



Staff Union
of the International Labour Organization

Syndicat du personnel
de l'Organisation internationale du Travail

Sindicato del personal
de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo

15 May 2017

Questions and answers concerning the “No pay cut campaign”.

Since the announcement of a possible substantial reduction in the salary of the Ps and following the various actions already undertaken, two legitimate questions have been asked to the Staff Union by some of its members. In the interest of transparency and to ensure a better communication on the reasons why certain decisions had been taken by the elected Committee, the latter decided to make these reasons public.

Question 1 : Why is so much effort being put into this pay cut for professional staff and much less was done for G staff when their salaries were reduced by 1,8% in 2016 in Geneva?

The Local salary survey for the Gs is also an exercise driven by the ICSC but with a different methodology and different steps. In Geneva, according to the methodology, a committee was setup including representatives from administrations and staff unions and associations of the UN organisations.

- HQ staff representatives worked actively to defend the interests of G staff before the announcement in May 2016 that the new salary for G staff would be reduced by 1.8%.
- During the 2015 ICSC salary survey, staff representatives were able to limit the pay cut to 1.8% (a tremendous work has been done by our Geneva based staff representatives, FICSA and CCISUA together, in particular in relation to taxes issues), when the ICSC had initially proposed a reduction of 3.8%.
- We were also able to successfully argue for an increase of more than 1000 CHF per year in family allowances, which had remained unchanged since the last salary survey in 2010. This was an important victory which represented an increase in the dependent allowance from CHF 5,025 to CHF 6,398 and an increase of the child allowance from CHF 6,526 to CHF 7,939 per year.

- In summary, we were able to reduce the pay cut from 3.8% to 1.8%, increase family allowances by more than CHF1000 per year.
- All of these efforts were perhaps not perceived adequately because they were not visible. Thus, it is understandable that G staff have the feeling that staff representatives pay more attention on the pay cut of the international staff. But this is not the case and the circumstances are very different:
 - In the Local salary survey for Gs in Geneva, the staff representatives had the opportunity to work before the decision was taken and to mitigate from the inside any ICSC's attempt to decrease the salary. They thought that they couldn't do more in this situation and that the results were at least acceptable and the methodology used more or less transparent. Then there was no need to challenge it and no grounds for mobilising staff at the moment.
 - It is a drastically different scenario concerning the calculation of the post adjustment for the Ps, the staff representatives as well as the administrations were taken by surprise by the ICSC Commissioners. At the ACPAQ meeting, in February 2017 when the first results came out, the decrease proposed for P was 3,8% (which is already quite important). But, at the ICSC meeting in March in New York, the surprise came that the pay cut would be at least equal to 7,5%, without any evident justification for such a change in the numbers.
- This is why different events need different approaches. It has nothing to do with the categories of staff and of course we need to keep solidarity amongst us in the ILO but also among us in all UN organisations if some different decisions would arise from the Geneva UN Agencies' administrations.
- All the Geneva based staff associations and unions are now putting a lot of energy into opposing the proposed pay cut for professional staff because of it will have a huge impact on the future conditions of employment of each and every UN civil servant. Geneva is the first HQ duty station attacked and if we let the ICSC commissioner act that way, the same situation will happen in cascade in all UN duty stations. For your information, 86 salary surveys are scheduled in 2017.
- We believe that we are stronger united and that we shouldn't make differences between categories of staff, grade, nationality, age or gender. We call on all staff to show solidarity and support one another on all issues.

Question 2: When it happens in the Field, why there is less noise?

- Salary surveys for each staff category (G & P) are carried out periodically (usually every 5 years) in each duty station. Committees are set up for the occasion, bringing together,

under the ICSC authority, representatives of the administrations and staff representatives of all the organizations of the United Nations system based in the duty station concerned.

- Of course, in each country, there may also be pay cuts. If this is the case, the staff associations and unions based in the duty stations forgather in FUNSAs (Field United Nations Staff Unions and Associations) which take action, if necessary. In summary, it is always in the country where the salary survey is done that the battle must take place because the staff unions in the field know the situation.
- It goes without saying, given the number of United Nations duty stations all around the world, that these salary surveys constitute the bulk of ICSC's work, not to say its "lucrative business". In addition, every UN organization finances partially this ICSC (the ILO's contribution represents almost \$ 800,000).
- Furthermore, salary surveys for Ps are different from Local salary surveys for GS because they are based on two different principles governing the conditions of employment of the international civil service: the "Noblemaire Principle" for Ps and the "Flemming principle" for the Gs.
- To get back to return to the main question, why do staff unions seems to make more noise in Geneva? Because Geneva is a historic HQ duty station with the highest number of international civil servants - Consequently, the impact of a pay cut, as currently proposed, will amount to millions of dollars of economy, savings again made on the backs of the officials (following a first reduction of the compensation package entered into force in January 2017), without any real justification. If we do not stop these attacks now, they will become more important and frequent.

As you know the ILO staff Union doesn't make distinctions between staff and has always advocated for "ONE ILO". The ILO Staff Union doesn't chose its battles. The sad circumstances always force it to act, irrespective of the category of staff or the duty station.

The future of the international civil service is at stake and it is our role to defend it in the name of the two principles that make it up. So let us be supportive of each other and united in this battle that is only a beginning.
