



**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

9 May 2019

## **Visit of the UN Secretary-General 8, 9 and 10 May 2019**

### **Additional information**

- Upon his accession to the post of Secretary-General (SG) and at the launch of the United Nations (UN) reform, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2018, Mr António Guterres made it clear that he thought that the United Nations system was full of duplicates in its activities and its services and that it was necessary to simplify it, in order to be more efficient with the constituents.
- This whole discussion took place at the same time as the disputes over wage cuts in several headquarters cities, including Geneva, where all the staff federations and associations requested that, in the context of this new reform of the United Nations, a real mechanism of social dialogue be established within the system, as so far it is non-existent.
- At the ILO Governing Body meeting (GB) in February 2018, in the midst of the wage dispute, the Staff Union was formally received by Ms Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General in charge of the implementation of the reform and of explaining this reform to the GB. During this meeting, the Staff Union hand-delivered a letter addressed to the UN SG, which outlined the various concerns of ILO staff, not only related to the wage dispute, but also to this reform, and clearly stated that it could only be successful with an effective social dialogue mechanism within the UN common system and its bodies (including the ICSC). To date, no acknowledgment of receipt has been sent to the Staff Union.
- In February 2019, the Staff Union learned of the future visit of the SG to Geneva on the occasion of the UN Chief Executives Board (CEB), which regularly brings together all the Directors-General of the United Nations and specialized agencies, including the Secretary-General of the UN.
- During its bi-annual meeting with the ILO DG, the Staff Union formally requested that it be able to meet briefly with the SG in order to inform him of the current concerns of ILO staff in the framework of the reform and also to stress, once again, the need for a social dialogue established within the whole United Nations.

- Since February, the Staff Union has regularly and frequently called the DG's Office in order to obtain an answer.
  - It was only last week that the Staff Union was drip-fed the first piece of information, that there would probably be no availability to meet with the staff representatives, but that instead an informal interaction would take place with staff between 7 and 7.30 p.m.
  - It is disturbing that, within the ILO itself, the Secretary-General and the Director-General of the ILO did not seize this opportunity to meet briefly with the Staff Union representatives, and see it as a visible and political opportunity to make the ILO an example in the United Nations system, especially in the year of its centenary.
  - The Staff Union spoke of a "dark future" in their communication to staff at the beginning of the week, because this kind of posture suggests difficulties in the future, especially for field staff, who will need to work within the framework of the UN reform to promote tripartism, dialogue and social justice in their day-to-day work.
  - There has been much disappointment over the past two years about the leadership of the entire United Nations system and its ability to defend staff against multiple attacks, often driven by the economic interests of the richest States within the United Nations General Assembly.
  - The Staff Union, whose members' commitment to the ILO's values and principles is beyond question, has participated in many events celebrating the centenary of the Organization. We regret that the Administration has not, in turn, done the necessary to bring social dialogue to its proper level within the international civil service.
  - As a reminder, when the first collective bargaining agreement was signed in the year 2000 at the ILO, Mr Kofi Annan, the then Secretary-General, came in person to welcome this historic event and encourage all other organizations in the UN system to implement this practice of social dialogue throughout the United Nations.
  - History will remember the current Secretary-General of the United Nations, visiting the ILO – visiting this house of tripartism, normative action, decent work and social justice in the year of its centenary, yet who did not find the time to honour the values and principles of the International Labour Organization.
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