis of their specific concerns. This involves direct discussions with these employees to identify their day-to-day challenges. The aim is to draw up a clear and detailed picture of their concerns, documented in a report with specific recommendations.

2. Restructuring the Independent Review Group:

At the same time, the need to restructure the Independent Review Group is emerging as a priority. Taking into account staff movements, we are developing a transparent restructuring plan. This plan aims to ensure a smooth transition while preserving the integrity of the group and ensuring the continuity of its crucial role within our operations.

3. Individual consultation strategy for union elections:

In anticipation of the union elections scheduled for March 2024, we are considering implementing an individual consultation strategy. The aim of this is to actively engage our members, gather their specific concerns and prepare them to participate in an informed way in the electoral process. A clear and well-defined strategy is essential to ensure fair and inclusive elections.

