



Letter to the Executive Heads of all common system organizations with staff in Geneva

Geneva, 7 April 2017

Dear Executive Heads,

Yesterday over one thousand common system staff met at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on the subject of the pay cut proposed by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) for staff in Geneva. The meeting was standing room only, raucous and noisy, with frequent changes of “no pay cuts, no pay cuts!” Staff voted unanimously in support of the attached resolution. Many called for strike action.

It is important to state upfront that staff do not join the UN for the paycheck. They join for the privilege of working under the UN flag. Many put their lives at risk and work extremely hard over their careers. But staff are disappointed and angry with the decision. It will lead to a real cut in take-home pay of 7.5 percent in dollar terms, on top of other cuts from the compensation review. Staff are living within their means, but adjusting to a loss in salary of almost one month per year will present huge difficulties, including for young families struggling to make ends meet given high childcare fees, rents and other costs in Switzerland. It is hard to square this cut with some of the considerable capital expenditures currently being made by organizations here.

The decision bears little relation to the macroeconomic situation in Geneva and results mainly from an earlier pay freeze, but not pay cut, in New York. The methodology is therefore questionable and without comparison to the outside world. It is also based on a change in rules two years ago designed to make the impact tougher.

We believe this decision will reduce the attractiveness of Geneva for key policy and decision-making staff, and will in so doing, reduce the profile and importance of international Geneva.

We also see this cut as part of a broader attack on all staff, and for this reason it is a matter for colleagues of all categories.

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Encl. Resolution

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We appreciate the efforts of your management teams at the ICSC to argue against the decision. However, now it is passed, **we ask your organization to support its staff by not implementing the cut.**

We see this cut as a breach of our labour rights, and as such, staff have given their associations and unions a clear mandate to contest this decision by all legitimate means, and hopefully with your support. We are ready to meet with you if necessary and look forward to a reply on your intentions with regards to non-implementation by 20 April.

We thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



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On behalf of the following staff unions and associations, members of the Geneva Group:

CERN Staff Association
ILO Staff Union
IPU Staff Association
ITU Staff Union
UNAIDS Staff Association
UNHCR Staff Council
UNOG Staff Coordinating Council
WIPO Staff Association
WMO Staff Association
The Global Fund Staff Association
IOM Staff Association Committee
WHO Staff Association
WTO/OMC Staff Association