

# **ILO STAFF UNION**

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## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** **SECOND SESSION**

**19 OCTOBER 2017**

**Annual Report of the ILO Staff Union Committee**  
**for the year 2017**

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for the year 2017**



**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

## ILO Staff Union Committee Annual Report for the year 2017

### Stormy weather

The Staff Union Committee is pleased to present the following summary of its activities in 2016-17.

As we approach our 100th anniversary, this past year must surely go down in the Staff Union annals as one of the ten most dramatic in its history.

We did warn the staff at the first session of the General Assembly that there were storm clouds ahead, but at the time we were thinking more than anything of the succession of internal ILO negotiations that were in the works at the time. There was no way we could have foreseen the turmoil that the ILO Staff Union, its representatives, a large swathe of the staff and, eventually, even the highest levels of the administration were going to be caught up in for next six months or more, when all our efforts, all our resources and all our energy were going to be put to the test if we were to remain at the helm.

The first sign of trouble ahead came in February when, following a routine survey by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) to fix post adjustment, we suddenly learned of the drastic reduction in professional salaries which was being planned for Geneva-based staff.

The Staff Union Committee, which like our partners in the administration was astounded by such a radical turn of events, immediately set about trying to discover the whys and wherefores of the decision. Looking back today on the crisis today, the least one can say is that the explanations given by the ICSC were anything but clear and transparent.

Realizing how gravely the situation could degenerate if the staff did not do something immediately, the Staff Union, under the leadership of the international federations and in close collaboration with the staff unions and associations of our sister organizations based in Geneva, launched a "*No Pay Cut*" campaign focusing essentially on the absence of any justification for the ICSC's findings and the total lack of transparency in the way the methodology used was conducted. It was vital that a stop be put right from the start to this attempt to undercut our salaries if it was not to create a precedent so that the same ploy could be used against the entire staff of the United Nations system, most of whom are stationed in the field where their isolation and dissemination in duty stations all over the world makes them more vulnerable.

While the ICSC and highest UN authorities maintained a stony silence or came up with less and less convincing explanations, the staff became more and more actively mobilized. As a result, the spring of 2017 was marked throughout by information meetings, general meetings, the adoption of resolutions and, eventually, a work stoppage during the International Labour Conference and the Conference on Human Rights, in advance of the crucial meeting in Vienna that was scheduled for mid-July. The Vienna meeting proved to be at once memorable, intense and lamentable in more ways than one, but it was ultimately positive in the sense that the decisions reached there spawned a number of measures designed to attenuate the initial pay cut, to reconsider the methodology employed and to postpone any further action till January 2018, pending the findings of a new survey of public service salaries in the United States.

It is patently obvious that, if it had not been for the mobilization of all categories of staff in Geneva and the active solidarity of our staff in the field, we would never have been so successful. Although such may

not always be the case, the Staff Union would for once like to emphasize the extremely active and professional role played by the administration, notably its preparation of highly technical documents for the Commission and the Director-General's unfailing commitment to protecting the interests of the Organization and of its staff.

The spring campaign also provided an unexpected boost to the Staff Union's medium-term strategy of establishing a genuine mechanism for collective bargaining within the UN system as a whole. The fact is that sooner or later the administration of the United Nations, as the leading advocate of durable development objectives that include the defence of fundamental principles and rights at work, is going to have to do something about the ICSC – that anachronistic rump of a would-be institutional oligarchy that is holding the whole system back – whose working methods are increasingly challenged and whose decisions reflect more than anything the wind that happens to be blowing at the time among the majority of the countries holding the purse-strings to the UN's finances. The time has come for the institution to introduce real social dialogue. And who better than the ILO to initiate such a move? Be that as it may, the ILO Staff Union, along with the leading international trade union federations, is already hard at work.

## I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME AND STRATEGY

### SECTION 1 – Objectives and priority areas of action

#### Objective No. 1: Improve industrial relations

- ✓ *Ensure effective implementation of the 2000 Recognition and Procedural Agreement,*
- ✓ *Improve the existing institutional framework to promote healthy and effective negotiations, and in transparency.*

#### Objective No. 2: Improve Job security

- ✓ *End precarious work,*
- ✓ *A fair contracts policy, including a redeployment mechanism.*

#### Objective No. 3: Ensure full social protection

- ✓ *Effective and efficient health care and pension funds,*
- ✓ *Unemployment insurance.*

#### Objective No. 4: Guarantee fair and equal conditions of employment for all staff, without discrimination based on gender, type of contracts, grades, personal and/or family status and duty station.

#### Objective No. 5: Ensure a career development path for all

- ✓ *A fair and transparent performance appraisal system,*
- ✓ *A negotiated and adequate job classification process,*
- ✓ *A fair recruitment and mobility system,*
- ✓ *A transparent rewarding mechanism.*

#### Objective No. 6: An even stronger Union

- ✓ *Maintaining and expanding our membership,*
- ✓ *Strengthening solidarity,*
- ✓ *Strengthening capacities,*
- ✓ *Improving operations, communication and coherence,*
- ✓ *Strengthening existing alliances with the international trade union federations.*

#### Objective No. 7: Enhancing staff security, safety and health

- ✓ *Enhancing staff security, safety and health with particular focus on crisis response and conflict-affected countries.*

## SECTION 2 – Staff Union Means of Action

### I. Improve industrial relations

Objective: To improve industrial relations in order to give full effect to the Recognition and Procedural Agreement.

Means of action

- Ensuring, from within the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC), that every decision or proposal presented by the administration is backed by the relevant data and, if necessary, has been the subject of consultation and/or negotiation;
- Establishing internal procedural rules setting out the lead time, deadline and terms of reference for each negotiation;
- Upgrading the negotiating skills of the staff's representatives.

**Co-Chair of the Joint Negotiating Committee:** Catherine Comte-Tiberghien

**Co-Secretary:** Elisabeth Fombuena

**Members:** Thierry Bousquet, Carlos Carrión-Crespo, Dan Cork, Yvan Poulin, Maria Marta Travieso

**Technical Advisers:** Enrico Cairola, Chloé Charbonneau-Jobin, Graciela Jolidon

The Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) is the cornerstone of the ILO's entire system of collective bargaining inasmuch as it ensures that the staff representatives have been properly informed and consulted. It allows for the validation and endorsement of the agreements, and keeps track of them. The Staff Union counted very much on a third party being appointed to preside over the JNC as a means of reducing and calming the pointless tension that it has had to cope with in the past. Whenever the JNC holds a session, discussion tends to be more objective; and yet, considering that it has so far held only two sessions in 2017, there must be a problem somewhere. The biggest problem is precisely the fact that the JNC's sessions are so few and far between, especially when the administration needs to submit documents to the Governing Body that necessarily call for consultation at the very least, but also sometimes for negotiation. We shouldn't have to negotiate with a knife at our throats just because an issue requires urgent attention. The Staff Union is not at all happy with the way things stand at present, because it feels that it is beginning to undermine the very quality of labour relations within the ILO. Meanwhile, it intends to continue doing all it can to improve the existing state of affairs as quickly as possible, as it is in the general interest of the Organization as a whole that it do so.

As regards training, the Staff Union has encouraged its representatives to take a number of courses on collective bargaining and negotiating techniques, both at the Turin Centre and through the international federations (especially FICSA) which organize excellent training course directly relating to current concerns in various areas, as well as at the major regional meetings that the Union organizes on a regular basis.

### II. Improve job security

#### A. Recruitment and selection

Objective: Sound implementation of the collective agreement on recruitment and selection, in the context of a mobility and career development approach, as well as a greater motivation and job satisfaction of staff.

### Means of action

- For confirmed vacancies, the Staff Union Committee (SUC), in collaboration with HRD, plays an important role in the review of vacancy announcements. The SUC aims at ensuring fair job descriptions and real opportunities of career development.
- The coordinator of the recruitment and selection working group is currently participating in the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC), in an advisory capacity. In terms of filling the vacancies, the action of the SUC will be reinforced by the presence of two SUC representatives in the RAMC, and it will be based on a sound implementation of the recruitment and selection procedure and the principles of transparency, due process, fairness and equity. Particular emphasis is placed on: recruiting internal candidates for career development positions; of TC+5 so that they can have job security; and the diversity of languages in order to promote French and Spanish in the interest of the organization and its effective multiculturalism.
- The SUC also aims at ensuring a good communication to staff on matters related to the new agreement on recruitment and selection procedures.
- Good relationships with the newly appointed independent members of the technical panels are important for the success of this critical new role. The SUC's purpose in this matter is to share the working group's experience, provide practical guidance and develop materials to support fulfilling their new responsibility.

**Member of the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC):** Catherine Comte-Tiberghien

**Technical Advisers:** Carlos Carrión-Crespo and Graciela Jolidon

**Substitute:** Elisabeth Fombuena

**Coordinator of the working group on recruitment and selection:** Graciela Jolidon

**Members:** Indira Bermudez Aguilar, Thierry Bousquet, Carlos Carrión-Crespo, Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, Siska Dubbert, Elisabeth Fombuena, Maria-Marta Travieso, Christiane Wiskow

### Achievements

- The Staff Union has ensured that internal candidates and TC+5 are tested fairly.
- The new rules provide for effective job mobility for candidates in the same grade.

### Challenges ahead

- Monitoring the rules that HRD has begun to introduce for competitions.
- The Staff Union believes that for competitions to be genuinely fair and objective the candidates have to be anonymous. In other words, that people who mark the papers have to be from outside the section concerned. For the purposes of objectivity there have to be two or more markers who send the marked papers to HRD without having any contact among themselves. One proposal is that there be a team of markers who are selected each time by drawing lots.
- The independent members, too, should be chosen by drawing lots rather than by the section chief who organizes the competition.
- Monitoring by the independent members also covers the oral test, and it is therefore all the more important that the short list and the results of the written test meet the most objective and impartial criteria.
- As things are at the moment, there is no guarantee that written tests are impartial and objective. Most section chiefs make sure that the tests are fair and objective, but the procedure needs to be such as to prevent any breach of the rules; if the same person organizes the competition, draws up the short list and the questions and marks the results, then the whole process may be compromised.
- A perennial problem is the bias in favour of English, which means that, culturally speaking, studies and research on the subject are all inherently skewed, as little or no use is made of sources from other languages.

## B. Contracts and employment security

### Objectives:

- To pursue the negotiation of a contracts policy that maintains an international civil service of the highest standard, while ensuring that access to the service is on the basis of equal opportunity and treatment and guaranteeing that working and employment conditions are equitable and career development opportunities are adequate.
- To further the implementation of the short- and medium-term findings of the joint SUC-HRD Survey on Technical Cooperation (TC) staff.
- To ensure that the situation of as many precarious staff as possible is regularized and is genuinely improved.
- To raise the awareness of precarious staff of their basic rights and entitlements, based on the premise that the ILO Staff Regulations apply equally to all staff.
- To defend the eligibility of staff in the titularization process and to make it a permanent feature of the Organization.
- To support the claims of ILO interns, by enhancing their representation in the field and arranging for regular performance feedback throughout the internship cycle and for the periodical revision of the stipend.

### Means of action

- Engaging in collective bargaining on the new contracts policy;
- Continuing to use legal action strategically to ensure equal conditions of employment for all staff and the managerial accountability of the administration, as well as the integration of different types of contracts in the ILO Regular Budget;
- Obtaining concrete data from the administration on the types of contracts given to ILO staff, broken down by gender, grade and source of funding;
- Encouraging the administration in the publication of leaflets and the organization of workshops, seminars and information sessions on the rights of TC staff;
- Strengthening coordination with other thematic groups on cross-cutting subjects, such as the rehiring of retired officials and intergenerational solidarity, security of employment and performance management, the regularization of staff through the recruitment and selection process and the implications of the new mobility policy.

**Coordinator:** Maria Marta Travieso

**Members:** Enrico Cairola, Carlos Carrión-Crespo, Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, Dan Cork, Siska Dubbert, Elisabeth Fombuena, Graciela Jolidon, Yvan Poulin

### Achievements

The contracts policy continues to be at the centre of negotiations with the Administration in the framework of the JNC. In November 2016, a meeting was held between the Union and the Administration at "Chateau de Penthes" with the objective of finding common issues of understanding and examine ways forward in the negotiations. No tangible results have been achieved yet which would improve the situation of precarious colleagues and establish a contracts policy that is coherent with other personnel policies, including recruitment and selection. However, the Administration has recently submitted to the Union a proposal for the advancement in the negotiations that is under examination by the Committee and which will launch again, we hope, the negotiations on the contracts policy.

The Union has continued, however, to deal with individual cases of precarious colleagues.

## **Challenges ahead**

The Union is aware of the urgency of this issue and spares no effort to ensure that it is given priority on the agenda of the Administration.

### **III. Ensure full social protection**

**Objective:** To have health care and pension funds that are effective and efficient; although there have been improvements in both cases, the situation must not be allowed to deteriorate again and the two funds must continue making improvements until they are on a firm foundation.

#### Means of action

##### **Staff Health Insurance Fund**

- Requesting and insisting on publication of the report of the working group on the SHIF; although it contains important information which the Staff Union believes needs to be shared with the persons covered by the Fund, especially on the Fund's governance, the report has still not been published;
- Monitoring the external audit requested by the Director-General; following the discovery of fraudulent claims on the SHIF, the Director-General requested an external consultant to carry out an audit in order to optimize the way the Fund is run and to prevent such a situation occurring again; the Staff Union will make sure that the audit's terms of reference are respected and that the steps taken really do provide a solution to the problems for which it was commissioned;
- Maintaining close contact with the insured persons and with the Former Officials' Section on every issue relating to the Fund.

##### **Pension Fund**

- Ensuring that participants' recommendations are taken into account in relevant decisions;
- Monitoring the proper conduct of elections to the Management Committee;
- Putting pressure on the administrations (ILO, UNJSPF) so that that the payment of pensions is assured from the date of retirement; although the delay in the payment of some pensions has been reduced, more needs to be done;
- Monitoring closely the implementation of the UN General Assembly's decision regarding the age of retirement;
- Maintaining close contact with the representatives of the Fund's participants on all relevant issues.

**Coordinator:** Elisabeth Fombuena

**Members:** Graciela Jolidon, Chantal Nahimana, Yoshie Noguchi, José Tossa, Faustina Van Aperen

**Technical Advisers:** François Kientzler (Anciens), Samir Koufane, Christopher Land-Kazlauskas, Rosinda Silva

**Member of the Compensation Committee:** Graciela Jolidon assisted by Elisabeth Fombuena

#### **Achievements**

##### **Staff Health Insurance Fund (SHIF)**

The report (dated December 2016) of the external audit on the SHIF called for by the Director-General has finally reached the Staff Union's working group, which has examined it closely. As we feared, the report's recommendations are geared mainly to outsourcing the SHIF's services to its members. So far these are

not more than recommendations, but the Union has time and again - through the relevant bodies - stressed the staff's preference for a health insurance fund that is really our own. The Former Officials' Section and the Union's titular representatives in the field have adopted the same position.

It is true to say that the services provided by the Fund have improved and the Executive Secretary has promised to go to the field to see what the situation is like on the ground and what can be done in the most problematic duty stations. The Staff Union has also been informed of the forthcoming introduction of measures to facilitate payments, such as direct payments to hospitals in the field as well as at headquarters, the use of electronic mail to send reimbursement forms and a "self-service" portal.

Communication between the Staff Union and the Fund has also improved, to the extent that the latter has responded to every question or urgent request put to it within a reasonable time.

Finally, we must not forget that this year is election year for the Fund's Management Committee. Our first step, therefore, is to see that people vote; the second to make sure that the members who are elected are genuinely committed to strengthening the Fund's human and financial resources and improve its governance so as to forestall any further attempts to outsource the SHIF's services. Any colleagues interested in submitting their candidature are warmly encouraged to do so, and all the members are urged to vote when the time comes.

### **United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF)**

Two meetings of the representatives of UNJSPF participants on the ILO Staff Pensions Committee were held, one before and one after the Joint Board's meeting in Vienna. New representatives of United Nations participants were elected to attend the Board's meetings. Along with the representatives who were not present at the meetings, the Union has been informed that the discussion once again focused on the situation of the Fund's executive chiefs, despite the fact that there were far more urgent issues on the agenda. The representatives of the UNJSPF participants on the ILO Staff Pensions Fund Committee are in the process of drafting a communication containing further details of the subjects that were discussed in the Joint Board meeting.

In addition, a number of urgent requests were taken up by the Staff Union and the Office's PENSIONS unit so that certain particularly pressing situations could be resolved to the satisfaction of our colleagues.

Finally, the Staff Union has inquired whether the introduction of the compulsory age of retirement of 65 will have any repercussions on the Fund and has been informed that it will not.

### **Compensation Committee**

One of the principles defended by the Staff Union in cases brought before the Compensation Committee is that, while compensation may be determined on the merits of each case, the general principles that are applied in one case must be equally valid in similar cases. The Committee further maintains that, whenever there is an element of doubt, the ultimate objective must be to guarantee a minimum level of protection for the workers.

Last year the Staff Union drew attention to the urgent need to establish rules of procedure and clear guidelines concerning the Committee's mandate, composition and functioning through the Internal Governance Document System (IGDS). The Joint Negotiating Committee (JNP) has set up a working group on the subject which has already met, and the Union has made some proposals that are currently being discussed.

### **Challenges ahead**

### **Staff Health Insurance Fund (SHIF)**

The Staff Union intends to wait and see what the administration plans to do about the recommendations contained in the External Auditor's report. Should it be decided to implement the recommendations, the

Staff Union will take appropriate action to prevent outsourcing, which would cause serious irrevocable damage of the kind encountered by other UN agencies that have already gone that route and bitterly regret having done so.

The Union will also monitor improvements in the running of the Fund, especially in the field.

### **Pension Fund (UNJSPF)**

The Staff Union will keep abreast of the Fund's financial situation by pursuing its dialogue with the representatives of participants and will continue to interact with PENSIONS so that it can immediately alert the staff to any emergency.

### **Compensation Committee**

Current talks have on the whole been encouraging. However, lest we confuse "speed" with "haste", the real challenge will be to ensure that the discussions are not only effective but conducted in such a way as to lead to ever better protection for the staff. Since this could well entail amending the statutes, we must be careful not to rush into things and to examine carefully any documents on the subject.

The way the administration treats the question of burn-out is another matter that we shall be taking up. Hitherto, the Committee has not recognized burn-out as an issue in its own right, though it has on occasion awarded compensation in respect of other symptoms (such as heart-related problems, for example). There is no denying that this is a difficult subject inasmuch as the human being needs to be looked at as a whole. That being so, the question is always to what extent the decisive factor is the work or the person's personal life. It is nevertheless important that the problem be tackled so that principles can be established which recognise burn-out and other work-related psychosocial problems.

## **IV. Guarantee fair and equal conditions of employment for all staff**

We all bring with us diverse perspectives, work experiences, life styles and cultures, which should be valued, respected and supported. The Staff Union Committee is committed to working to create a working environment where diversity and equality is respected and leveraged to improve organizational performance and work-life balance.

Objective: To contribute to the improvement of the working environment for all ILO officials through combating discrimination and promoting equality and diversity whilst facilitating the pursuit of a healthy work-life balance.

### Means of action

Building upon the success of the previous year and learning from the challenges faced, the Staff Union proposes continuing to work on special mechanisms/initiatives to facilitate inclusion and work-life balance, focusing on gender, equality and diversity.

More specifically, the working group will:

- Train and work with the ILO Staff Union Committee and its working groups to integrate and mainstream diversity and equality into the work of the SUC;
- Design and implement the March for Diversity Campaign;
- Develop Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and information notes with regards to:
  - disability issues at the ILO;
  - entitlements and services available under parental leave and return to work, including child and other care responsibilities;
  - stress and burnout;
  - harassment.

- Conduct disability equality trainings for staff working on selection and recruitment (SU officials, HR and job panellists);
- Assess current application forms to enhance accessibility for job applicants with disabilities (this will ensure including information on reasonable accommodation);
- Develop a fact sheet for ILO recruiters on how to ensure a disability-inclusive recruitment process;
- Review of the Collective Bargaining Agreement on Harassment and work with Staff Welfare Officer to examine how it can be translated into a zero tolerance towards harassment.

**Coordinator:** Gurchaten Sandhu

**Members:** Indira Bermudez Aguilar (Personne de référence pour les questions de genre / *Gender Focal Point*), Siska Dubbert, Elisabeth Fombuena, Vera Guseva, Yoshie Noguchi, Faustina Van Aperen

**Technical Advisers:** Laura Addati, Eric Carlson, Kroum Markov, Jurgen Menze, Clara Van Panhuys, Erlien Wubs

## Achievements

*Diversity Month.* Building on the success of last's year Diversity Month Campaign, this year's Diversity Month had a larger programme that involved the wider participation of both ILO Staff and Interns. This year's campaign was a joint effort and collaboration with the ILO SUC, the Intern Board and ILO HRD. Events included panel discussions with ILO Officials and former Officials as panellists who shared their stories and lived experience around themes such as gender, disability and sexual orientation.

*International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT).* On the occasion of IDAHOT marked on 17 May, the ILO SUC supported the GED & ILO AIDS photo campaign “LGBTI allies at the ILO” that encouraged ILO staff to take practical steps to “come out” as allies to LGBTI staff.

*Training to mainstream diversity.* In an effort to mainstream a gender and diversity perspective in the work of the SUC and its working groups, the ILO Staff collaborated with UN Care to develop a tailor-made half-day course on UN for All. The aim of the course is to promote dignity and equality in the UN and its specialized agencies. All members of the SUC were invited to take the course along with the ILO Intern Board. During the last session of the workshop, each working group of the SUC was required to identify steps and measures to mainstream diversity and inclusion in their activities for 2017.

*Working Group on Work-Life Balance.* In 2006, the Joint Negotiating Group established a joint working group on “Work-Life Balance.” The group has been inactive and dormant since 2015. This year the JNC agreed that the group should be reactivated. The JNC has requested the group to present a short to medium term work plan.

*Information notes.* The group has also started drafting fact sheets to make information on staff rights regarding entitlements such as maternity, paternity, flexitime, part-time work, etc. more accessible.

## Challenges ahead

- To keep up with the needs/requests in relation to the human resources and expertise available in the working group remains a key challenge and thus some working items are still pending.
- Shortage in time-commitment and a dedicated working group member to make progress in all of the work items.
- Prioritizing the main activities of the JNC working group for 2018.

## V. Ensure a career development path for all

### A. Personal promotions and upgrading review

Objectives:

- To ensure that the personal promotion machinery is transparent and equitable. Push for clarification regarding the eligibility of staff who are being unlawfully excluded from the exercise, such as colleagues in the ILO Administrative Tribunal, former precarious colleagues, and all others who, according to the applicable rules and GB decisions should be eligible.
- To ensure that the global reclassification exercise in the field is executed, and Independent Review Groups are established and active in all regions for the examination of job grade review appeals.
- To negotiate a mechanism to validate work experience for educational requirements in applying for new posts.

Means of action

- Participating in the joint group on personal promotions, and legal action where appropriate; also, to assist the JNC when needed.

**Members:** Carlos Carrión-Crespo (Professionals), Thierry Bousquet and Catherine Comte-Tiberghien (General Services)

As you can see in the defined objectives, the personal promotion covers several areas.

At this very moment, the joint group on personal promotion is still active but there are vacancies that need to be filled. The Staff Union will do its outmost to ensure that the group achieve its goal as soon as possible.

The global reclassification process in the field is ongoing and the Staff Union has had various meetings with HRD in close collaboration with the staff representatives in the regions. The issue of the settlement of Independent Review Groups at the regional level has been brought to the table and a specific discussion has been organized between the Staff representatives and the HR partner in Africa during the regional meeting held in Johannesburg last September. The harmonization of the Recruitment and Selection process is also an important matter to ensure equity and transparency.

The validation of work experience for educational requirements in applying for new posts has been mentioned several times in the framework of the recruitment and selection process and the Staff Union will ensure that the issue is dealt with in the appropriate forum.

The titularization exercise for all staff and the personal promotions exercise for G staff are up to date. The need to replace the management representative has delayed the personal promotions exercise for P staff until October.

### B. Training policy and performance management

Objectives:

- To ensure that staff concerns are taken into account in the ILO training policy and in the performance management system of the ILO and that policies are implemented in a fair and transparent manner.

- To ensure that the review of job descriptions in the field and headquarters is fair to the staff.

Means of action

**Training policy**

- Negotiating a training policy in line with the needs of staff at all levels and categories, in the context of the JNC;
- Reactivating the Joint Training Council under its terms of reference and the Collective Agreement on Personal Development Plans, so that the Staff Union has a voice in the use of staff development funds, the impact of training expenditure and the assessment of how proposed training programmes satisfy staff members' needs and requests;

**Performance management**

- Surveying the staff regarding the implementation of the performance management system and assessing how the introduction of a new system has responded to staff needs;
- Negotiating improvements suggested as a result of this consultation process with staff, through the JNC;
- Negotiating specific performance management procedures for staff working under TC projects and programmes, through the JNC.

**Co-chair of the Joint Training Council:** Carlos Carrión-Crespo

**Coordinator of the working group on career development:** Carlos Carrión-Crespo

**Members:** Thierry Bousquet, Harvey Clavien, Chantal Nahimana

The Staff Union has been consulted throughout the year on performance management issues, as the result of the on-going Business Process Review requires some modifications of the existing mechanisms and policies.

*Training policy:* As already mentioned, the Joint training Committee (JTC) has been reactivated. Its mandate and composition has now been agreed by the Staff Union and the administration and the first meeting will soon be convened. In this framework, the Staff Union will have a voice in the use of Staff Development Funds, the impact of training expenditure and the assessment of how proposed training programmes satisfy staff members' needs and requests. The Staff Union will seize this opportunity to ensure that every training indicated in the appraisal reports is realized and, if not, managers should justify its absence.

*Performance Management:* Under the BPR, the Staff union has been invited to several meetings to discuss the modification of the Performance Management Framework. Discussions are on-going but the Staff Union has already underlined its aim to preserve the interest of the staff in this exercise to ensure that the Performance Management Framework is used as a real tool to help colleagues in their career development. The Staff Union has received many complaints regarding this assessment tool, which will be taken into account.

The situation of our colleagues on development cooperation project is part of this discussion and the Staff Union will keep all staff informed in due course of all and any evolution of the situation on these important matters.

## VI. An even stronger Union

### A. Communication

**Objective:** To increase communication with staff on both current issues and progress achieved by the Staff Union, in close coordination with the thematic working groups.

**Means of action**

- Issuing regular updates to staff via the website and social media and by other means;
- Using creative and inclusive channels of communication, such as the posting of weekly bulletins on latest developments;
- Developing new marketing materials for various campaigns, including member recruitment.

**Coordinator:** Yvan Poulin assisted by Indira Bermudez Aguilar, Thierry Bousquet, Siska Dubbert, Elisabeth Fombuena

#### Achievements

The Staff Union is still hard at work on its means of communicating with its members.

- **Bulletins, broadcasts and banners**

These are our principal means of communication, and a succession of broadcasts this year have entailed the drafting of over 80 press releases since October 2016. Most of these were about our campaign against salary cuts, but at all times the priority has been to keep the staff up-to-date with events. Our banners have also played a major role through their ability to catch the attention not just of colleagues and members of the administration inside the ILO but also outside the Organization, where other agencies have taken up some of our slogans.

- **Information sessions**

The Staff Union held an information meeting that was attended by statisticians – here again on the subject of the proposed reduction in salaries.

- **Website and social media**

This year again, our website received over 10,000 hits and more than 24,000 pages were consulted; the average time spent on each visit to the new site also increased. The same is true of the number of “Likes” on our Facebook page, of which there are now 950, and the number of viewers is now stable at around 1,000 per issue. The weekly communications we post have likewise met with success and the feedback has been very positive.

- **New Union magazine**

The Staff Union’s working group on communication has decided to propose a fully digitalized magazine in order to improve response time and the immediate relevance of the articles proposed. The new digital magazine will very soon be on line, and as in the past contributions will be welcome from all our colleagues. The articles that were scheduled to appear in the last paper version of the magazine will all be accessible in the new online version. Since there are a number of subjects that the staff may find of interest, we can

only recommend that you sign up quickly to catch up on the latest articles on our website: <http://unionmag.ilostaffunion.org>.

## B. Membership, staff representation and training

### Objectives:

- To strengthen the capacity of the Union Stewards and new SUC members in Geneva to carry out their representative roles.
- To expand the membership base of the ILO Staff Union, and activate staff to become involved in the work of the ILO Staff Union.
- To strengthen the voice of ILO Staff in the midst of restructuring/change processes.

### Means of action

#### *Objective 1*

- Organizing basic Induction training (Module 1) for union stewards and new SUC members on the key aspects of their work in defending the rights and interests of ILO Staff (two half-day training sessions for stewards and new SUC members were held on 19 December 2016 and 30 January 2017);
- Providing induction training (Module 2) for union stewards and new SUC members on active listening and union organizing skills (recruitment and preparation for meetings);
- Providing Know Your Rights Guidance for staff representatives, beginning with the recruitment and selection process for RB (RAMC) and TC staff, performance management and reclassification (RB and TC); each guideline will form the basis for monthly brown-bag discussions or mini-training sessions with union stewards at ILO headquarters and will be made available to staff representatives in the field;
- Providing coaching support for union stewards in their work (each member of the coordinating group will be asked to work with four or five stewards, to check in with them on their work and to be a sounding board for challenges that come up; this will include joining union stewards at meetings with departmental management).

#### *Objective 2*

- Developing union recruitment campaign for 2017 that targets those regional offices and ILO HQ units with fewer members for focused organizing efforts;
- Organizing a minimum of 5 café croissant information sessions with ILO departments in HQ in 2017, in cooperation with union stewards, including Employment Policy, Fundamentals, and SOCPRO;
- Providing training to staff union representatives in at least two regions in the field on organizing skills and targeting of specific demographic groups.

#### *Objective 3*

- Identifying departments where restructuring is going on or planned for 2017, through regular communication with HRD;
- Organizing a half-day strategy session in January 2017 with Committee members and stewards in target departments on change management guidelines and mobilization of staff to participate in transition processes;
- Monitoring developments and escalate to JNC as needed, including in the context of Contract Policy Negotiations.

**Coordinator:** Dan Cork assisted by Indira Bermudez Aguilar, Harvey Clavien, Siska Dubbert, Elisabeth Fombuena, Yvan Poulin and Thibault Van Langenhove

## Achievements

### **Union stewards organizing and training group**

The Staff Union Committee maintained its active support for the Union Steward Network in ILO HQ in the past year, through a recruitment campaign and elections that resulted in a significant expansion and renewal of the network, from 19 to 23 constituencies, with new stewards in Better Work, PROGRAM, DCOMM, Employment Policy, SOCOPRO, and other units. The union steward elections were followed by an ongoing mentoring and capacity building programme for current stewards, occasional coffee meetings, café-croissant meetings to support stewards in their roles, and the mobilization of stewards in support of the UN-Wide No Pay Cut Campaign.

The Coordinators for the Union Steward Network organized a series of lunch-time and half-day workshops to train stewards and new Staff Union Committee members on their roles and responsibilities, the structure of the ILO Staff Union, active listening skills, addressing workplace problems, and organizing and mobilization skills. A special half-day meeting was held between the stewards in majority Technical Cooperation (TC) Programmes and Units and the ILO Staff Union Executive Bureau, in which there was a frank discussion on the persistent inequalities between staff on Regular Budget and Technical Cooperation. The recommendations from the discussion were fed into the Contract Policy Working Group for future consideration.

### **UN No Pay Cut Campaign and the Role of Union Stewards**

The ICSC Decision to impose a 7.7 per cent pay cut created an unexpected rapid immersion of the Union Stewards into the work of the ILO Staff Union. The Union Stewards at the ILO showed great courage, energy, and determination in mobilizing their colleagues to take actions in support of the Campaign, from hanging posters on their doors, to attending rallies and information sessions, toward contributing to the door to door petition campaign against the pay cut.

The Union Steward Group Coordinators organized a workshop on organizing skills for leaders of other UN staff associations in Geneva during the campaign, in which the ILO Staff Union stewards actively participated. This workshop leveraged the experience and skills of the ILO Staff Union in an effort to help each staff union and association to reflect on the importance of strong union leadership, and it focused on building the skills of the union representatives in persuading staff to become union members and take actions in support of the No Pay Cut Campaign. Each organization mapped out their office building and developed strategies for mobilizing a maximum number of staff to attend the Extraordinary General Meeting of the UN Staff Associations, which resulted in the adaption of a resolution in support of industrial action.

The union steward network also continued its active support for department and Technical Cooperation Programmes in transition, including GED-ILO/AIDS, SOCOPRO, Better Work, SCORE, and several units involved in the BPR process. These efforts were constrained by the lack of consistent advice given by the Office's Human Resources Department on the transition process and the appropriate sequence of steps. Nonetheless, the ILO Staff Union demonstrated to staff in the concerned units and departments that it was present and capable of creating space for staff to have a voice in the process, and many staff in the field and HQ were able to obtain new jobs thanks to the intervention of the Staff Union.

### **Organizing campaign**

The Union Steward Working Group organized café-croissants in several departments in the past year, which created space for staff to speak openly about their working conditions and to ask questions of the Staff Union. Formal meetings were held with staff in DCOMM and RESEARCH, with informal discussions taking place with staff of SCORE, SOCOPRO, and Better Work, to support stewards in engagement with staff on the processes of transition. At headquarters, the Staff Union focused new membership efforts on the No Pay Cut Campaign. So far in 2017, as of early September, a total of 132 staff became members of the Staff Union, 92 in the field, and 36 at headquarters, Geneva duty station. A majority of the new union members in Geneva for 2017 joined during the period of the No Pay Cut Campaign, between April and July.

## VII. Enhancing staff security, safety and health

**Objective:** To strengthen the network of union representatives knowledgeable and equipped with the means to defend the rights of staff concerning safety and health and well-being in the ILO.

### Means of action

- Supporting the implementation of the occupational safety and health (OSH) policy and procedure through active participation in the Committee on Safety and Health (COSH), and contribute to the timely implementation of the COSH action plan;
- Participating in the COSH working group on stress at work and contributing to advancing the implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) in 2016;
- Expanding and supporting the network of Staff Union OSH representatives in the field offices and at headquarters through information and advocacy activities and technical assistance;
- Contributing to capacity-building among SU representatives by developing user-friendly guidance for OSH representatives on how to fulfil their OSH duties, and by contributing to the development of training materials and implementation of training activities;
- Ensuring a staff voice in the Steering Committee for the building renovation so that the highest standards on staff safety and health and well-being apply during the renovation of the headquarters building, in consultation with Staff Union representatives, union stewards and focal points;
- Ensuring that staff are kept informed of developments through communications and/or information sessions;
- Promoting and supporting active participation in security measures.

**Titular members of the Committee on Occupational Safety and Health:** Christiane Wiskow, Harvey Clavien

**Substitute members:** Jim Windell, Vera Guseva

**Coordinator of the working group on occupational safety and health and environmental issues:** Christiane Wiskow

**Members:** Enrico Cairola, Harvey Clavien, Vera Guseva

### Achievements

Regarding capacity building, information sessions on OSH policy, implementation procedure and the role of OSH committees were held with the Staff Union representatives at the Regional Meeting of Asia and the Pacific (April 2017) and the Regional Meeting of Africa (September 2017). Advice regarding OSH concerns in individual field offices was provided to SU OSH representatives upon request. Continued participation in COSH meetings and collaboration with the OSH Coordinator helped to follow through on OSH policy implementation.

Staff Union OSH working group participated in an ad-hoc consultation on a UN Mental Health Strategy that was presented as a draft with very tight response timelines. We raised our strong concerns that the strategy was not yet ready to be launched and needed much improvement by aligning it with the UN OSH framework; these points have been supported and brought to the attention of the UN working group. Our main concern was that the strategy development should be consulted within the COSH as the established bipartite body; a discussion took place at the following COSH meeting. Further, Staff Union OSH working group members participated in the preparations for the World Mental Health Day (10 October 2017) as the topic focused on mental health at the workplace.

In the context of the building renovation at headquarters, security and OSH concerns have been raised continuously with the administration and in the Building Renovation Steering Committee. At the beginning of the second phase of the building renovation we attended to many complaints and requests from staff and contributed to problem-solving efforts. The security protocols have been reviewed and the training of volunteers as fire wardens and intervention teams has started.

### **Challenges ahead**

At headquarters, the start of the second phase of the building renovation project and the related office moves of nearly 1,000 persons within six weeks took much of the attention of the SU OSH group members. Moreover, the OSH Coordinator was absorbed by this process for many weeks. This led to a delay in advancing on OSH priorities such as the training of OSH representatives. One of the COSH meetings had to be cancelled. Further, the COSH working group on stress at work could not pursue its work as comprehensively as possible due to the multiple demands on the group members.

Creating a culture of security, safety and health is a long-term challenge. Anchoring COSH as the main advisory body in the organizational procedures, and improving collaboration and coordination at the interfaces of the respective units and responsibilities is an ongoing effort.

## **Section 3 - Periodic and regular action**

### **I. Resolving the problems facing non-headquarters staff**

#### Objectives:

To continue and broaden information sharing and coordination between the various regions and headquarters, regarding:

- the continuation and development of information sharing;
- coordination between the different regions and headquarters in the following areas:
  - the effective implementation of the new field structure;
  - recruitment and selection procedures through the implementation of the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC);
  - the reclassification of positions in the field;
  - the establishment and effectiveness of Independent Review Groups (IRGs) for use in the field reclassification. This objective should be effective this year;
  - career prospects through the new mobility policy;
  - staff security in the field for all categories, from both the standpoint of harassment of health and physical security;
  - the fight against discrimination between international and local staff in terms of the safety and evacuation policies, including the rights and benefits linked to high-risk duty stations.

#### Means of action

- The new system of monthly discussions via Skype held regularly with all the regional representatives is now an effective reality that facilitates the sharing of experiences on the implementation modalities of the above priorities. In order to plan the monthly meetings, there is now a quarterly planning.
- Continuation of the census approach and sharing of good practices while pointing out irregularities, to enhance the participation and action of the Union in the negotiations in the various decision-making at headquarters.

**Coordinator:** José Tossa assisted by Indira Bermudez Aguilar, Enrico Cairola, Vera Guseva, Chantal Nahimana, Yoshie Noguchi, Maria Marta Travieso

## Achievements

The practical implementation of the new field structures in all the regions is now a fact. However, there are still a few temporary hitches that the Staff Union Committee will be looking into.

There has been definite progress in the processing of reimbursement by the SHIF, as there has in discussions on the coverage of emergencies, on which proposals will probably be made for a test phase in certain regions. Here too careful follow-up will be needed.

Regarding the reclassification of field posts, HRD has made a number of proposals as to how families of jobs and job descriptions might be redesigned. The Committee has since submitted its own comments to the administration based on a summary of contributions from all the regions. Discussions have now begun in the hope of reaching specific solutions as rapidly as possible. Along with Staff Union representatives in the field, the Committee will be giving its closest attention to this particularly important issue.

Certain regions, and notably Africa, still have no arrangements in place for the effective functioning of Independent Review Groups (IRGs) to consider appeals against the classification of jobs in the field. The Regional Office has promised to correct the situation very soon, and the Committee will be monitoring developments to ensure that action is duly taken.

Shortcomings have been identified and recorded in the new job mobility policy as it affects career prospects. The Committee attaches special importance to this and will be looking into the matter very carefully in the context of the IGDS review currently under discussion.

Lastly, in the effort to counter discrimination between international and field staff in the ILO's security and evacuation policies, especially as they relate to rights and benefits in high-risk duty stations, action - possibly requiring discussion with the administration - still needs to be taken on a few remaining issues.

The new system of monthly discussions via Skype is now well established and will make it easier for people to share their experience on how best to implement the priorities identified above. However, because the first half of 2017 was largely dominated by the ICSC's decision to cut Professional staff salaries, it was impossible to hold them on a regular basis. Training sessions are nevertheless organized for new appointees at regional meetings – two of which were held in 2017, in Asia and Africa – while Circular No. 1 on the use of membership fees retained in field offices will ensure that the same good practices are observed everywhere.

## II. Use of financial resources

Objective: To ensure maximum transparency in the use of financial resources

Means of action

- Examining the monitoring and follow-up process for all financial transactions;
- Pursuing discussions with the administration on the opening of bank accounts at duty stations where Union dues are deposited locally;
- Issuing a Staff Union circular clarifying the financial powers and responsibilities of staff representatives in the field;
- Setting up a new Solidarity account for ad-hoc fund collections after a natural or human disasters.

**Treasurer:** Yvan Poulin

**Deputy Treasurer:** José Tossa

## Achievements

As the handling of payrolls has now been centralized, a review has been undertaken of the procedure for ensuring that local Staff Union representations have access to that part of union dues to which they are entitled (75 per cent of total contributions). The fundamental reasons for this are financial control and the regular payment of dues.

The Solidarity account - for collecting voluntary contributions in the event of a natural disaster, for example, and enabling members of the ILO Staff Union to come to the assistance of workers and their families in the affected areas by mean of the rapid financing of specific projects - has been reactivated. Internal Circular No. 7 on the demonstration of solidarity in case of natural or man-made disasters has been specifically adopted for this purpose.

## Challenges ahead

To enable field offices that are not in a position to open “association” or commercial bank accounts to manage their own funds without having to go through a personal account.

## III. Support for ILO staff in the prevention and resolution of disputes

Objective: To increase the transparency and consistency of the Office's procedures, especially with regard to responsible governance.

### Means of action

- Providing the Staff Union Committee and individual members of the staff at headquarters and in the field with legal advice on the application and interpretation of the Staff Regulations, the collective agreements and the IGDS's, as well as on the policies and procedures currently in force;
- Providing technical assistance as part of the Staff Union Committee's activities in connection with the disputes resolution bodies (Mediator, Study Group, JAAB, ILO Administrative Tribunal, etc.);
- Organizing information meetings on legal issues at headquarters and in the field;
- Preparing proposals aimed at enhancing governance, transparency and responsible management for submission to the JNC.

**Coordinator:** Elisabeth Fombuena

**Members:** Chloé Charbonneau-Jobin, Maria-Marta Travieso

## Achievements

Between November 2016 and September 2017, over 120 of our colleagues were provided with legal counsel. A new follow-up system is currently under trial and will be implemented so as to maintain more accurate statistics on the subject and to provide comprehensive information on current procedures engaged with the disputes resolution bodies and the ILO Administrative Tribunal (“the Tribunal”).

Most of the cases brought to the attention of the Staff Union have to do with recruitment and selection, personal promotion, the performance evaluation system and job classification. The number of such

instances is steadily on the rise, and the working group and Legal Adviser have voiced their concern at some particularly serious cases of alleged harassment and governance issues.

As far as possible we try to resolve complaints informally. A new mediator was appointed in 2017, and the early resolution of disputes is, in the opinion of the Staff Union, the best way of maintaining a healthy working environment.

That said, the Staff Union is increasingly concerned that it is not yet officially allowed to file collective complaints and/or policy grievances before the JAAB and the Tribunal to defend the collective rights of the staff and that recent decisions handed down by the Tribunal mark a regression from the established and constant case-law on the question in past years.

Furthermore, it would be a sign of progress if information on specific legal matters of special interest to the staff could be shared. Several information notes on the subject have been drafted so that our colleagues can better understand relevant procedures. The administration has also been asked to have collective agreements translated into French and Spanish.

#### **IV. International**

**Objective:** To strengthen alliances at the international level and promote collective bargaining in the United Nations system worldwide.

**Means of action**

- Pooling know-how and resources for mobilization campaigns aimed at international federations of international civil servants;
- Pursuing activities within the "Geneva Group" so as to induce international organizations to be more responsive to the interests and needs of their staff;
- Encouraging staff representatives to join or establish local federations of UN staff associations (FUNSAs).

**Coordinator:** Catherine Comte-Tiberghien

**Members:** Harvey Clavien, Dan Cork, Yvan Poulin, Gurchaten Sandhu (point focal UN Globe / focal point UN Globe), Faustina Van Aperen

The “No UN Pay Cut” campaign against the cutting of Geneva-based professional staff salaries, which kept the entire Staff Union Committee busy virtually full-time during the first half of the year, proved to be an ideal opportunity for the Staff Union to strengthen its ties with Geneva-based staff unions and associations throughout the UN system and, more specifically, to reactivate the Geneva Group. A global and united response and mobilization of the staff as a whole was in any case the only way we could hope to be heard, not just by our respective administrations but also at the highest level in New York. The deployment of modern means of communication such as mobile apps and social media proved a very useful way of reaching out to young people and to our field staff and reassure them that their staff representation was anything but a figment of the imagination.

As part of the broader campaign the Staff Union also strengthened its ties with the major trade union federations, notably Public Services International (PSI) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), with an eye in the medium term to establishing nothing less than a collective bargaining mechanism within the United Nations itself.

Given the general uncertainty and the total lack of transparency surrounding the salary surveys, the Staff Union urged its representatives in the field to join or establish local federations of UN staff associations (FUNSAs) – local mini-federations covering all the UN representatives of a given duty station – in their country so as to be well prepared should the survey findings turn out to be questionable. The local Committee at the Manila Office in the Philippines has already established its own FUNSA and it is to be hoped that others will quickly follow suit.

The Staff Union has of course been taking part in the activities and meetings of its own Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA), and recent events have shown that it is vital that the Union play a leading role in it, as it is the only body that has the necessary expertise and experience of collective bargaining with an international organization. Developing a similar collective bargaining mechanism in other organizations will call for extensive training and awareness-building in the CCISUA's sister federations, which do not have the same degree of maturity in terms of social dialogue. With regard to social protection, especially the Pension Fund, greater consistency is needed among our staff unions and associations if some of the differences of approach that have clearly come to light during the past summer are not to backfire on us and undermine the collective interests of our contributors and beneficiaries.

Elsewhere, the Staff Union has maintained its close relations with UN-Globe in its efforts to promote the rights of LGBT international civil servants, especially in countries whose conception of human rights is pitted against them but also so as to bring staff regulations to a greater sense of equality and recognition.

The Union also takes part in the Conference of Staff Associations of International Organizations (CSAIO), which brings together staff representatives from international organizations based in Europe and where it can learn about the best practices of organizations outside the United Nations system.

## V. IRIS “Users” Forum

Objective: The IRIS roll-out in the ILO field offices is implemented in 2017.

Means of action

- The Staff Union will continue to participate as observer in all reviews of business processes resulting from the IRIS implementation. It remains also a focal point in case of some potential difficulties faced by staff during this phase of implementation.
- The Union will insist on its demand that ongoing IRIS training be put in place at headquarters and in external offices in order to provide adequate career development opportunities to General Service staff and stop the re-employment of retired officials.

**Members:** Yvan Poulin, José Tossa

**Achievements: Coverage by region**

*Africa:*

**IRIS TOTAL:** RO-Abidjan and CO-Addis-Ababa

**IRIS PARTIAL:** Dakar, Abuja, Dar-es-Salaam, Lusaka, Cairo, Alger, Pretoria, Antananarivo, Harare, Yaoundé and Kinshasa

*Asia:*

**IRIS TOTAL:** RO/DWT/CO-Bangkok and Cambodia (Project Office), ILO-Tokyo

**IRIS PARTIAL:** CO-Beijing, CO-Colombo, CO-Dhaka, CO-Hanoi, CO-Islamabad, CO-Jakarta, CO-Kathmandu, CO-Manila, DWT/CO-New Delhi, CO-Suva

*Americas:*

**IRIS TOTAL:** RO/DWT-Lima, ILO-Washington, ILO-New York, CO-Brasilia, CO-Buenos Aires, ILO-CINTERFOR, DWT/CO-San Jose, DWT/CO-Santiago

**IRIS PARTIAL:** CO-Mexico, DWT/CO-Port of Spain

*Europe and Arab States:*

**IRIS TOTAL:** DWT/CO-Budapest, CO-Brussels, CO-Rome, CO-Paris, CO-Berlin, ILO-Madrid, ILO-Lisbon, BR/DWT-Beirut

**IRIS PARTIAL:** DWT/CO-Moscow, CO-Ankara

## II. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Africa

**Titular member:** Roger Mavinga Nkambu

**Substitute member:** José Tossa

The principal areas of concern in the region are described below.

#### 1. Return of the Regional Office to Abidjan

The return of the Regional Office to Abidjan has given rise to considerable anxiety among the staff in Addis Ababa who feared the loss of some of the posts previously associated with the Country Office there. So far this has not happened, but the suppression of one post or another is always in the offing. Discussions on the subject have been held between the Regional Office and the Country Office in Addis Ababa. The Country Office has also been asked to look into the possibility of assigning or redeploying to technical cooperation projects some of the staff members who were previously based at the Regional Office.

The Staff Union Committee will be following up on the matter with HRD and the Addis Ababa Office in order to find appropriate solutions for those who have to be redeployed, on the one hand, and to negotiate the best possible terms for those who may be obliged to leave the Organization.

#### 2. Reclassification procedures

After lengthy procedures some of our colleagues have at last had their jobs reclassified, but many of those whose job description is outdated are still waiting to have their current situation officially recognized. The fact is that the reclassification process is still not clear and that this kind of anomaly is still a regular occurrence. There has in fact been no significant progress, despite the imminent reclassification of grades across the board which shows every sign of being a stop-gap measure for the sake of saving face. Meanwhile, the ceiling set by the ILO is NOB, or very occasionally NOC.

Given the circumstances, the Staff Union at the regional level has written to the Deputy Regional Director to request the establishment of the Group of Independent Experts (GIE) to encourage greater transparency and fairness in the handling of requests for reclassification. In her response the Regional Director recognised that the region was lagging behind in this area and promised to organize consultations and

negotiations between the Regional Office and the Staff Union so that the GIE can look into the situation in Africa in the near future.

In so far as the ILO is part of the United Nations, it has to assume its responsibilities thereunder fully. The Committee will need to keep a very close eye on the discussion of the NO issue that is now taking place within the UN system.

### **3. Assistance, support and advisory services**

The past year has kept the Staff Union very busy. It has provided advice and guidelines to the numerous colleagues who have approached it on a variety of concerns: the right to keep a UN laissez-passer, salary advances, working hours, the right to training during working hours, leave for recuperation when on mission, number of days that offices working a 40-hour week close at the end of the year, requests for job reclassification, medical evacuation, abuse of authority, holidays, reimbursement of medical expenses, contracts (especially under HIV/AIDS projects and RBSA), funeral expenses, salaries, use of Staff Union funds retained at country offices and in Decent Work technical teams (DWTs), etc.

The Staff Union has been a constant advocate of industrial peace and the maintenance of cordial relations among colleagues in the ILO's various offices. If the repetition of unfortunate situations in certain of the Organization's offices is to be prevented in the future, however, it is important that the ILO arrange regular capacity-building sessions for its managers in the field, in the form of briefings, training, exchanges between junior and senior managers; it must also provide more training and awareness-building courses for the staff as a whole.

### **4. Staff security in the field in the face of new forms of terrorism**

United Nations personnel throughout the system are a prime target for terrorists, and the multiplication of terrorist movements in Africa is therefore a source of serious concern for the future of technical cooperation and for the safety and security of field staff. The number of countries emerging from recent conflicts where conditions of safety are precarious, the resurgence of urban gangs, pick-pocketing, bag snatching, armed robbery, civil disorder before and after elections, etc., are as many reasons why the ILO, both as a member of the common system and on its own initiative, must in the name of equal treatment and social justice take steps to protect its local staff, by the same token as it protects their international colleagues. Anything else would be tantamount to failing to assist a person in danger.

### **5. Working conditions/health and safety**

The field structure review in Africa has not brought a corresponding strengthening of the various offices' capacities, notably as regards the number of staff. The extra workload generated by successive reforms without any improvement in the quality and quantity of human, financial and logistical resources raises the stress level at the workplace, poses a threat to the staff's health and undermines the Organization's image. The extra stress is aggravated by the need to produce results within what are often unrealistic deadlines. The structure of field offices therefore needs to be harmonized so that they all have an equal chance of succeeding in their task.

Along with several directors of offices in the region, the Staff Union has through its regional representatives informed the Regional Office of the urgency of taking corrective action.

### **6. Staff Health Insurance Fund (SHIF)**

A real effort has been made to reduce the delay in reimbursing medical expenses, even though the SHIF staff is obviously too small to do very much in the way of speeding things up. In cooperation with the Fund, measures have been considered to reduce the pressure on people's earnings without compromising their immediate access to health care, and the necessary machinery is currently being put into place.

Meanwhile, the coverage of medical emergencies is still a real problem and it is important that the Staff Union Committee find a way of taking positive and effective action, if necessary by introducing new arrangements that are better suited to particular regional contexts.

## **7. Career development and training**

If the spirit of the ILO's achievement over a whole century is to be preserved, more has to be done to promote genuine career development for its staff. The ILO is not an NGO, nor is it just one more United Nations institution. The right person has to be placed in the right position, and systematic training is needed so that the staff are better equipped to take on new responsibilities. Staff mobility both horizontally (field to field) and vertically (headquarters to field and vice versa) ought to apply to all categories of personnel, so as to improve their career prospects and raise the overall level of competence and experience. It is up to the ILO to secure the necessary means to do so irrespective of the cost.

## **8. GS and NO salaries**

The conditions of remuneration of local staff are appalling, combining as they do very low salaries and a totally obsolete wage-fixing methodology with the underlying intention of the UN system to keep them as low as possible - not to mention their virtual exclusion from financial advantages such as assistance with school fees for their children, the cost of personal safety measures, loans, etc. Although this is a matter for the common system to decide, the ILO (as the agency whose specific mandate it is to promote equitable social justice for all) has to play a leading role in persuading the UN to correct the shortcomings of the Flemming methodology.

A number of duty stations in the field (among them Cairo, Pretoria, Harare, Antananarivo, Accra) have contacted the Staff Union Committee to voice their countless concerns on the subject of salaries. The Committee's first step has been to pass on their concerns to certain staff representatives and to put them in touch with the officials responsible for salaries.

Given the importance and complexity of the issue, however, and although it comes within the competence of the common system, the Staff Union Committee should have an item placed on the agenda of the next session of the CCISUA and join forces with other bodies with an eye, ultimately, to having current methodology reviewed. The Committee should also encourage more of our colleagues in the field to undertake training in the conduct of salary surveys. During the period covered by this report our colleagues in Antananarivo and Yaoundé have already undergone such training.

The region has also given its overwhelming support to the campaign against salary cuts conducted by our colleagues in Turin and Vienna.

## **9. Access of local staff in certain countries to loans from the UNFCU and the MEC**

There has been some progress in discussions with the UNFCU through the intermediary of its Geneva office, and over the years the number of duty stations that now have access to such loans has increased steadily. That said, there is still a fairly low ceiling on loans to locally and nationally recruited staff, and the ceiling varies from one location to the other. According to the UNFCU, there are several duty stations in Africa where the prevailing instability and insecurity are such that loans are not yet available. For its part, the Staff Union is of the opinion that political insecurity and instability are not restricted to particular countries and that, as has been amply demonstrated by recent incidents throughout the world, anything can happen anywhere and at any time. Furthermore, staff members employed by the ILO are recruited under various types of contract, including contracts without limit of time, and most of its officials are members of the Staff Pension Fund. These two considerations are sufficient, in our view, for the UNFCU to make its loans available to all the duty stations in the region.

As to the MEC, which we have approached on several occasions, its position is rather more ambiguous; whenever locally and nationally recruited staff outside headquarters have met its conditions, it has tended to add new conditions. Despite the fact that the ILO payroll is now calculated and paid from Geneva, the MEC has maintained its position not to grant loans to locally recruited staff.

The result is that staff recruited in their countries of origin to serve the United Nations in general, and the ILO in particular, have at the same time to cope with living conditions in which, among other drawbacks, they have little or no access to regular bank loans and their retirement prospects are dismal.

This is why we have for some years now been urging the Staff Union and the Director-General to call on the UNFCU and the MEC to adopt a more flexible position and thus contribute to improving the social conditions of locally recruited staff in Africa.

#### **10. Staff Union Assistance Fund**

As in past years the Staff Union has requested the Fund to make loans and/or grants, as appropriate, to a number of colleagues who find themselves in straightened circumstances, because their contract has come to an end or because of serious financial difficulties, sickness, disaster, and so on.

#### **11. Retirement of the directors of country offices and DWTs**

The Titular member attended the events that marked the retirement of the directors of country office and DWTs in Africa, which took place in Assinie, Côte d'Ivoire, from 27 to 29 January this year. A message from the Staff Union was conveyed to the Regional Director in the presence of all the directors of country offices and DWTs, as well as of a number of Assistant Directors-General and other departmental directors from headquarters.

#### **12. Staff management**

Mention should also be made of the initiation of regular contacts with the Regional Office by means of exchanges with the HRD team. This will play a positive role in tackling and resolving specific staff management problems.

### **Americas**

**Titular member:** Maria Elena Lopez Torres

**Substitute member:** Maria-Marta Travieso

The issues confronting the region this year are as follows:

#### **1. Human resources**

The procedure for selecting local staff is working fairly efficiently, along the lines that we set out in 1992.

We are currently awaiting confirmation from Regional Human Resources and the Director of the Regional Office of the review that was carried out early this year, following our Regional Staff Union Meeting for 2016.

#### **2. Reclassification and post description**

There is a definite need for some of the posts held by local staff whose workload has increased to be reviewed, especially posts where retired staff members have not been replaced.

The Region is concerned that it has not yet received definitive information regarding new job descriptions for the review of posts decided upon by HRD in Geneva.

### **3. Staff Health Insurance Fund (SHIF)**

Communication between the SHIF members and the Fund has improved, as has the speed of reimbursement of medical claims. There are some problems with receipts being rejected. It is sometimes impossible to get hold of the originals of electronically generated medical fees, and we would appreciate their being accepted by the SHIF staff responsible for checking claims.

We were informed of a planned mission to the Region by the Executive Secretary of the SHIF, Mr Florian Leger, in the first half of 2017. We are still hoping it will take place, as it would be very helpful for reviewing a number of SHIF-related issues *in situ*.

### **4. Staff Union bank account**

We are very anxious for a review of the situation regarding Union funds retained in the region, as all the regional offices are still receiving deposits in joint accounts (President and/or Treasurer). During his recent IRIS training mission our colleague, Mr Manuel Céspedes, informed ILO Buenos Aires that he would be discussing the matter with the Staff Union Committee Treasurer.

### **5. Local staff salaries**

The committees on local salaries have been actively engaged, with the ILO playing an important role. In some countries their findings have been generally positive, but this tends to be less and less often the case.

### **6. Communication with the Staff Union Committee and headquarters**

Communication has been quite smooth and we have always received rapid feedback.

### **7. New Assistant Regional Director**

A cordial meeting has already been held with Mr Carlos Rodriguez, ILO-Chile's ACTRAV expert who was appointed as the new Assistant Regional Director in August 2017. As he has no previous experience in the post, it is understood that he will rely to a large extent on the Region's management units.

## **Asia and the Pacific**

**Titular member:** Razi Mujtaba Haider

**Substitute member:** Yoshie Noguchi

The membership in the Asia and Pacific Region is on the rise and due to the effective role of the SU and due to effective outreach and dissemination of information and also due to provision of services to the SU members, the confidence of the members in the SU has been generally on the rise in the AP Region. Many of the DC staff have further strengthened the SU by becoming the SU members in the majority of offices in the AP Region.

The AP Region has strengthened the membership base of the SU members and as per the guidance of the SU at HQ and in compliance with the synchronization of elections of the SU in all the field offices across the AP Region, the SU elections were convened from February to March 2017 in all the country offices in the AP Region. New SU committees have been elected in the majority of offices and in some offices a few representatives have been re-elected also due to their dedicated work for the SU and for their members in the field offices.

## **1. Regional Staff Union Meeting of the AP Region**

Following the elections of the SU in all the offices in the AP Region, the newly elected SU Reps convened for the Regional SU Meeting in Bangkok in April 2017. The Regional SU meeting provided an opportunity in which all the SU Representatives had detailed discussions and deliberations with the SU Officials from HQ and with the Regional Titular member and also with the regional administration, and also representatives of the administration from HQ through Skype conferences.

The Regional SU meeting was tailored in such a way that the newly elected Representatives were also provided training on the role, functioning and mandate of the SU local committees, and a special session was facilitated by the SU Treasurer at HQ regarding the use of local SU funds at the duty station. The Legal Adviser of the SU also imparted in-depth and valuable training on legal aspects.

The representatives at the Regional SU Meeting discussed all the important issues ranging from Recruitment and Selection, Precarious Contracts, Career Development, Generic Job Description Review, Mobility, DC staff, Security, and conditions of work. The following were some of the recommendations made by the representatives at the Regional SU Meeting:

### **2. Recruitment and selection procedures**

- Taking note of the various practices in different field offices in the AP Region, regarding the engagement of the SU in the recruitment and selection procedure, the need to have a uniform level of participation of the SU in all offices of the AP Region was emphasized.
- The uniform policy on inclusion of the SU in recruitment and selection panels must be based on the best practices in the Region, but at the same time must not be less than the minimum floor provided for by the “Collective Agreement on Recruitment and Selection”, 2014.

### **3. Precarious contracts**

- In conformity with ILO Staff Regulations, the representatives at the SU Regional Meeting demanded that the use of inappropriate forms of contracts for recurring and/or core official work of the ILO, which is in contravention of the ILO Staff Regulations, should be discontinued.
- Where there is a need to carry out official continuing work of the ILO, for a duration of more than a month but less than a year, then – at the minimum – temporary mobility should be envisaged as a priority as well as re-employment of people whose development cooperation contracts have ended, or will end.
- Recalling IGDS No. 630 on “Inappropriate Use of Employment Contracts” the SU representatives demanded that the ILO administration take the necessary steps to stop the use of inappropriate contracts (social security social protection vs. precariousness and insecurity) in the AP Region as a matter of priority.

### **4. Career Development**

Career development opportunities must be provided for all officials of the ILO and a clear defined career progression and development path should be available.

### **5. Generic Job Description (GJD) Review**

- It was emphasized that, for ILO National and General Service officials, the GJD review must benefit from a clear path for their career development and this must be taken into account in the GJD review, and that the GJD can be consistently applied across all the regions of the ILO with regards to the career path, and the titles of the posts should be pursued.
- It was also emphasized that, as clarified by the HRD officials, the work experience of the national staff at the country level was considered an equivalent of ‘international experience’ when they

applied for international positions. Considering that every official of the ILO working in the field offices, irrespective of their grade, works for an international organization, this should therefore be taken into consideration for any international position.

## **6. Mobility**

- The ILO administration should prioritize the career development path of the internal ILO staff for international temporary opportunities, find resources to provide the chances of temporary mobility to the national staff and excuses of financial constraints should not be put forward by the administration to deprive the staff of these temporary mobility opportunities.
- At present in the AP Region the Generic Job Description (GJD) Review is drawing a lot of concern and apprehensions from the SU members. The elimination of the G-7 grade and the undefined career progression path of staff in the G-7 category and those who are in the G-6 category and ready to be promoted to G-7, pose serious questions for the validity and effectiveness of the proposed GJD Reviews. Like everyone else the SU representatives from the AP Region have provided detailed inputs from their members and the same have become part of the inputs from the SU that have been submitted to the ILO administration by the SU at HQ. There needs to be detailed and candid discussions on these issues with the administration and concrete proposals by the administration should be sought which should address the questions raised by the SU regarding the GJDs.

## **7. SHIF**

The Staff Union members in the AP Region two years ago had a lot of concerns and issues with the SHIF and with the unprecedented delays in the processing of medical claims. But now visible and tangible improvements are seen and felt by the SU members in the AP Region and the back log of pending medical claims has significantly reduced and the membership is appreciative of the good work being done by SHIF and positive vibes and appreciation for SHIF improvement were resonated by all the SU Representatives during the Regional SU meeting for the AP Region.

Apart from that, the BPR is also a concern being felt by the SU members in the AP Region. The flow of information and the timely dissemination by the SU at HQ and pertinent feedback being provided by the SU and the effective use of information tools and social media has strengthened the SU as an institution and also the SU members.

The Regional Titular member is pursuing dialogue with the Regional Director on issues of importance for the SU members, and staff issues in the AP Region are also being tabled directly by the Regional Titular member and the Regional administration is providing opportunity to the Regional SU to present the issues of the staff during the Directors' meetings. These are measures that help bridge the gap between the administration and the SU and boost a spirit of positive engagement on both sides.

## **Europe and Arab States**

**Titular member:** Rania Bikhazi

**Substitute member:** Vera Guseva

The activities in the Region of Europe and the Arab States are characterized by the diversity of the Region. Nevertheless, the activities undertaken in the period August 2016-2017 can still be grouped along four main topics:

1. Increasing the membership base and strengthening representation and communication
2. Ensuring the Staff Union is involved in all office committees affecting staff
3. Staff Union in times of reform and uncertainty
4. Other priorities

## **1. Increasing the membership base and strengthening representation and communication**

Since 2016, no official became a member of the Staff Union in the Western European Offices (Berlin, Brussels, Lisbon, Madrid, Rome and Paris).

In the Arab States, the Staff Union Committee worked on increasing the number of Staff Union members and extended its efforts to technical cooperation projects in the field. A total of 7 staff became new members, divided as follows: 3 P (2 RB and 1 TC), and 4 G (TC).

A call for the election for a new Staff Union Committee for Arab States was launched in March 2017 as per HQ Directives. The newly elected committee (March 2017 – March 2019) is composed of three people holding the position of President (re-elected), Secretary and Treasurer (both new). The same was applied in the offices of Western Europe, Moscow, Budapest and Turkey. Existing committee members were re-elected in Brussels, Budapest and Moscow and one new staff member in Turkey. This could have two interpretations: either staff believe in the current representatives' capacities and re-elect them on that basis, or there are no new nominations due to the lack of interest from officials to assume this responsibility.

It has proven difficult to convince people to join the Staff Union or nominate themselves for committee elections for various reasons namely lack of belief in the mandate, lack of trust in its ability to drive change, and others. There is a strong need to work on a marketing campaign – at the Global and Regional Levels – to showcase the Staff Union work and achievements (the usage of info-graphics to show pre and post situations could be considered), in order to convince staff in becoming members to benefit from the support and assistance of the Union.

## **2. Ensuring the Staff Union is involved in all office committees affecting staff**

- In the Western European Office, almost all staff members are part of the OSH committees as these offices are very small. The SU representative based in Brussels is a member of the Local Salary Survey Committee.
- In the Budapest Office, the SU has submitted a group nomination for the ILO Recognition Awards. It was an exemplary joint effort of many colleagues across the region, Budapest staff, National Coordinators, project staff, and even stakeholders.
- In the Moscow Office, the established labour relations between the SU and the administration are very tight and strive for the same goals. As good examples of such cooperation, both SU representative and HR officials represent the ILO in the LSSC as well as in the office retreat team. There is also a Joint Committee on Occupational Safety and Health that was established in 2015 with representation of the administration, OSH Specialists and SU representatives. The development of the Staff Development Fund Committee has just been initiated by the Office Director; it is currently at the concept note preparation phase. However, existing Staff Development Funds were used for the first time ever to cover the expense of an All-Staff retreat, which brought together all the staff (51) from the countries covered by the Moscow office. Moreover, approximately 52 staff members participated in 11 different activities (including distance learning courses) supporting development of various competencies.
- The Russia Local Salary Survey Committee has 3 members of the ILO including the Chairperson of the SU. Results of the last survey (comprehensive salary survey held in April 2016) were satisfactory. Revised net salaries reflected an increase of 5.3% for GS-staff and 14.7% for the NO staff category. Allowances for children and languages were also reviewed positively.
- In the Arab States, the Staff Union participation in the committee that prepares and implements the RO-Arab States retreat every 2 years has been a practice, and it is the case for this year's retreat. It also continues to successfully participate in the Staff Development Committee to ensure a more just and

transparent process of applications, especially as it relates to the eligibility of TC staff to benefit from staff development funds. Approximately 30 applications were processed to the benefit of staff members during the period under report.

- The Staff Union Committee of the Arab States met with the ILO Director-General, Mr. Guy Ryder, during his visit to Lebanon to attend the FOW meeting in April 2017 and the following topics were raised and discussed:

- a) New US Administration and its implication on the ILO budget;
- b) ILO internal reforms and restructuring: new proposed grading system and contracts policy, staff mobility/career development and job descriptions;
- c) Fragile situation in the region, implication on job security of staff;
- d) SHIF and the latest improvements; and
- e) Regional Office Management: governance, equity of actions and “management by exception”.

### **3. Staff Union work in times of reform and uncertainty**

- The Administrative Assistant post in Paris will be replaced by a G5; the position was at the G7 level 4 years ago. Throughout all Western European offices, the administrative position are downgraded to G5 because the financial duties are centralized in Geneva in RO EUROPE and Central Asia. The Europe branch offices being small, IRIS has not been deployed and all financial tasks remain centralized in Geneva.
- A step in the restructuring of the Budapest Office has been accomplished together with management: the post of receptionist has been discontinued and an RB-financed G5 Programme Assistant position has been introduced instead, which reflects the needs of the office. The job description of the PA was designed as a joint effort of management and the SU and the position has been successfully filled.
- The Staff Union in all offices of Western Europe, Budapest, Moscow, Turkey and the Arab States were called upon to review the draft new Job Descriptions shared by HRD. A consolidated response including the feedback received was shared with HRD for review and further discussion.
- In solidarity with colleagues in Geneva, the Staff Union representatives for Europe and the Arab States encouraged staff to sign the petition against the pay cuts and in Budapest and Kiev colleagues stopped working.
- The Performance Appraisal Framework's effectiveness remains questionable. It is felt that it takes a long time to complete under tight deadlines and has no consequence on securing jobs or pursuing career advancement.

### **4. Other priorities**

- Employment related issues which remain of concern to the Staff Union in these times of reform are:
  - Equality of opportunities and treatment of staff regardless of status.
  - Transparency of the recruitment, selection and mobility processes. A concern remains in the area of career development for long-serving G staff who arrived at the top of their grades and see no potential for further development. This is visible with the new job-grading proposal that, on the one hand, dismisses the G7 level and focuses on the educational background in the new JDs without giving enough importance to working experience to access higher grades such as the NO level. The response of HRD on the comments provided by the Staff Union on the new proposed Job Descriptions is awaited.
  - Reclassification and grading: the process needs to be more efficient and more encouraging given the amount of staff members performing additional duties without being rewarded.

- Information sharing and update on the contracts policy under review remains a worry to staff members.
- There is the concern in Branch offices (Paris, Berlin, Madrid, Lisbon and Rome) that staff cannot be awarded WLT contracts although selected through open competitions and not detached from their respective governments.
- The ILO staff in Moscow is not satisfied with the SHIF despite the changes/improvements shared lately. The issues remain the same:
  - frequent delays;
  - reimbursements are not done adequately;
  - staff receive back (for clarification) the package of documents they sent to SHIF without any prior notification. Emailing the reason could save time and funds (for pouch) to both parties, as in most cases it can be resolved by email;
  - no response to staff queries, especially those received from staff working in the Sub-Regional Offices.
- According to the Survey Monkey initiated before the Moscow Office Retreat to identify the staff level of satisfaction from the functioning of the Office, the level of the team work/team spirit was assessed as "Medium". However, the stress level remains quite high and affects staff of different categories:
  - GS staff combine several duties or assisting several specialists;
  - The expansion of the staff in the sub-region – staff working under the TC projects in the countries, NCs in the countries – staff feel themselves unprotected when facing different circumstances.
  - Numerous missions of the P-staff in different time zones and weather conditions affects the health conditions;
  - Short deadlines imposed by HQ requesting inputs and at the same time unjustified delays in responding to constituents due to communication failure among different departments at HQ;
  - The Moscow Office also raises the issue of the methodology used for the Salary Surveys;
  - The methodology used in conducting the survey does not protect the local staff. It relies on the country official data (which hardly represents the actual situation) and does not take into account the country official exchange rate set by the Central Bank (the UNORE was used in the last survey of Moscow);
  - Lack of information, which could help in the selection of leading comparators and attracting and keeping them interested in further collaboration;
  - No interest in participating in the UN salary surveys (as the methodology implies involving comparators from public and private sector representing a cross-section of economic activity). The comparators are interested only in figures representing other companies in their segment. Otherwise, they feel useless participating in the survey;
  - No budget is made available for involving a third-party to carry out the comparators' analysis to identify the leading comparators;
  - Not enough capacity and knowledge among the LSSC members on the process itself.

## **Turin**

**Titular member:** Jesus Garcia Jimenez

**Substitute member:** Enrico Cairola

### **1. Contracts and employment security**

#### ● Occupational levels

Despite the consolidated generation of significant surplus by the staff of the Centre, and despite the reiterated requests by the SUC to restore adequate occupational levels by replacing colleagues retiring, or using funds available from activities and projects to hire with new staff with regular contracts, the staffing levels continued to be below the operational needs. Succession planning has not been implemented as it

should have been. This resulted in the persistence of high workload levels, chronic overtime work and unhealthy stress situations.

- Signature of the Collective agreement on Project-Based contracts

The main energy and work of the Turin SUC has been devoted to the negotiation of a sound Agreement concerning the colleagues working with precarious contracts, in Turin called “project-based” (PB) contracts.

In October 22, 2015 the SUC re-opened negotiations with the Management regarding the situation of Project-Based Staff.

These negotiations were a continuation of the negotiations undertaken by the previous SUC around the two following objectives:

1. Progressive regularization of current PB staff;
2. Equal rights for all fixed-term staff irrespective of the source of funding.

In the initial meeting the SUC indicated that in its view all-fixed term contract holders should have the same rights regardless of the source of funding.

Following this initial meeting there ensued a series of JNC meetings during which the issue of PB contracts was discussed: 27 October 2015, 29 February 2016, 16 March 2016, 30 March 2016, 12 May 2016, 26 May 2016, 15 September 2016, 4 October 2016 and 24 October 2016.

At the end of 2015, the SUC commissioned an external legal opinion regarding the contractual status of the project-based staff. The opinion obtained formed the basis of a position paper dated March 4, 2016 addressed to the Management in which the SUC indicated that there was no lawful basis for treating PB staff differently from other fixed-term Staff Members by denying the so-called Project-Based access to the rights in a manner equal to that of regular Fixed-Term appointment holders. It further indicated in this position paper its view that the administration could simply and lawfully issue extensions of the fixed-term appointments without reference to article 1.2(c) of the Staff Regulations and without the need to advertise the post.

Following the 26 May 2016 meeting, a drafting committee composed of one representative from the SUC and one representative of Management was appointed to prepare a draft agreement. The work of this committee was suspended in September, following the failure of the representatives to agree on the text of an agreement which both parties could agree upon.

Working from a draft text of the collective agreement circulated by the SUC to the Management on September 5, 2016, the two parties negotiated the final text of a draft agreement that was discussed with members of the Staff Union during a General Assembly which took place on October 19, 2016. During this meeting several concerns were raised by the members which subsequently formed the basis for a request from the SUC for further amendments to the text of the agreement. A revised text of the agreement was provided to the SUC by the Management. This text was discussed with the members of the Staff Union during an Extraordinary Assembly which was held on October 25, 2016. A majority of the members present subsequently voted in favour of the adoption of this text of the agreement. The agreement was brought to the attention of the Officers of the Board at its 79th Session, which took place on 27-28 October 2016. During this same meeting the members of the Board agreed to authorize the Director to appoint the staff members who were holding a project-based contract linked to a series of training activities forming a coherent programme to positions funded from variable expenditure without competition, as an exception to article 1.2(c) of the Staff Regulations.

On 25 November 2016 both parties met to formally sign the "Collective Agreement Concerning Staff with Fixed-Term Contracts Linked to Specific Training Activities Forming a Coherent Programme". Although this Agreement took immediate effect, the staff concerned would only be issued with new employment contracts from January 1, 2017.

- **Titularization exercise**

The Titularization exercise (transformation of fixed-term contract into without limit of time – WLT - contracts) for 2015 was finally undertaken and 10 WLT contracts were awarded. There is still a long “waiting list” among colleagues with 10 or more years of seniority because the Director decided to grant only a limited number of new WLT contracts, and not all contracts resulting from the application of the formula established by Circular 91/44. Approximately two thirds of the entitled officials still have to benefit from a WLT contract.

The next Titularization exercise will be for 2017. The Staff Union Committee remains vigilant in order to assure that the exercise will take place as scheduled. Furthermore, the SUC will negotiate in the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) in order to amend the language of Circular 91/44 to enforce the idea that the Director may not appoint less than a certain number of WLT contracts, considering the list of officials awaiting titularization based on the fact that they meet the criteria required by the Circular and the Collective Agreement on Titularization of September 2015.

- **Mobility**

The “integration” issue has been raised many times by the two Unions with the ILO management (Director-General, Chief of HRD, and DDG-FOP). The ILO SUC Chairperson included in her speech to the March 2015 ILO GB a strong request to overcome obstacles to staff mobility between the ILO and the Turin Centre. Changes in our respective rules and regulations will be required and approved by the respective Boards. During the ILO Staff Union Global Meeting in February 2017, the Director-General indicated that in the framework of the new contracts’ policy a solution to this long-standing issue could be found.

- **Revision of Centre Circulars (short-term and ex coll)**

During the speech in front of the Board of the Centre in October 2016 the SUC has expressed the concern for the use of inappropriate forms of contracts to cover functions that shall be covered only by regular contracts, short-term or fixed-term. In 2017 the Union action shall be in particular focusing on the complete elimination of any abuse in ensuring that all staff is employed with regular contracts.

This may require the revision of some Centre’s Circulars, in particular concerning short-term and external collaboration contracts, also considering the corresponding Circulars in the ILO.

- **Streamlining process**

On many occasions the SUC has put forward the need for genuine consultation instead of merely being informed. Despite the joint recommendations by the Employers’ and Workers’ groups at the last Board meeting to proceed in consultation with the Staff Union on a streamlining of procedures and integration with the ILO, an attempt without consultation to implement changes going in the opposite direction (bottlenecking instead of streamlining) was unsuccessful and resulted in the postponement to 2017 of the “streamlining project”. The SUC remains vigilant to ensure that, before any change, the staff and its representatives are fully involved and that no changes adversely affecting the workload, which is in many cases already unsustainable, be implemented.

- **Cancellation policy**

During the Staff Union General Assembly held on July 13th, 2016, the Staff, including several Activity Managers, brought to the SUC’s attention the problems and impacts created by the Cancellation Policy included in the 2016 Pricing Policy.

Despite the fact that Staff in general is positive regards the usefulness of the Centre having a Cancellation Policy, as articulated at the moment, it presents several administrative bottlenecks and damages to the to the Centre’s business relationship with its clients.

Following the discussion in the General Assembly, the Staff Union Committee was requested by the Staff to formally write to the Director indicating the need to revise the policy. The minute to the Director was sent on 20 July 2016. To date the Cancellation policy is still to be revised.

## 2. Improvement of work organization and working conditions

- Overtime

Apart from the problem of the heavy workload and reduced staffing levels resulting in abnormal number of overtime work, highlighted under Part 1, the SUC in 2016 has received complaints by colleagues for the miscalculation of compensatory leaves following overtime worked by staff of the General Service category. An Excel calculations worksheet has been developed by the SUC with the assistance of experts; the worksheet has been tested for an individual case that is now in front of the Administrative Tribunal and will be distributed to all staff so everyone will be able to compare his/her overtime recorded and the calculations resulting from the software used by HRS.

- Working parents

For the first time a summer camp for children was organized on campus in July 2016; the initiative was well received and appreciated, and should be consolidated in the future as a contribution to improve work-life balance and a support to working parents.

- Retirement age and pensions

The Turin SUC has presented to the JNC the proposal to implement as soon as possible the new 65 retirement age according to the UN General Assembly recommendation, but with the excuse that the Centre will align itself to the ILO implementation date the answer was negative. The March session of the ILO Governing Body introduced the possibility to choose the 65 retirement age for all staff in service with implementation date January 2018. The SUC negotiated and approved for the amendment of the Staff Regulations so that from January 2018 all staff will have the possibility to choose the 65 years retirement age without prejudice to their acquired rights.

- SHIF

In December 2015 the SUC mobilized the staff and the Former Officials' Association to sign the petition against the increase of the SHIF contributions.

- COSH

Health problems are caused by exposure to risks, and risks can have their origin in working conditions. Prevention is needed to avoid health damages related to working conditions.

This is the reason why we ask the COSH Committee to be committed in the whole process from the risk identification to the implementation of preventive policies. At the same time it is important to face the current damages that we can find around us, taking into account that almost all these damages are avoidable.

One of our first task as workers' representatives should be to seek information about workplace risks and damages. For this purpose we must have clear where and how to do it. From the SUC, we should have the relevant information to analyse the risk's existence, the risk assessment which is being carried out in 2017, and that the necessary preventive measures are taken.

This risk assessment on OSH must be in 360°, that is to say:

- Workplace and installations
- Machinery, technology and tools
- Ergonomics
- Work organization (focusing on psychosocial risks)

It must be carried out as a necessary step for a coherent comprehensive prevention policy, to support workers and benefit the Organization as a whole. In this regard, it is important to take Convention No. 155 (Articles 16 to 21), as a reference. We strengthened the action of the Joint Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (COSH), by extending its action through an operative working group focused on risk assessment, composed by members of the COSH, and with a proper work plan and schedule.

The participation of the workers' representatives is necessary in all matters relating to OSH management at the Centre. Health and safety representatives should obtain records for statistics regarding health damages to investigate the causes and eliminate or correct them.

The task of the risk assessment is being developed by specialists, agreed by the members of the COSH. Worker representatives must be involved and consulted throughout the entire process, and we confirmed our availability for this task.

- Compensation Package for P staff

In October 2016 the SUC was consulted in the JNC on the amendments to the Staff Regulations following the changes in the compensation package for the Professional and above categories recommended by the UN General Assembly, amendments that were then approved by the Board of the Centre and implemented in January 2017.

It was agreed by the Management that, because the amendments concerning the Education Grant was presented at the 2017 March session of the ILO Governing Body, any eventual difference in the amendment of the Centre Staff Regulations was aligned to the ILO Staff Regulations.

Considering that, according to Article 0.3, the Staff Regulations may be amended without prejudice to the acquired rights of officials in order to give effects to the decisions of the ICSC, the staff shall assess and quantify any monetary or other adverse effect and any potential detrimental impact that the implementation of the new compensation package may have. The Staff Union as well as the International Unions' federations have reserved their rights to make any claim or request any further amendment as deemed appropriate and/or required to ensure respect of acquired rights.

### **3. Industrial relations and solidarity initiatives**

- ONE ILO Staff Union

Taking into account that the ILO Staff Union is facing a similar negotiation, the agreement in ITC-ILO regarding the improvement of the situation of colleagues in precarious situations was shared with ILO Staff Union members. The time before we had shared the "rights for all" campaign and the main issues regarding the negotiation process.

*Updated information on the negotiations on the new contracts policy.*

After eight (8) informal meetings and a retreat, the Staff Union's position and that of the administration had become clearer but seem very far apart.

The Staff Union wanted the following:

- a) The reduction of differences in treatment according to the source of funding of the contract in order to achieve the objective of ONE ILO.
- b) The maintenance of the conditions of service of staff members who benefit from, or will benefit from, a contract financed from the Regular Budget related to the core functions of the Organization.
- c) A significant improvement in the situation of persons benefiting from a development cooperation contract (ex-technical cooperation).
- d) The Staff Union is against the administration's proposal to create a new type of contract (Fixed Term activities - FTA) which will create a new army of civil servants in precarious situations.

Regarding the question of the integration of the staff of Turin: Turin staff must be considered internal candidates in ILO positions: we talk about integration many times and now we should resolve this paradoxical situation as soon as possible.

The DG told us that within a year this issue can be dealt with in the framework of the negotiation of the contracts policy.

- Support to *Serenissima*'s workers

In December 2016, the *Serenissima*'s staff informed the SUC about the decision of their management to suspend 50% workers/time as a consequence of the restructuring works of the kitchen, self-service and restaurant of the Centre planned to start in January 2017 and scheduled for completion by March 2017. The SUC immediately took action by requesting clarifications to the ITC-ILO Management while strongly reaffirming the absolute need to guarantee the full respect of labour rights for all workers.

At the end of December 2016, *Serenissima* trade union representatives and *Serenissima* management reached a pre-agreement including temporary transfer for 9-10 workers to other *Serenissima*'s implants,

from 9th of January until 12th of February , maintaining the same working hours and salaries and in no case, using the “*cassa integrazione*”.

Despite the agreement, on 5 January some staff unexpectedly received a telegram indicating that they would be transferred to either *Collegno* or *Grugliasco*. Two out of ten were requested to move to Cuneo (90 km far from Turin). The telegram stated a beginning date of the transfer but not an ending date. Following these decisions by the Management of *Serenissima*, the staff decided on a union action by going on strike on 9th and 10th January. The Staff of the Centre supported the strike by boycotting the catering services on campus until further notice.

By the Extraordinary Assembly which took place on 10th January the SUC was mandated by its members to meet the Management of the Centre in order to reiterate the previous demands regarding the refurbishment of the kitchen and self-service areas including the setting up of a “temporary kitchen” on the premises of the Centre where the meals could continue to be prepared by *Serenissima*’s staff – a solution adopted in the past on similar situations. The Assembly also decided to set up a solidarity fund to support the workers of *Serenissima* to cover the loss of the salaries due to the days of strike.

Following a meeting on 12th January with the Director, Deputy Director, FIS Chief and HRS Chief during which the Director recalled that both Management and Staff Union share the same principles and values regarding the respect of labour rights, the SUC was informed that:

- there would not have been staff reduction,
- there would not have been any reduction to the working hours nor to the salaries of *Serenissima*’s staff,
- on 13th February all *Serenissima* staff would return to work on campus and a training programme would be organized to prepare them for the improved situation after the works,
- a temporary kitchen would be set up in the Valentino Bar for the local preparation of first courses, salads, cold dishes; only main courses and side dishes would have been partially prepared outside the Centre premises,
- from 1st April the new restaurant and self-service will be operative and all meals prepared on campus.

On 25th January *Serenissima* management and *Serenissima* staff union representatives signed an agreement according to which 5 workers would return to the ITC-ILO on 13th February and 5 would remain transferred in the Turin area for the duration of the restructuring works. The working hours as well as wages would be safeguarded and a training programme organized for *Serenissima*’s staff.

With regard to the Solidarity Fund a total amount of EUR 3160.00 was collected.

CGIL and UIL representatives sent to the SUC a list with the amounts deducted from the salaries of 10 *Serenissima*’s workers for the days they were on strike.

On the basis of the list received, 10 envelopes for a total amount of EUR 1.296,35 were prepared and handed over to the persons concerned during the Assembly of *Serenissima* which took place on 3rd March.

- Collection of funds "In aid of the earthquake victims in central Italy"

The Staff Union together with the Welcome Committee through a collection of funds and a crowd-funding event has managed to collect € 4.540.

This amount was transferred to the *Fondazione Specchio dei Tempi* which will rebuild the school buildings of Arquata.

- The Staff Union responded to an urgent appeal regarding a Campaign in support of the WIPO Staff Association.

“Given the gravity and urgency of the situation, the time has now come to put a stop to the WIPO Director General’s illegal interference in the staff’s right to manage their own affairs in regard to staff representation and call a halt to the WIPO Director General’s retaliation against the duly elected Staff Council for its whistleblowing activities”.

The Staff Union participated by circulating the petition defending the rights of staff and their elected representatives against the WIPO’s administration union-busting tactics.

Moreover, on 25th January 2017, the staff of the ITC-ILO joined UN staff worldwide, mobilized for freedom of association, the right to free speech and solidarity with WIPO staff.

### III. OTHER BODIES

#### **Former Officials' Section**

**Executive Secretary:** François Kientzler

At the beginning of 2016, three new women members joined the Former Officials' Section, to which they have brought a breath of fresh air: Kitty Hooton, Elisabeth Sommaro and Cherry Thompson-Senior. The Section was nevertheless sad to have to record the departure for medical reasons of Robert Falaize, one of its founder members, who has been a most active influence for some 30 years. The Section is also very sorry to have to announce the death of Clément Roche, who was especially concerned with tax issues.

The Section met regularly twice a month to discuss the latest developments concerning the ILO Staff Health Insurance Fund and the common system's Pension Fund, among other items. Other points that were discussed included the future of the SHIF and the regular discussion in the Governing Body and UN General Assembly of health insurance coverage for retirees, under the heading of *After Service Health Insurance*. The staff at the ILO is very much attached to our Pension Fund, a fact that the Section keeps very much in mind. Since the Fund changed its computer application, delays of up to two months have occurred in the settlement of initial claims and, together with our colleagues in the Staff Union, the Section has approached the Fund's managers to come up with and implement appropriate solutions. The Section actively supported the Staff Union in its "*No Pay Cut*" campaign to prevent the reduction of Professional staff salaries. It also responded regularly to requests from individual retirees.

One of the Section's projects that was successfully completed in 2016 was the launching of its own website: <http://www.anciens-bit-ilo.org>. The site is now up and running and all ILO retirees are cordially invited to tune in. It has been designed to bring former ILO officials closer together, to inform them quickly of any important developments and to facilitate access to the Pension Fund, SHIF, Staff Union, etc. Visitors to the site will also discover albums of photos of various notable events. In a word, the site should allow all our colleagues living far from Geneva to feel linked by a personal bond.

On 30 March 2017 the Section was received by the Director-General, Mr. Guy Ryder - the first meeting of its kind for years. This year the Section presented a report on its activities, with the emphasis on its attachment to the SHIF and to improving its management and governance. The hundredth anniversary of the ILO in 2019 is an occasion that the Section is looking forward to celebrating, and several suggestions were accordingly passed on to the Director-General (see the report on our meeting with the DG on our website). The Section laid particular stress on the situation of our retired colleagues and on the difficulties faced by many of those living far from Geneva and outside Europe.

There were around 150 participants in the annual information meeting of retired officials living in the Geneva area that was held on 19 October 2016. The first part of the meeting dealt with the recent computerization of the Fund and with members' online access to their personal data, and the second part with health insurance and the SHIF. Participation in the annual seminar for future retirees, too, is an important occasion for encouraging them to join the Former Officials' Section. A substantial number of retirees played an active part in the General Meeting of the SHIF on 29 September 2016.

The *Message* continued to appear twice a year, thanks to its editor and to several retired volunteers. The Executive Secretary took part in meetings of the Association of Former International Civil Servants (AAFI-AFICS), and the Section maintains good relations with the other associations of former employees in Geneva. The Arts and Decoration Circle has been revived and in October 2016 it held a second exhibition in the Colonnade at headquarters. A third exhibition in October 2017 gave 30 ILO artists the opportunity to show off their paintings, sculptures, photographs and craftwork.

The Former Officials' Section is proud of its cooperation with the Staff Union Committee, for which it thanks the Chairperson; it appreciates the fact that its close relations with the Union's secretariat makes it that much easier to meet and discuss some of the many issues that they have in common.

The Section's report would not be complete without mentioning the annual receptions for retirees that were held in May and December at the invitation of the ILO Director-General and which are a privileged opportunity for former ILO officials to meet again on familiar ground. The Director-General's attendance on these occasions is greatly appreciated.

### **International Civil Servants' Mutual Association (MEC/AMFI)**

**Staff Union representative:** Pierre Moulet

One is tempted to think of 2016 as having been an excellent year, but that would be to forget the hard economic times that we have had to face, and will continue to face for some years to come.

The environment in which the MEC operates has greatly evolved since 2007, and the Governing Body has sometimes had to adopt strict measures to ensure that it conforms to current standards and is able to function as well as possible. Verifying that it complies with all relevant fiscal laws and regulations, cutting back on its cash transactions, setting a ceiling on the earnings of deposit accounts in Swiss francs are just some of the unavoidable measures that it has had to take to ensure the MEC's long-term survival.

On the subject of fiscal legislation the Association has since 2013 repeatedly reminded its members that it can no longer harbour assets that are not in compliance with the rules and regulations in force. It has, however, been forced to conclude that a substantial number of members have so far failed to take the necessary action to comply with the relevant provisions; these, let us not forget, are an integral part of the standards of conduct that are binding on all international civil servants. The Governing Body has therefore had no choice but to request the MEC to proceed to a systematic verification of its depositors' accounts, including those of members of the GB, representatives of affiliated organization and the staff of the MEC itself. Considering that the Association has almost 6,000 depositors, the verification process will continue throughout 2017; it will also extend to all new depositors and new retirees who, while in service, benefited from tax exemption by reason of their diplomatic status.

The reduction in cash transactions was decided by the Governing Body in December 2015 in order to minimize the risks involved in the use of cash. Because so many requests were received for cash withdrawals following the systematic verification of accounts to ensure compliance with the law, it proved necessary to establish a waiting list that sometimes stretched to several weeks. The Governing Body would like to remind the members concerned of the importance of giving urgent thought to the desirability of replacing their cash operations by bank transactions, inasmuch as cash transactions will inevitably be further restricted in the near future (this is already the case in many numerous countries of the European Union).

The application by the banks of a negative interest rate on all MEC assets in Swiss francs obliged the Governing Body in June 2017 to set a ceiling of CHF400,000 on earnings from deposit accounts in Swiss francs; the measure has unfortunately had to be applied retroactively to 1 January since earning under that heading depend on the results of the fiscal year as a whole. It should be noted here that the updating of the risk analysis conducted last autumn revealed that, because of the drop in members' deposits and in the number of members, large accounts now posed a higher liquidity risk for the Association, and that a more rational distribution of assets by means of a ceiling on members' deposits was necessary in order to minimize that risk. Once the verification of compliance of members' accounts with fiscal legislation has reached a more advanced stage, the Governing Body will conduct a general review of the situation.

The Governing Body would like once again to make it quite clear that the drop in membership and in deposits that began in 2013 when members were reminded of their obligation to comply with the relevant legislation does not constitute any risk for the MEC. As has been explicitly stated in previous accounting exercises, the MEC was never designed to be an investment fund, and the rapid growth of its membership and of its deposits between 2000 and 2013 clearly revealed its limitation. The subsequent decline in

membership and in deposits is therefore an opportunity for the Association to refocus its activities on the granting of loans, while continuing to afford an excellent return on investments in Swiss francs.

Since the MEC's ordinary reserves in Swiss francs currently exceed the fixed limit of 12 per cent of its total assets less reserves, the Governing Body does not wish to increase the figure, as called for by the Association's rules, and proposes to the General Meeting that the statutory annual allocation of 12.50 per cent of the interest be distributed among its members, thereby permitting a higher return on investment, viz. an interest rate of 0.70 per cent plus a bonus of 1.20 per cent.

The audit of the internal control system conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers last November did not give rise to any observations other than those relating to the computer system. Several of the points raised in this connection have been resolved by the Association, and such areas as remain are essentially concerned with the introduction of a continuity plan. The Information Technology and Communication Service of the United Nations conducted an assessment of the MEC's website and raised a number of important points; one of these was that no arrangement existed for updating programmes and certificates that might have a bearing on the level of security. The Association immediately took the necessary action to ensure that the points raised were attended to as quickly as possible.

Regarding the integration of the Provident and Insurance Group of International Officials (GPAFI) into the structure of the MEC, a draft of the revised Statutes and Internal Regulations have been sent for approval to the affiliated organizations. In response to observations submitted by some of the latter, the draft will be reviewed and submitted once again for final approval.

Turning to a matter of transport, the MEC once again organized a "Bike to work" campaign in May and June which broke all previous records, with 90 teams signing up a total of 360 participants. For the second year running the MEC helped to finance a bicycle container located on the Place des Nations from April to October 2016, so that its members could borrow a bike free of charge.

As mentioned in last year's report, the Secretariat of the MEC is launching a new loan that would allow members to borrow small amounts for short periods. Although there have been some delays, the loan should come into effect by the middle of 2017. Meanwhile, the process of verifying compliance with fiscal provisions is to continue and the Governing Body appeals to all members for their comprehension and for their willing collaboration in a process which, though it is as tiresome for the MEC's secretariat as it is for them, is nevertheless indispensable.

In conclusion, the Governing Body would like to pay a tribute to Mr Philippe Augsburger and Mr Michael Evteev, who left the MEC in 2016. Monsieur Augsburger served as the Association's Executive Secretary from 1980 to 2001 and his rigorous management of its affairs and his highly professional approach have done much to assure its success today. Mr Evteev, for his part, was previously the UNDP's representative on the Governing Body and as such was at the origin of the Programme's affiliation to the MEC, thanks to which Geneva-based UNDP officials are able to benefit from its services.

## **The ILO InternBoard**

**Staff Union representative for relations with the InternBoard:** Elisabeth Fombuena

The members of the InternBoard are very active, and meetings are held with their counterpart on the Staff Union Committee every other week. They are also invited to the induction course organized by HRD for new interns.

The Staff Union organizes a number of events for interns, as well as assisting them by updating available information and helping them to understand the internships programme.

The *Interns Guide* has been updated and is in the process of being translated into French and Spanish; it will be posted on the InternBoard website.

A “Know your rights!” webpage is also in the works which will contain practical information on the various procedures involved in asserting one’s rights.

There are a number of other issues that are to be taken up with HRD, such as the possibility of reducing the price of meals in the cafeteria. Another important factor for interns is medical insurance, and we are trying to find reliable partners to meet their particular requirements at a reasonable cost.

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