

# STAFF UNION BULLETIN

## BULLETIN DU SYNDICAT

### BOLETIN DEL SINDICATO



24 January 2013

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

**18 October 2012**

#### ***Record of Decisions***

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee opened the second session of the Annual General Meeting and welcomed the participants.

#### **1. Election of the Chairperson**

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee reminded the participants that it was customary for the Chairperson of the Annual General Meeting to be elected for both sessions held in the course of the year. Consequently, Gloria Moreno-Fontes would chair the second session, as she had the first.

#### **2. Adoption of the agenda (doc. SU/AGM/2012/2/D.1)**

***The Annual General Meeting adopted the agenda***

#### **3. Report of the Staff Union Committee (doc. SU/AGM/2012/2/D.2)**

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee, presenting the Committee's annual report, focused on the priority areas for action, notably the state of industrial relations in the ILO. He reported steady progress on a number of issues, including recruitment and selection whereby a framework agreement had been reached on interim measures for 2012, reclassification, and resolution on what is subject to negotiation, with recourse to the Review Panel whose decision would be binding. The Review Panel was presently instrumental in helping the parties agree to a travel policy.

The Chairperson of the SUC also informed the Meeting that the Committee had submitted a paper to the Transition Team on areas it believed should be addressed in the medium term. In addition to promoting healthy industrial relations procedures, the paper focused on "Building One ILO" to end precarious work and ensure equal treatment among staff; establishing a merit-based and transparent ILO, particularly in relation to recruitment and selection and accountability; and a safe and healthy ILO, in relation to stress, security in the field, SHIF and the building renovation.

Concerning precarious contracts, the Chairperson of the SUC noted that discussions had started with the Administration on the improper use of external collaboration contracts and regularisation, and the need to define the employment relationship based on the principles of R198. He also said that there had been an early success in bridging the gap between TC and RB staff in relation to recruitment and selection, whereby those with more than five years' service on TC could apply to competitions on an equal footing with internal candidates. However, still more needs to be done in relation to training of TC staff and the inappropriate use of contracts.

Going on to the second section of the Report of the Staff Union Committee, the representatives of the regions took the floor to report on developments at the regional level.

Africa. The titular member for Africa highlighted an increased involvement of staff in the Staff Union in the region, with increasing membership and more candidates during the last regional elections. He welcomed the positive dialogue in the region, encouraged by the annual meeting between Management and Staff Union, this year in Nairobi to encourage interest in TC project staff issues. He acknowledged the worsening of working conditions as a result of field restructuring, and was sceptical of the "budgetary reasons" for freezing posts and the need for the 3:1 ratio of P to G staff. He also stated that staff in the region was impatient to see the start of the promised reclassification exercise. He drew attention to the situation of colleagues in Mali, who were in an extremely difficult situation with no office and who were not receiving the support they could receive from the ILO and the UN. He raised the issue of problems with SHIF, particularly in relation to discrimination between local and international staff in a recent case of evacuation for medical reasons. He also stated that the region was following travel negotiations closely, mainly because travel was difficult and it was not easy to define how long a flight would take.

Americas. The titular member for the Americas raised seven major concerns in the region. While she highlighted the region's positive experience in several of these areas, particularly the good practice built up around local committees dealing with recruitment and selection, training, and occupational safety and health, she remained concerned about "burnout" as a major problem and the use of training funds to finance participation in technical coordination meetings rather than for training and development of staff. She said that staff had made efforts to make the launch of IRIS in Lima as successful as possible, but training and information in its use has to be improved, including in the local language. She raised the recurring issue of SHIF reimbursement delays, calling for a renewed effort to address the situation, not just for the Americas region but for all. Another particularly important issue in the region was reclassification, especially in relation to possible distribution of tasks with the launch of IRIS. She also voiced the concerns of both the Santiago office and the region in relation to the local salary survey methodology, in which there seems to be a trend to use limited data to keep local salaries at a lower level than would otherwise be justified. She thanked the Staff Union Committee, and especially the substitute member for the Americas, for their support over the year and welcomed the new substitute member.

Asia. The titular member for Asia stated that membership in the region is increasing and that this increase brings with it heightened expectations of the Staff Union and the need to be seen to be taking up important issues for the members. Recruitment and selection was a case in point, whereby different offices in the region work to different procedures. Harmonised guidelines for the region were in the process of being negotiated. He also raised the need to raise awareness and training on persistent problems such as SHIF and local salary survey methodology. The Staff Union in the region

had been instrumental in forging solidarity with other UN organisations through FUNSAs, particularly coordinating for research on local salary data. A particularly important issue was to propose solutions to the problems flagged. In this respect, he said, information flow to and from the field representatives is imperative, and regional inputs should be taken into account in mediation and negotiation processes.

Europe and the Arab States. The titular member for the region highlighted the recent roll-out of IRIS to Beirut as a particularly relevant issue recently. Both the Budapest and the Beirut offices now had experience in the “business process review” and IRIS roll-out. The Staff Union had been part of the process, which was time-consuming and stressful, involving unpaid overtime and limited training. She raised the issue of discrimination between P and G staff in relation to teleworking and evacuation, and between local and international staff in relation to participation in the pre-retirement seminar. She called for more SU participation in recruitment and selection procedures in the Arab States region, where parachuting of staff was common and demotivating. Equally demotivating was the lack of career development and the contracts policy whereby bright young staff who have been trained are let go. On the other hand, she said, staff union participation in the training committee was a positive outcome of the business process review for the SU in the Arab States.

Turin Centre. The representative of the Staff Union Committee in Turin raised the perennial problem of the financial status and precarious positions in the Turin Centre. He described a deterioration of working conditions, leading to dissatisfaction and stress among staff. Within this context, he described the Union effort to reduce precarious work and regularise contracts, promoting a policy to give preference to long-serving precarious staff. He also raised the issue of workload and long working hours, often 45-50 hours per week, which have given rise to stress. He was also concerned about the tendency for management to announce new decisions without prior consultation. At the same time as the future of the Turin Centre is being compromised economically, the staff are being presented with decisions of no economic interest – no search for new sponsors or new activities – merely those aimed at reducing expenses and increase bureaucracy. He also promoted the role of the Turin Centre as an integral part of the ILO and urged the ILO to consider its services in printing and capacity-building.

Several members took the floor to voice their concern over security and discrimination between different categories of staff, including those on regular budget and technical cooperation contracts. The issue of security was a matter of life and death, and after discussion a motion was adopted, to be presented in the Record of Decisions, and at the next Annual General Meeting as a Resolution. The text is set out below:

***Motion adopted by the Staff Union Annual General Meeting (second session) 18<sup>th</sup> October 2012***

*The Annual General Meeting recalls that the right to physical integrity is a fundamental human right. It stresses that the security of ILO staff must be ensured without discrimination based on grade, type of contract or its source of funding, or on any other ground. The General Meeting supports the efforts of the Staff Union Committee to achieve this goal and urges the Administration to afford the highest priority to this issue.*

The Chairperson of the SUC also highlighted a number of other developments, particularly in relation to recruitment and selection and the introduction of Staff Union observers in the technical evaluation panels, a process which had led to greater transparency and confidence in outcomes. Responses were noted concerning measures in relation to the building renovation, the creation of an interns section within the Staff Union, and organisation of former officials.

***The General meeting approved the annual report of the ILO Staff Union Committee for 2011-12 by consensus.***

**4. Electronic voting**

A member of the Staff Union Committee introduced the issue of electronic voting for future SU elections, and outlined the advantages in terms of cost and time saved, as well as security and voting options available, and the implications for the Staff Union Rules. A member of the Electoral Commission supported the move to electronic voting. There were no objections and the General meeting agreed that the SUC should proceed with a referendum to ascertain support to possible amendment of the Staff Union Rules.

**5. Financial report and Addendum: Report of the Auditing Commission  
(doc. SU/AGM/2012/2/D.3 and doc. SU/AGM/2012/2/D.3/Add.)**

***The General Meeting approved the financial report for the period 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011 by consensus.***

**6. Election of the Auditing Commission (doc. SU/AGM/2012/2/D.4)**

On behalf of the General Meeting, the Chairperson thanked the financial auditors for their work and announced that they had agreed to accept a new mandate.

***The General Meeting approved the renewal of the mandate of the financial auditors by consensus.***

**7. Report of the Board of the Staff Union Assistance Fund  
(doc. SU/AGM/2012/2/D.5)**

The Treasurer of the Fund presented the Board's report and stated that there were more outgoings than usual due to assistance to staff in Bangkok after heavy floods there. However, the financial situation remained good.

***The General Meeting approved the report of the Board of the Staff Union Assistance Fund by consensus.***

8. **Arrangements for the elections to the Staff Union Committee and Addendum:**  
**List of candidates for elections to the Staff Union Committee 2012-2014**  
**(doc. SU/AGM/2012/2/D.6 and doc. SU/AGM/2012/2/D.6/Add.)**

***The General Meeting approved the timetable and arrangements for the elections to the Committee to be held in 2013.***

**Appointment of the returning officers.** On behalf of the General Meeting, the Chairperson thanked the returning officers for their work. Samir Koufane and Régine de Loof had agreed to accept a new mandate. The Chairperson proposed that Mireille Hernandez, who was not standing as a candidate again, be replaced by Craig Russon. There was no objection.

***The General Meeting approved the election of the returning officers by consensus.***

**Appointment of the Electoral Commission.** The General Meeting thanked the Electoral Commission for its work. The Chairperson said that all the titular members – Mr. Jean-Bernard Ballion, Ms. Karen Curtis, Ms. Fabienne Duprat, Ms. Caroline de Giorgi and Mr. John Myers – and substitute members – Mr. Bertrand Bernaz, Mr. Gabriel Brun, Ms. Martine Humblet, Mr. Mourad Ismaïli and Mr. Gerald de Smidt – had accepted to serve another term in 2013. There were no other candidatures received. There were no objections.

***The General Meeting approved the appointment of the Electoral Commission by consensus.***

9. **Other business**

No other business was proposed.

After the customary thanks, the Chairperson closed the second session of the Annual General Meeting 2012.

**The session ended at 16.00**