

# ILO STAFF UNION

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17 October 2019

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**SECOND SESSION**

**17 OCTOBER 2019**

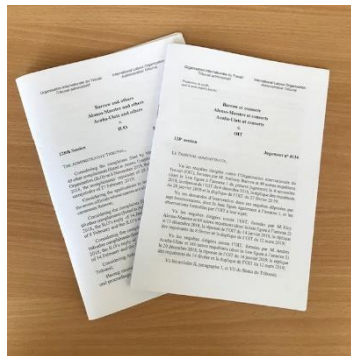
**Annual Report of the ILO Staff Union Committee**  
**for the year 2019**

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for the year 2019



**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 2019



**For our 100th anniversary, let's see what's the best the ILO has to offer and make sure we hang onto it**

When on 3 July 2019, the Officers of the Executive Bureau of the Staff Union entered Room XI, accompanied by a broad cross-section of the staff to hear the ILOAT's decision on the complaint lodged against the reduction in salaries that was imposed in 2018, you could feel the nervousness and tension in the room. We were about to discover whether, in the cold light of justice, the Tribunal was going to exert its administrative and juridical authority in order to win the day against bad faith and political interests. Was its judgement finally going to justify all those months of mobilization, all those sleepless nights that our legal unit spent fine-tuning their legal arguments?

And so it was a huge relief when, in the muffled and solemn atmosphere surrounding its deliberations, the Administrative Tribunal of the ILO did precisely that.

That day we discovered that there is some justice in the world after all and that, just when everything seemed lost, there exists a court of law that has proven its worth over the past 92 years to which we men and women of the international public service of the ILO can still confidently appeal. Let's see that it stays that way.

So on this hundredth anniversary of our Organization, by way of a tribute to the ILO's very first Director-General, Albert Thomas, the Staff Union would like to recall his memorable words<sup>1</sup>:

*« Ne donnez pas au monde l'impression que l'intelligence humaine,  
(...) peut être défaillante et incapable d'organiser la société selon la justice !  
La justice commande, il faut que la justice triomphe. »*

<sup>1</sup> Delivered in 1921 to the International Association for Social Progress.

## I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME AND STRATEGY

### SECTION 1 – Objectives and priority areas of action for 2015-2020

#### 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 age, race, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, religion, colour, national extraction, social origin, marital status, pregnancy, personal and/or family status and responsibilities, sexual orientation, disability, union membership or political conviction, grade, type of contract, 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 Objectives and Means of Action for 2019

### I. Improve industrial relations

Objective: Strengthening the framework of industrial relations so that the Collective Bargaining Recognition and Procedural Agreement between the International Labour Office and the ILO Staff Union becomes a reality.

Means of action

- Ensuring that the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) insists that every decision or proposal from the Administration is backed by detailed information and, if necessary, by due consultation or negotiation with the staff.
- Establishing internal rules of procedure that fix time limits, deadlines and terms of reference for each negotiation.
- Improving the negotiating capability of our staff representatives.

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

**Co-Secretary:** Elisabeth Fombuena

**Members:** Carlos Carrión Crespo, Manuel Céspedes Ocampo, Yvan Poulin, Clara Van Panhuys

**Technical Advisers:** Chloé Charbonneau-Jobin and all the members of the Committee according to the subject on the agenda of the JNC

This year the two sides on the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) promised to meet more often (at least four times) on pre-scheduled dates and to agree on a set of priorities for possible future negotiations. True enough, the JNC *did* meet more often this year but, once again, there were issues on which we were unable to make as much progress as we would have liked, such as a review of the policy on teleworking, parental leave, an agreed wording for Chapter XII of the Staff Regulations and the interminable discussion on the contracts policy, which is still stymied by the administration's failure to make any proposals to the Staff Union. Things are not all bad, however, and after years of negotiations the Staff Union did finally sign the Collective Agreement on the new generic job descriptions in non-headquarters' duty stations. In addition, at the insistence of the Governing Body, the administration did very belatedly come up with a new point for discussion that has generated extensive consultations within the Union: the need for greater diversity.

As to the form and quality of social dialogue within the ILO, the Staff Union is not altogether happy. On the one hand, run-of-the-mill meetings are held often enough with the administration (mostly with HRD) and for the most part they are quite friendly; but when it comes to a more formal dialogue (information, consultation, negotiation) the Union still has enormous difficulty getting the administration to implement the agreement on recognition and procedures the way it was originally intended. On several recent occasions, for example, the staff's representatives have not been systematically consulted on IGDS circulars that have implications for the staff's working and employment conditions. For both parties to the negotiation, and above all for the Organization itself, this wastes our time and energy and reduces our effectiveness.

The Staff Union has sent several of its Committee members or field staff representatives for training so that they can acquire the skills they need, whether for negotiating at headquarters or at other levels such as local salary survey committees.

## II. Improve job security

### A. Recruitment and selection

Objective: To take advantage of a successful appeal to the Joint Advisory Appeals Board (JAAB) in 2018 aimed at ensuring that the recruitment and selection process is both equitable and transparent, so as to strengthen the collective agreement on mobility and recruitment by focusing on career mobility, career development, greater motivation and job satisfaction.

Means of action

- The Staff Union Committee's review of job vacancies will seek to ensure that job descriptions are objective and offer a real possibility of career development.
- The Committee is convinced of the importance for the Organization of a system of recruitment that seeks a broader and more authentic diversity of manpower while at the same time respecting Article 100 of the United Nations Charter, the Declaration of Philadelphia and the Staff Regulations. It therefore undertakes to maintain the utmost vigilance over internal procedures conducted by the Human Resources Department.
- The Staff Union is assisted in its work by the presence of two of its representatives on the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC). Its efforts are based on strict observance of the recruitment and selection procedure and of the principles of transparency, on following up standard procedures and on just and fair treatment. Particular attention is paid to the recruitment of internal candidates so as to offer them an opportunity of career development and of DC+5s so that they can benefit from employment security, as well as to a knowledge of more than one language so as to promote French and Spanish and thereby the interests of the Organization's truly multicultural nature.
- The Committee also intends to make sure that the staff is properly informed about any issues relating to the agreement on recruitment and selection procedures, especially since the introduction of a new computer programme that must not be allowed to undermine the 2014 agreement or to limit the role played by the staff representatives and independent members in the recruitment process.
- If it is to carry out this crucial work successfully, the Committee must make a point of establishing good relations with the newly appointed independent members of the technical panels. The objective will be to share the working parties' experience, to offer practical advice and to devise ways for them to fulfil their responsibilities properly, as far as possible in conjunction with the Human Resources Department.
- The Committee will ensure that, as stipulated in the ILO Staff Regulations, equivalent experience is recognized as such and that the basic tenets of the Organization and of its mandate are preserved.

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

**Technical Adviser:** Manuel Céspedes Ocampo

**Substitute:** Carlos Carrión Crespo

**Coordinator of the working group on recruitment and selection:** Manuel Céspedes Ocampo

**Members:** Harvey Addo-Yobo, Carlos Carrión-Crespo, Alessandro Chiarabini, Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, Siska Dubbert, Elisabeth Fombuena, Yvan Poulin, Azza Taalab, Clara Van Panhuys, Christiane Wiskow

**Achievements:**

In 2019, the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC) met 7 times in connection with General Service (GS) competitions and RAPS sessions. Since January 2019, and at the time of writing, two RAPS sessions have taken place and RAPS 3 was in preparation by HRD.

In RAMC meetings, the SUC representatives do their best to reach a consensus on the basis of SUC views. When consensus is not possible, a separate recommendation by the SUC is made. The latter is capital when colleagues decide to appeal, as the Joint Advisory Appeals Board (JAAB) will be able to know the Staff Union's position as regards a competition.

The Staff Union representatives are extremely vigilant at each of the three (3) procedural stages in the filling of vacancies (see also Annex I of the Staff regulations):

**Request of the opening of vacancies and review of vacancy announcement.**

The SUC actively participates in the recruitment process, starting with the review of Job descriptions (JDs) for the RAPS and for GS competitions – Over 30 JDs have been reviewed by the Union so far. The SUC aims at ensuring that vacant positions are real career opportunities for qualified colleagues

As in previous years, the main trends for 2019 noted by the Staff Union are:

- the bias in favour of English, with negative consequences on the efforts made for an authentic diversity of ILO staff.
- managers are always tempted to downgrade the vacant positions, in particular GS posts, but maintaining the tasks of the upper level – what we call low-cost employment.

**Stage 1:** In the RAMC, the SUC representatives review and participate in recommendations on proposals to transfer colleagues without competition – due to humanitarian and medical reasons, legal obligation of the Office, an abolished position, etc.

The SUC continues in its efforts to protect the interests of staff at this stage one of the process.

**Stage 2: transfers in the same grade or through mobility.**

The SUC takes into account very seriously the apparent frustration noticed because of this second stage, as some colleagues considered it as a brake on career development. Nevertheless, the domino effect of reassignments for mobility have meant the creation of vacant positions meaning a real chance for colleagues to further their career through competition.

**Stage 3: Filling vacant positions by competition.**

The Staff Union through its representatives in the RAMC continues to defend the interests of colleagues vigorously, when reviewing the competition files, drawing attention to irregularities in long and short-lists.

**Challenges ahead:**

Communication by HRD on recruitment and selection matters remains a challenge. The SUC intends to ensure the respect of the collective agreement on mobility and recruitment by insisting that the SUC and independent members should have been informed before the introduction of the new computer program on recruitment and selection procedures. Several serious issues have been detected since the introduction of that IT tool.

The SUC takes very seriously the complaints from colleagues who were unsuccessful applicants for positions filled at the three stages of the recruitment process. Ensuring confidentiality, the SUC has shared staff concerns with HRD and other RAMC members.

The SUC noticed the confirmation of the trend of the decrease and downgrade of General Service positions being advertised. What about the career development for GS colleagues?

The SUC has raised, several times, a recurrent issue of English-language bias in many JDs, with the trend to exclude many possible better-qualified candidates for the benefit of Anglophones, which in the SUC's view is unacceptable in a multilingual organization.

The role of the Independent member of the technical panel is key in the third stage of the selection process. The organization of sessions to share experiences and guidance with the independent members remain pending.

Moreover, on more than one occasion HRD's refusal to apply the Staff Regulations correctly with regard to minimum requirements (especially recognition of equivalent experience) or to separate candidates by country of origin has ended in the Staff Union lodging an official complaint that the JAAB has subsequently upheld. Five years after the signing of the collective agreement, it is about time that we clarified and improved the recruitment and mobility procedure so that diversity really does become a hallmark of the Organization.

## **B. Contracts and employment security**

Objective: Protect employment security at the ILO, particularly in all current or future negotiations with the Administration, irrespective of the contractual situation of the staff. Take steps to eliminate all forms of precariousness, and strive for greater equity between different categories of staff (RB-DC, P-G, and Headquarters-field).

Priority areas include:

- the defence of the eligibility of staff in the titularization process and the support of such a process as a permanent feature of the Organization;
- The examination, in negotiations with the Administration, of the realities of staff in situations of precariousness in order to achieve tangible improvements for all staff while defending acquired rights;
- The defence of existing jobs in the framework of the Business Process Review (BPR) that has become almost permanent and the fight against the attempts to downgrade the positions;
- The improvement of employment conditions for DC staff, including recruitment, career development, recognition and merit, and access to training;
- The medium and long-term integration into the regular workforce of the Organization through the statutory channels;
- The regularization of staff employed for years under successive contracts.

Means of action

- Ensure that priority areas are included in the negotiation of a new contracts policy by the end of the year.
- Establish an ad hoc working group on Development Cooperation to analyse the impact of HR and other policies on this group of staff, to engage in a broad consultative process of staff working on Development Cooperation, including in the field, and to advise the Staff Union regarding the priorities and key issues facing this group of staff.
- Support the Staff Union position on the contracts policy with an appropriate legal strategy.
- Maintain a close and constructive dialogue with the INTERNBOARD.



**Coordinator:** Catherine Comte-Tiberghien

**Members:** Siska Dubbert, Laurence Dubois, Elisabeth Fombuena, Yvan Poulin, Clara Van Panhuys

The contracts policy is still being negotiated with the administration in the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC). So far, it has proved impossible to achieve any tangible results that improve the situation of staff members in a precarious situation or to establish a contracts policy that is consistent with other staff policies, such as recruitment and selection. It is time the administration submitted new proposals to the Staff Union so that the negotiations can make some progress.

Meanwhile, the Staff Union continues to look into the situation of colleagues in a precarious situation, case by case. It realizes just how urgent this has become and is again doing all it possibly can to keep the issue high on the administration's agenda.

*Creation of an ad hoc working group on Technical Cooperation Staff*

An ad hoc working group on Technical Cooperation Staff was established to analyze the impact of HR and other policies on this group of staff, to engage in a broad consultative process of staff working on Development Cooperation, including in the field, and to advise the Staff Union regarding the priorities and key issues facing this group of staff. The first meeting was held on 23 September 2019 with Union members from Headquarters and the field. The group agreed to develop ToR with its priorities and hold regular monthly meetings.

### III. Ensure full social protection

Objective: Ensure that the policies pursued by the SHIF Management Committee and the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board reflect the needs and interests of current and former officials, in close collaboration with the representatives of the SHIF and the Pension Fund.

Means of action

- Ensuring compliance with the SHIF Rules and Regulations, particularly with regard to the information provided to insured persons, the timely publication of annual reports, etc.
- Increasing staff awareness of health insurance and pension issues in order to give staff representatives more weight on the joint bodies. This calls for regular and close contact between the Staff Union (including the Former Officials' Section) and members' representatives on the SHIF's Management Committee and the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Committee.
- Promoting and organizing information meetings, general assemblies and referendums so as to ensure that any proposed changes to the structure, programme, benefits or contributions are clearly and fully explained to participants and that no decision is taken without their broad consultation.

**Coordinator:** Elisabeth Fombuena

**Members:** Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, Yoshie Noguchi, Azza Taalab, José Tossa, Faustina Van Aperen, Clara Van Panhuys, Sergio Velasco

**Technical Advisers:** François Kientzler (Former Officials' Section), Cherry Thompson-Senior

*Staff Health Insurance Fund (SHIF)*

Once again, the Staff Union has been busy this year and has maintained close ties with the SHIF. Three of the Staff Union Committee's members are also on the SHIF Management Committee, which means that

they can keep it better informed of any decisions that affect the health coverage of the Fund's members. The main improvement this year has been the launching of SHIF ONLINE for serving officials to submit reimbursement claims directly, which has earned a lot of positive feedback, especially from our colleagues in the field. The one negative point continues to be one of access to healthcare for all serving officials. Judging from discussions in the Management Committee, however, a long-term solution would seem to be in the offing for Fund members all over the world.

The succession of tangible improvements in the running of the Fund gives us every reason to believe that it really is suited to the size and specific nature of the Organization – provided of course that the administration is prepared to invest sufficiently in both financial and human resources. A regular actuarial review is shortly to be introduced, and the representatives of the Fund members will make every effort to take the right decisions to ensure that it continues to operate.

#### Pension Fund

As for the Pension Fund, the representatives of the participants attended the annual meeting, which was held this year in Nairobi and where, as usual, they defended the interests of the ILO staff. The audit report that was submitted to the United Nations General Assembly gave rise to an extensive debate that could possibly jeopardize the ILO's representativity on the Fund. When the discussion resumes as scheduled, the Staff Union will, through its representatives, do its utmost to defend the interests of the staff and retirees.

Our representatives on the Compensation Committee continued to represent the staff by looking into every case that arises. Here, too, they defend the staff's interests to the very best of their ability.

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

Objective: To contribute to the improvement of the working environment for all ILO officials through combating discrimination and promoting inclusion, 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, diversity, equality and work-life balance.

More specifically, the working group will:

- Actively collaborate with the Joint Negotiating Committee Sub-Working Group on Diversity and Inclusion;
- Develop a working paper on staff with duty of care responsibilities for dependants with a disability;
- Support the piloting of the UN System Wide Action on Disability Inclusion in the ILO;
- Work with the ILO SUC working group for:
  - recruitment and selection on geographic representation;
  - OSH and in particular mental health;
  - the JNC on sexual harassment and other types of harassment;
- Collaborate with HRD to revise the teleworking and flexi-time policy;
- Launch consultations with HRD to revise the maternity and paternity leave policy for a more inclusive parental leave policy;
- Partner with – when possible – ILO GED and HRD, on International Days, including International Women's Day, IDAHOT, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, etc.

**Coordinator:** Gurchaten Sandhu (Gender Focal Point)

**Members:** Laurence Dubois, Elisabeth Fombuena, Chantal Nahimana, Yoshie Noguchi, Patricia Rangel Charrier, Faustina Van Aperen, Clara Van Panhuys, Christiane Wiskow

**Technical Advisers:** Jurgen Menze, Ilka Schoellmann

#### *ILO's Action Plan on Diversity*

Following a Governing Body request to improve “geographical diversity” in the ILO, HRD established a Task Force of ILO staff “to reflect on and put forward proposals for enhancing overall national and regional diversity among the Professional and above levels of the Organization in the short, medium and long term.” Following a consultation with HRD, the ILO SUC and a working group provided extensive inputs into the draft report. The ILO SUC highlighted in its feedback and in person consultations on numerous occasions that the interpretation and analysis of diversity was too narrow and encouraged HRD and the Task Force to adopt a more holistic and participatory approach rather than focusing only on nationality and a binary definition of gender.

Given the concerns raised by the SUC, submission of the Office’s report along with recommendations to the Governing Body during the March session was delayed until the November session. In between this period, the ILO SUC has provided extensive inputs into the report.

#### *UN System-Wide Action Plan on Disability*

The System-Wide Action Plan for Disability Inclusion (Disability SWAP) is a means to build internal capacity, providing clear guidelines for the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities across all pillars and at all levels of the UN work. The Disability SWAP, like the Gender SWAP, also has a component on organizational culture, including employment and capacity development for staff. The ILO SUC provided extensive feedback on both the policy and strategy. The ILO SUC will be involved in the next stage of consultation to pilot the Disability SWAP at the ILO.

#### *International Days*

*International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT):* Building on the success of last year, the ILO SUC supported the GED & ILOAIDS photo campaign “LGBTI allies at the ILO” and supported the lunch time seminar on “Justice and Protection for LGBTI+ people in the world of work.”

*International Day for Women:* This year to mark International Day for Women, in a show of solidarity, the ILO SUC invited all female colleagues in HQ for a coffee.

#### *Teleworking Survey*

The Staff Union provided feedback and inputs into the analysis of the survey results and report. The report highlighted key issues that staff face with regards to the teleworking policy. Discussions on next steps are pending.

#### *Dependents with disabilities*

The working group conducted informal consultations with officials who have dependents with disabilities, along with the medical service and welfare officer. The Office does have several measures, channels and services available to officials who have dependents with disabilities. These are not always well known. In some cases, the measures or services offered by the administration are insufficient. The working group proposes to develop an information booklet to better inform officials of the various measures and services available, as well as holding talks with the administration to improving the provision of services.

## V. Ensure a career development path for all

### A. Personal promotions and reclassification

#### 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.
- To ensure that the global reclassification exercise in the field is executed, and Independent Review Groups (IRGs) are established and active in all regions for the examination of job grade review appeals.

#### Means of action

- Participating in the JNC Sub-Working Group on Personal Promotions, and legal action where appropriate;
- Finalizing the implementation of the reclassification exercise in the field that provides equal opportunities for all; and
- Assisting the JNC when needed.

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

At this very moment, the joint group on personal promotions has finalized the 2018 exercise for G staff and has begun the 2017 exercise for P Staff, which has two stages. The Staff Union will do its utmost to ensure that the group achieves 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 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 agreed in the framework of the job descriptions in the field, which was agreed in August 2019.

The titularization exercise for all staff is up to date.

### 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, including a review of the Reports Board;
- To promote diversity and geographical representativeness through the training policy and other mechanisms of career development;
- To ensure a transparent mechanism for merit increments that reflects performance evaluation results;
- To ensure that the review of job descriptions in the field and headquarters is fair to all 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; and
- Relaunching the Joint Advisory 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; and
- Negotiating improvements suggested as a result of this consultation process with staff, through the JNC.

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

**Members of the Joint Training Council:** Siska Dubbert, Chantal Nahimana, Olga Strietska-Ilina, Azza Taalab

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

**Members:** Harvey Addo-Yobo, Siska Dubbert, Chantal Nahimana, Yvan Poulin, Azza Taalab, Clara Van Panhuys, Christiane Wiskow

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

*Training policy:* The members of the Joint Training Committee (JTC) have held a preparatory retreat to reactivate the JTC, and the operational meetings 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:* The Staff Union has participated in negotiations to amend the Performance Management Framework. As a result, the merit increments are now tied to the performance reports and those corresponding to 2018 were published for the first time in August. This will increase transparency in the process. The Staff Union has 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 projects 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: Ensuring that the Staff Union communicates with the staff more effectively, both on ongoing problems and on progress made, in close collaboration with the relevant working groups.

Means of action

- Keeping the staff regularly informed of developments through the Union's website, social media, etc.
- Updating the website in English, French and Spanish.
- Updating existing information notes on important issues such as the Staff Union Assistance Fund (SUAF), the use of members' dues, recruitment and selection.
- Improving the wording of Staff Union material (especially its flyers and membership forms) so as to make it more inclusive.
- Drafting new information notes to make procedures easier to understand for the officials concerned.
- Communicating regularly with the drafting committee of UNION regarding the publication of editorials on ILO policies and procedures.
- Finding new ways to promote Staff Union campaigns and explain what they are about, especially recruitment drives, training activities, etc.

**Coordinator:** Elisabeth Fombuena assisted by Harvey Addo-Yobo, Yvan Poulin, Patricia Rangel Charrier

The communication team meets every week to prepare the weekly headlines and press releases. The members of the team keep in close contact with one another so that the Staff Union and the staff can get in touch very quickly in the event of an emergency. It was this rapid-response capability that proved so crucial during the events that took place at the beginning of the year and that ensured that the staff was informed of developments step by step.

The Staff Union communicates mainly by means of headlines, and bulletins and broadcasts (issuing 37 of these this year).

Among its other activities, the communication team supported the following events in recent months:

- the campaign on juridical appeals;
- CCISUA's campaign on the post adjustment and on matters relating to the ICSC, by providing the design and material for posters and publications on Twitter, Facebook and other social media.

UNION magazine was very quiet this year, as much as anything because the editors were so busy with other matters. Besides that, the fact was that there were not many contributors other than the Staff Union Committee. Shortage of staff meant that the yearly paper version could not be prepared in time. That said, contributions from members of the staff who have something to say are still very much welcome, and we can only encourage you to visit our site at <http://unionmag.ilostaffunion.org>.

The website is currently being updated. This is a lengthy process, but it is necessary if the team is to provide fully comprehensive information in three languages, which they are determined to do. Slowly but surely, we shall get there.

The Staff Union plans to keep up the hard work and to do everything it can to improve communication with the staff. To do this, it shall make use of every means at its disposal and of all the know-how of the members of the team.

## 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 expand and renew the Union Steward Network in ILO HQ.

### Means of action

#### *Objective 1*

- Providing training sessions for union stewards on mobilization techniques, as well as negotiation and influencing skills for working with management at the unit level;
- Finalizing a Union Steward Guidebook, to support stewards in addressing various aspects of their representative role, which would also be made available to staff representatives in the field;
- Providing mentoring support to union stewards in their work through ad hoc meetings, mentoring or training (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);
- Identifying departments where restructuring is going on or planned for 2019, in particular those tied to the Business Process Review (in collaboration with the ad hoc Business Process Review Working Group of the SUC) , through regular communication with HRD;
- Establishing working groups of Staff Union Committee members and union stewards in the key departments that will face restructuring, with mentoring support provided on application of the change management guidelines and mobilization of staff to participate in transition processes;
- Regularly sharing information with the Union Stewards network through emails, and information-sharing coffees and lunches.

#### *Objective 2*

- Developing a union recruitment campaign for 2019 that targets those regional offices and ILO HQ units with fewer members for focused organizing efforts, including organization of Union Day in 2019.
- Organizing a minimum of 2 café-croissant information sessions with ILO departments in HQ in 2019, in departments with a union steward, to strengthen support for the Union.
- Liaising with Regional Titular members and their Substitutes to exchange experience and provide mutual assistance in the recruitment process

#### *Objective 3*

- Organizing a minimum of two additional café croissants in ILO departments without a union steward, to recruit additional stewards to complete the network.

**Coordinator:** Yvan Poulin assisted by Carlos Carrion-Crespo, Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, Elisabeth Fombuena, Clara Van Panhuys

Throughout the past year the Staff Union Committee actively supported its network of shop stewards at headquarters by improving their skills and conducting public awareness events. As a result, it was able to extend the network and to cover 25 to 26 constituencies, thanks to the addition of new shop stewards in INWORK and RESEARCH.

### Mentoring shop stewards in their work

The shop steward coordinators provided assistance to individual shop stewards by organizing meetings with the staff and management, often over a morning coffee and croissant. The meetings helped the shop stewards to get to know their colleagues better and to play a more active role in their constituency.

### Union membership campaign and organization

In February 2019, during the first session of the Annual General Meeting, a meeting was held with regional representatives to find out how many officials in each region are members of the Staff Union and to make a bigger effort to get people to join.

At this point in mid-September, the Staff Union has so far acquired 169 new members this year—146 in the field and 23 at headquarters. Most of the new members in Geneva joined during the appeals process before the Administrative Tribunal. In the field, membership enjoyed a particular boost in Thailand, Peru and Costa Rica.

## **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 security and occupational 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 regular updating and effective 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;
- Supporting the network of Staff Union OSH representatives in the field offices and at headquarters through information, advocacy activities, technical assistance and training;
- Contributing to capacity-building among SU representatives by developing user-friendly guidance for OSH representatives on how to fulfil their OSH duties;
- 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;
- Supporting all greening initiatives within the ILO including through existing policies such as telework.
- Ensuring that staff are kept informed of developments concerning security and occupational safety and health through communications and/or information sessions.

### **Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (COSH)**

**Titular members:** Yoshie Noguchi, Christiane Wiskow

**Substitute members:** Harvey Clavien, Ana Catalina Ramírez Abarca

### **Working group on occupational safety and health and environmental issues**

**Coordinator:** Christiane Wiskow

**Members:** Harvey Clavien, Jean-Louis Dominguez, Jürgen Menze, Yoshie Noguchi, Tzvetomira Radoslavova, Ana Catalina Ramirez Yoshie Noguchi



### Achievements:

A major achievement was the re-activation of the Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (COSH) at headquarters. Through persistent communication initiatives and finally a formal request sent to the DG, the administration took action and re-appointed a COSH Chair. We thank Mr Moussa Oumarou for his readiness to accept the function as COSH Chair on a continuous mandate. During the first COSH meeting (March 2019) we agreed on a mechanism to secure the functioning of COSH in case of temporary absence of the Chairperson. The COSH met three times in 2019 with partially new COSH members on the administrative side. The meetings have been very constructive and solution-oriented towards advancing the implementation of the ILO OSH policy. The action plan has been reviewed and updated; the development of a budgeted action plan is a work in progress. There was agreement on our suggestion that the training of members of OSH mechanisms should be a priority, and first steps have been taken to develop an overall approach and to complete the training materials developed by the OSH Coordinator.

The Staff union also provided general as well as specific OSH information to staff representatives, for example at the meeting in the Asia and Pacific region. We further responded to specific requests from staff representatives in country offices and facilitated communication and information exchange with the ILO OSH Coordinator. In addition, the Staff Union engaged in the joint working group to prepare for events at the occasion of the World Mental Health Day in Geneva (10 October 2019).

### Challenges

There is a wide variety of situations concerning OSH matters across regional and country offices. While in some offices the local OSH committees or mechanisms are active, in others those mechanisms are dormant. One of the challenges is to encourage the active engagement of all parties involved in the implementation of the OSH policy across offices. Keeping information updated, for example the list of OSH representatives in case of staff movements, is one of the aspects of effective OSH work. Some offices have good access to OSH information because there is an OSH specialist in the team, while others are not aware whom to contact in case of questions. The OSH working group seeks ways to improve the outreach to colleagues in the field.

In general, there is acknowledgement of the resource constraints regarding the effective implementation of the OSH policy, both in terms of finances as well as staff capacity, such as working time. Setting aside working time is a challenge in this centenary year, causing also delays in the development of Staff Union OSH information materials. The joint working group on work-related stress has not yet taken up activities despite our repeated requests.

We would like to reiterate that creating a culture of security, safety and health is a long-term challenge requiring the awareness and action of everyone in their day-to-day work as well as commitment to the active implementation of the ILO OSH policy.

## Section 3 - Periodic and regular action

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

Objective: Pursuing more and more intensively the pooling of information and coordination between the various regions and headquarters, by means of:

- the effective implementation of the new field structures;
- recruitment and selection procedures, through the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC);
- ongoing negotiations with the Administration on the revision of job descriptions and an implementation as soon as possible;
- reclassification of field posts;
- effective establishment of Independent Review Groups (IRGs) for the reclassification of field posts. This objective is linked to the revision of job description;
- career prospects under the new mobility policy;
- security of all categories of field staff, in terms of both harassment and their physical safety and health;
- pursuit of the campaign against discriminatory security and evacuation policies as they concern international and local staff, especially with regard to rights and benefits in high-risk duty stations.

Means of action

- Continuing to hold regular monthly discussions with all regional representatives via Skype, as an effective means of facilitating the sharing of experience in the practical implementation of the priorities indicated above (monthly meetings are currently programmed on a quarterly basis).
- Identifying and sharing best practices while at the same time drawing attention to irregularities, so as to improve the Staff Union's participation and negotiations in decision-making bodies at headquarters.

**Coordinator:** José Tossa assisted by Alessandro Chiarabini, Manuel Cespedes Ocampo, Jean-Louis Dominguez, Yoshie Noguchi, Sergio Velasco

1. Major achievements:

On 25 July 2019, the collective agreement on the new standardized job descriptions in the National Service and General Service category in non-headquarters duty stations was at last signed by the administration and the Staff Union.

The signing came at the end of a long and bitter negotiation over a period of two years.

The Staff Union's prime objective throughout the negotiation was to facilitate and promote the **career advancement of ILO field staff**.

The main achievements that came out of the negotiation were as follows:

- Equivalent experience will in future be taken into account for purposes of career advancement. This is essential for our colleagues in the General Service category whose advancement is to a certain extent prevented by the fact that they do not necessarily have the required university

diploma. Thanks to these provisions, they will henceforth be able to enter competitions. [See: **Staff Regulations (Article 4.2(a)(iii))**]

- Preambular paragraph 3 of the collective agreement recognizes two important principles for the Staff Union and for the ILO staff:
  - a) it offers broader career opportunities, and
  - b) regardless of the source of funding, the Office is determined to ensure that the classification of all post is consistent and harmonized throughout the Organization.
- The agreement does away with G1 posts; the G7 grade is maintained and its terms confirmed; an NOC grade has now been included in the ILO's grade scale.
- For competitions, the concept of specific tasks no longer exists; only the new generic tasks are valid.
- Once implemented, Article 6 of the collective agreement will introduce some important principles for the classification of serving officials, inasmuch as it stresses the non-retroactivity of the new grading system. In other words, posts will keep the grade they had prior to implementation.
- Moreover, where a post is given a higher grade than before, the incumbent will benefit from the new grade without having to sit for a competition.
- The Staff Union has secured the possibility of using Circular No. 639 as a possible alternative for an official who is still not satisfied after the implementation phase; this option is not subject to any limit of time and is available even after the official has signed the acknowledgement of receipt.

#### Following the administrative procedure:

Since 8 September 2019, all officials have received an individual letter informing them of their new job family and relevant grade. Officials are urged to acknowledge receipt of the letter, as this does not signify the recipient's acceptance of the proposal made by the administration. As stated in the collective agreement, officials have two months from receipt of the letter to discuss their personal situation further with their superior, the Director, under the coordination of the regional human resources officer.

The Staff Union will be only too happy to assist its members in any such discussion; it would point out that they may also be assisted by a colleague or former official.

The transition to the new system is a delicate process, and the SUC in Geneva is available to assist Staff Union representatives in the field in their efforts to help their colleagues as effectively as possible. A special manual containing clear and precise instructions has been drawn up for this purpose, in order to ensure that officials receive all the help they need during the transitional phase.

#### Means of action:

- A monitoring unit will be set up to assist staff members during the implementation phase of the new job descriptions.

#### 2. Other achievements:

The new field structures are now a fact of life in every region. That said, the Staff Union still needs to follow up the process in order to resolve any specific problems that may arise, especially in maintaining a new balance among the staff of different Offices that are expected to produce the same results.

The establishment of Independent Expert Panels (IEPs) for regrading field jobs is under way, and one has already been set up in Africa, where a training course has been arranged for mid-October 2019. In other regions (Asia and the Pacific and Latin America), their creation as soon as possible is currently under discussion. IEPs are also provided for in the agreement on new job descriptions (Circular No. 639), which has been in force since September 2019.

Discussions are continuing with the administration on recruitment and selection by the new Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC), notably for Africa.

There has been significant progress in the SHIF's reimbursement of claims, thanks largely to the electronic system for submitting claims that was introduced in mid-May 2019. With the new system it should be possible to speed up reimbursement further, and the Staff Union Committee will be keeping a close watch on the situation, inter alia, by means of a consumer satisfaction survey.

Means of action:

- The regular monthly discussions with all the Staff Union's regional representatives via Skype are a good way to compare notes on how best to implement the priorities above.
- Best practices should be identified and shared and attention drawn to any irregularities, so as to strengthen the Staff Union's participation and action in negotiations with decision-making bodies at headquarters.
- A list has been compiled of any shortcomings in the improvement of career prospects under the new mobility policy. These call for the Staff Union's close attention, particularly now that the Internal Governance Documents System (IGDS) is being reviewed.
- Finally, regarding the question of discrimination between international and local staff in terms of security and evacuation, especially the rights and benefits of staff in high-risk duty stations, some shortcomings remain that need to be discussed further with the administration in the search for specific solutions.

## II. Use of financial resources

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

Means of action

- Reviewing the supervision and follow-up of all financial transactions.
- Opening more and more AMFIE bank accounts for field offices that need them.
- Making arrangements for funds to be transferred to those accounts.

**Treasurer:** Yvan Poulin

Although an account with AMFIE was opened at the beginning of the year, despite its assurances, the establishment unfortunately did not live up to expectations. Notwithstanding the extremely detailed specifications that had been drawn up regarding the use of the account and the requirements it would have to meet, AMFIE was unable to satisfy the Staff Union's needs adequately. It was therefore decided to close the account and to look into other possible solutions.

Pending a solution that meets its requirements, the Staff Union suggests that regional offices that are unable to open a bank account in the country on behalf of the Staff Union open instead a personal account on which a member of the local union committee would have power of attorney. The 75 per cent share of members' union dues would in such cases no longer be paid into these accounts in full, but only as much as is needed to cover the local union's overheads as well as any event that might be planned in accordance with SU Circular No. 1.

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

Objective: Represent and defend the individual and collective interests of the staff.

Means of action

- Providing the staff members at headquarters and in the field with information and/or recommendations (individually or collectively) on the application and interpretation of the Staff Regulations, collective agreements and IGDS documents, and on the policies and procedures currently in force;
- Providing information and/or recommendation on matters relating to collective rights;
- Providing information notes on procedures that are applicable to officials;
- Representing or accompanying staff members in the context of conflict prevention;
- Organizing information meetings on legal issues at headquarters and in the field, notably during regional meetings or via Skype;
- Following up on internal bodies' recommendations and identifying trends to meet staff needs.

**Coordinator:** Elisabeth Fombuena

**Members:** Carlos Carrión-Crespo, Alessandro Chiarabini, Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, Patricia Rangel Charrier, Clara Van Panhuys

**Technical adviser:** Chloé Charbonneau-Jobin

During the period from January to October 2019, over 105 of our colleagues solicited individual legal advice on various issues. This does not include requests from local SU committee members in field duty stations on collective and/or individual issues there, nor does it include consultations leading to formal recourses in accordance with the ILO statutory provisions on conflict resolution.

Most of the consultations related to the following topics: the improper use of certain types of contracts; recruitment and selection; maternity/parental leave policy; requests for reclassification; termination of appointment; salary and entitlements upon promotion and/or appointment; performance appraisals and other labour relations issues including some cases of allegations of workplace harassment (psychological and sexual harassment).

As observed in previous years, legal consultations are steadily increasing. The Staff Union continues to work to ensure that cases are resolved informally rather than through litigation. Early conflict resolution remains the best way to maintain a healthy work environment. The Staff Union aims at achieving a higher rate of informal resolution of disputes, and sustained efforts in this regard are being made with continuous dialogue with the administration.

From December 2018 and throughout the beginning of 2019, the Staff Union remained focused on the issue of the revised post adjustment for Geneva and introduced as many as 250 individual complaints before the ILO Administrative Tribunal against the Geneva revised post adjustment. On 3 July 2019, the

Tribunal rendered its Judgment No. 4134, which upheld the complaints introduced by ILO officials. This constitutes a historic victory in many aspects. For the first time ever, the Tribunal has concluded that the ICSC had no authority under its statute to decide post adjustments. The ICSC can only make a recommendation to the United Nations General Assembly, which holds the authority to decide on the matter. The Tribunal also determined that the ICSC had not provided “statistical, mathematical methodological or otherwise scientific terms” to explain the reduction of the gap closure measure, which used to be fixed at 5 per cent and thus its reduction “was not substantiated nor transparent”. Although the Tribunal did not address other arguments which had been raised by the Staff Union on behalf of the complainants, it nevertheless observed that “a number of them raise[d] issues of real substance”.

The Staff Union remains attentive to the consequences of this decision for the UN Common System and works closely with the CCISUA and other staff federations. These complaints have shed light on a number of the Staff Union’s enduring concerns about the ICSC’s working methods, internal governance, lack of accountability and respect for the rule of law especially following the 89th Session of the ICSC in Vienna last August where the ICSC publicly expressed its disagreement with the Tribunal’s decision in Judgment No. 4134. It will monitor closely the upcoming decision from the United Nations Dispute Tribunal (“UNDT”) regarding the complaints filed by other UN common system officials who do not fall within the ILO Administrative Tribunal’s jurisdiction.

From a procedural point of view, these complaints have also illustrated the limits of the current legal framework, as the Staff Union is unable to file complaints or grievances in the collective interest before the JAAB and the Tribunal. The Staff Union is more determined than ever to make every effort to ensure that the international civil service has a modern, effective and efficient labour relations system that is responsive to the interests of staff and its members. This begins with the collective bargaining of all working conditions and the possibility for the Staff Union to file class actions on behalf of its members for issues affecting their collective rights and interests. The Staff Union will participate in a meeting with the Tribunal on 21 October 2019 along with other staff federations, staff legal representatives and legal counsels from other organizations and will convey these concerns and suggestions, which it had already made in the past on numerous occasions.

#### **IV. International**

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

Means of action

- Strengthening ties with major international trade union confederations and with others to which the Staff Union is affiliated so as to benefit from their logistical support and influence in establishing better industrial relations as part of the United Nations reform process.
- 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).
- Strengthening ties with inter-agency groups (such as UN Globe, UN+ or UN Feminist network) so as to improve employment and working conditions for categories of workers within the United Nations system who are liable to be targets of discrimination (based on race, ethnic origin, social origin, national extraction, nationality, sex, family status, family responsibilities, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, political opinion, religion, handicap, HIV status or trade union membership).

**Coordinator:** Catherine Comte-Tiberghien

**Members:** Harvey Addo-Yobo, Manuel Céspedes Ocampo, Yvan Poulin, Gurchaten Sandhu (UN Globe Focal Point), Faustina Van Aperen

The Staff Union has devoted a great deal of attention to keeping the members of the Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA) and all the Geneva Group properly informed so that they can fully understand the collective bargaining process and so that it also becomes a matter of course in other staff unions and associations. A very successful presentation on the subject was made at the CCISUA's General Assembly in June, when the ILO Staff Union shared a number of documents illustrating all the advantages and constraints of social dialogue.

As a member of the Geneva Community for Trade Union Action (CGAS), the Staff Union focused essentially on two major events in the course of the year: the commemoration of Labour Day on 1 May, when the Chairperson was one of the official speakers, and the demonstration organized by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) on 17 June, where some 3,000 trade unionists from all over Europe and beyond gathered in the Place des Nations.

The Staff Union also played a very active role in defending the rights of our colleagues in the field, taking advantage as it did of all the synergies that exist between the Union and national trade unions in the countries concerned.

It continued to support the creation of local federations of staff unions and associations of the United Nations system so as to be prepared as well as possible in the event of future campaigns to defend working and employment conditions in the field.

## V. IRIS "Users" Forum

Objective: Ensure that the deployment of IRIS in ILO field offices and the changes do not lead to deterioration of the working conditions of colleagues.

Means of action

- The Staff Union will continue to participate, as an observer, in all the assessment processes resulting from the implementation of IRIS. It also remains a focal point, in the event that staff are faced with possible difficulties during this implementation phase. In 2019, IRIS will be fully deployed in all field offices in the Africa region.
- The Staff Union will continue to ask for training on IRIS to be established at headquarters and field offices in order to provide sufficient career opportunities for General Service staff and to put an end to the re-employment of retired staff.
- We also hope that steps will be taken to ensure that the trainings and training materials will be provided in the language of the region's offices.

**Members:** Manuel Céspedes Ocampo, José Tossa

Achievements:

This is the year when IRIS is to be deployed in all the ILO's field offices, and the Staff Union's IRIS team has therefore continued to take part in working meetings with the IRIS team from headquarters.

The first two stages in the deployment of IRIS in the ILO's offices in Africa were completed in June 2019.

The third stage is due to end in October 2019 and will involve full implementation of IRIS in the offices in Dar-es-Salaam, Kinshasa, Cairo and Yaounde.

The Staff Union's main concern at the meetings it attended has been to ensure the painless introduction of the changes in the new functions and responsibilities of field office staff.

#### Challenges:

The Staff Union will continue to monitor very closely the impact of the IRIS implementation on our colleagues in the field offices.

## **II. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES**

### **Africa**

**Titular member:** Roger Mavinga Nkambu

**Substitute member:** José Tossa

CAPS/SHIF. After Pretoria, the SHIF went to Abidjan on a joint mission with the Staff Union to explore the possibility of devising some sort of arrangement between local suppliers of health services and the staff. Kinshasa and Dar es Salaam are also waiting their turn to respond to the files that have been submitted with a view to contracting the best locally available medical services. The aim is to overcome the difficulty of financing health care in advance, and if all goes well it should be possible to replicate the arrangement in other regional offices.

Regrading procedures. The fact that staff in certain job categories (particularly in finance) cannot advance beyond a certain grade is the principal concern that has come to light since publication of the new job descriptions. It is essential that the basic requirements of staff are met, particularly those who are called upon to manage funds. Meanwhile, members of the staff who are waiting for news of their requests for regrading are beginning to wonder how they are going to fit into the new standardized job descriptions.

Assistance, support and advice. The Staff Union has advised a number of officials who have consulted it on their various concerns. If there is to be any long-term solution to certain unfortunate situations, the ILO must provide more capacity-building for managers and more opportunities for staff training and awareness-raising.

Salaries. Because the methodology for fixing salaries is out of date and because of the ill-concealed efforts of the United Nations system to reduce salaries, there has been a steady decline in the staff's earnings. Although the relevant decisions have to be taken by the United Nations, the ILO must continue to play a leading role in remedying the systems shortcomings in this respect.

Retirement of the directors. In February 2019 the titular member attended a ceremony in Addis Ababa marking the retirement of the directors of the Africa region. The Staff Union sent a message to the Regional Director on the occasion.

Establishment of the Independent Expert Panel (IEP). Following the establishment of an IEP at the regional level, the members – appointed jointly by the Regional Office and the regional Staff Union representatives – will be attending a training course prior to taking up their duties in mid-October 2019 in Cairo, where the Panel will play a leading role in introducing the new job descriptions that came into effect in September 2019.



## **Americas**

**Titular member:** Maria Elena Lopez Torres

**Substitute member:** Sergio Velasco

### **HUMAN RESOURCES**

It was with great concern that the staff learned of the outcome of the post review exercise, not to mention the fact that the new framework should have reached the staff representatives earlier in its entirety.

The new job descriptions were a disappointment for many staff members, who discovered that in their case the description did not correspond to the facts, since they do a lot more than they are supposed to do.

Some posts have disappeared altogether, which means that some members of the staff at G7 no longer have any career prospects at all. GS-7 is as far as they can go, and that's that! (Finance, for example.)

Finally, after a year during which she was away on study leave, the Regional Human Resources Coordinator resigned her post to take up a position in UNWOMEN in New York. The post has still not been filled and the region is once again under the responsibility of the Principal Human Resources Assistant in Lima.

### **STAFF DEVELOPMENT FUNDS**

Although these funds are transferred from the central budget at headquarters, they have for a long time now been used for activities and initiatives that originate elsewhere than in the country office. In most cases, officials are engaged in activities undertaken by the Regional Office or by headquarters and receive instructions/suggestions to seek support from local funds. This raises two problems: on the one hand, the country office cannot guarantee that the necessary funds have been earmarked to meet the development priorities set by their BOC; on the other, and though they may be classified as "training", activities that are standard practice for headquarters and regional offices in every biennium and/or annual meeting, are not really training at all. Moreover, this creates a situation where some officials have regular access to Staff Development Funds while others do not.

### **SHIF/CAPS**

There has been an improvement in the time taken to process reimbursements. Although there are still occasional delays, the situation is obviously much better and the staff is much happier. The new SHIF on-line system is quite user-friendly and useful; we shall see if it is possible to improve the follow-up of requests for reimbursement

Let's hope that the new system will soon be available for retirees.

### **RECENT APPOINTMENT OF A REGIONAL DIRECTOR**

After almost a year, we have at last been informed that on 15 January 2020 our colleague Vinicius Pinheiro, who was previously Director of ILO/NY, will be taking up the post of Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean. The staff is looking forward to his arrival and has great expectations. It is essential that the region has someone at the helm, and a whole year without a Director is far too long.

As the Staff Union representatives of all the ILO staff in Latin America and the Caribbean, whether local or international, we would like to reiterate our commitment to a stronger Staff Union and to the protection and improvement of our working conditions and of our working environment.

One of the biggest challenges facing us is to strengthen ties among staff representatives in the region while at the same time improving our lines of communication with the Staff Union Committee at headquarters.

## **Asia and the Pacific**

**Titular Member:** Pong-Sul Ahn

**Substitute Member:** Yoshie Noguchi

The Staff Unions in Asia and the Pacific continue to gain new members and representation is high overall. However, the SU and the staff have had various concerns and challenges across the region. The report is a reflection of the results of the Regional Staff Union Committee Meeting (Kathmandu, Nepal, 9-13 September 2019) where the representatives of the Staff Unions discussed the principal areas of concern and challenges.

### New Generic Job Descriptions

- Special concerns with hybrid positions – multiple job family tasks and work complexity in multi-country field offices
- Corresponding human resources planning is necessary
- Vigilance: repercussions on working conditions; consistency for all JDs (RB-TC)
- Ensure necessary training for the staff

### UN Reform

Already advanced and has started to have severe impacts. The following are essential:

- Information sharing
- Participatory process (at the global, regional and country levels)
- Measures to prevent or mitigate negative consequences on staff; job security; conditions of work

### Local Salary Survey

- Bring ILO voices (administration + SU) into the methodology review by the ICSC
- Similarly, the ILO field offices vis-à-vis the Regional Committee
- Ensure training for members of the LSSC

### Recruitment and selection

- Uniformity of process within the Region for the participation of the Staff Union representative, from the preparation, to the shortlisting, to being a selection panel “member”
- Respecting Staff Regulations, e.g. minimum requirements, equivalent experience, no discrimination
- Promotion of functional and geographical mobility of staff
- Recognition of experience of internal candidates

### Work-life balance

- Equal application of the teleworking policy and broadening of its coverage beyond work-related reasons and other IGDS on working time
- Active promotion of different flexible working-time arrangements

### OSH and prevention of violence/harassment at work

- Ensure the involvement of SU representatives for timely information, action, and consultation – i) COSH to establish or activate; ii) ad hoc committees for e.g. Office renovation/movement, at/beyond ILO – for e.g. air pollution, asbestos concerns
- Prevention of harassment and violence at work, including abuse of authority, addressing root causes

TC staff concerns

- Clear policy needed for retention and career continuation of TC staff
- Pending contract policy negotiation, minimum 1 year fixed-term contract for everyone
- Align: contract duration with the project duration; TC staff's conditions to those of RB staff (e.g. merit increment)
- Better planning, e.g. roster of colleagues

**Europe and Arab States**

**Titular member:** Rania Bikhazi

**Substitute member:** Jean-Louis Dominguez

**Regional Office for Arab States**

Major activities conducted by the Staff Union in Beirut between October 2018 and August 2019:

- Increase in Staff Union membership, from 57 members in 2017 to 74 in 2019.
- To facilitate financial operations and administrative independence, a bank account was opened for the Staff Union in Beirut.
- Input provided by SUC Beirut on the recruitment guidelines for DC staff, namely, a SUC representation on recruitment panels for more transparency. The SOPs are still in draft format and not endorsed yet. Negotiations are ongoing to finalize these SOPs.
- Upon the request of the SUC Beirut, an ethics workshop was organized in Beirut for ILO-ROAS staff in May 2019 to emphasize the ILO's standards of conduct and ethics policies with the aim to reinforce ethical work relationships between staff members and clarify rules and regulations on fraud, harassment at the workplace and other unprofessional behaviours.
- A new Staff Union Committee was elected in May 2019 incorporating DC representation. Following the elections, a first meeting with Management was organized to tackle all issues facing ILO-ROAS staff members. Various points addressed were: **recruitment and selection, business processes, division of responsibilities between DWT and Programme: Office relocation, office retreats, Office Committees.**
- The newly elected Staff Union Committee in Beirut plans to improve communication channels with Management and will hold quarterly meetings with it to ensure regular follow-up on pending issues facing staff members at ILO-ROAS.

**ILO Ankara and Moscow Offices**

In general, there are good working relations among the colleagues in the office but the stress level is very high given the big increase in the workload related to the increase in the number of projects that have been carried out. The Staff Union suggests conducting training on Effective Communication, Stress Management and other related topics that would lead to a healthier and more enabling work environment. A flexible worktime modality was introduced in early 2019 in response to staff requests. This allowed colleagues to manage their working time in a more flexible manner. An important point raised is the need to improve the ILO regulation on breastfeeding and maternity leave in line with the UN Secretary General's Bulletin on 'Policy on Breastfeeding'.

In Moscow, the stress level can be quite dependent on the workload.

Main issues raised by both offices are:

- Local Salary Survey Committee (LSSC):  
Many problems are being faced in conducting the Comprehensive and Local Salary Surveys. It is becoming increasingly difficult to get survey information from comparators, due to its complexity and lack of interest on the part of the selected comparator companies or organizations. It is also

becoming increasingly difficult to find job qualification matching between international organizations and comparators.

In Russia, the Interim Salary Survey held in April 2018 brought the new increased salary scales for NO and GS staff categories: GS - 4.4% and NO - 4.6%, and the difference was paid retroactively. There were no actions in 2019 as the exercise requires too much work and time from the local staff to get information from the comparators that are not interested in the exercise.

- Staff Development (mainly eligibility of DC staff).
- SHIF (recognition of progresses made despite the absence of agreements with health providers both in Turkey and Moscow).
- Pension Fund: In Moscow, the instability of the currency rate reduces the pension savings of the local staff.

### **ILO West European Offices: Brussels, Lisbon, Paris, Madrid and Rome**

Overall, the West European Offices are satisfied with the new SHIF on-line services.

There is a general absence of committees in these offices given their small size.

The main common points raised by these offices are linked to recognition of their ILO work in their career development, the absence of WLT and some pension issues in some ILO Offices, such as Brussels.

### **ILO Budapest Office**

There is an overall improved cooperation with management on office structure, hiring procedures, administrative issues. However, problems with the local salary survey prevail, as it is very difficult to find comparators, even with outsourcing the task (lack of interest, no suitable comparators). Methodology is mainly disadvantageous for local staff. There was an increase in nominal salaries in 2019 due to the conducted comprehensive survey, but if compared to USD/EUR the Hungarian Forint salary levels for UN staff are below 2012 levels. Cooperation was initiated among UN agencies present in Budapest (FAO, WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR, ILO and IOM) for seeking possible action on salaries.

## **Turin**

**Titular member:** Jesus Garcia Jimenez

**Substitute member:** Alessandro Chiarabini

In 2018-19, the ITC-ILO SUC has continued to implement its programme following a transparent, participatory and democratic approach aimed at strengthening the Staff Union role.

The staff were regularly briefed on the outcomes of discussions regarding collective issues. Staff have also been regularly informed of discussions held with the Management on these matters.

General assemblies were held regularly with members and information meetings and extraordinary assemblies have taken place when necessary. Actions were also organized in order to demonstrate solidarity in cases where decisions have adversely affected colleagues on the Campus (as well as in ILO Geneva) and the staff of ITC ILO service providers.

2018-19 has been marked by slow and limited progress on some as well as pending matters carried forward from 2017-18 (implementation of agreement on project-based contracts, the opening of new Regular Budget positions, the career development of staff and SUC involvement in the definition of future human resources needs).

An ad hoc committee composed of members of the SUC was created in order to propose revisions to the set of minutes and circulars that pertain to the issue of work-life balance (teleworking, overtime and compensatory leave, travel arrangements, parental leave, etc.)

The committee presented its proposal regarding the amendments to the said circulars at the last Staff Union assembly. Once consensus was reached on the changes, the SUC proposed to open a round of consultations with the Management with a view to revising the various circulars in order to take into consideration the work-life balance aspirations of the staff.

On the other hand, and completing the Centre-wide risk assessment exercise, an assessment of work-related stress was carried out in 2018. The complete methodology, which involves the use of multiple subjective and objective assessment modalities, was presented to the SUC, and the SUC representative participated in some of the focus groups meetings.

The final report describes the process for updating the Work-Related Stress risk assessment implemented by the ITC ILO Centre ("Centre") with the aim of updating the Health and Safety Risk Assessment Document for Centre Workers.

### **Labour rights of staff of on-campus service providers**

In 2018 the SUC undertook a number of actions requesting the Management to take the necessary measures to avoid that the staff of two service providers (Securpol and GrafArt) working on campus be put into a precarious situation as a result of the termination of the supplier's relationship with the Centre. Such actions included emails and meetings with the Management, with Staff Union members, with the Italian Trade Unions representing the staff of the two service providers and with the staff themselves.

In addition, in reaction to the non-renewal of the Centre's contract with GrafArt, the SUC together with the CGIL submitted to the Management a joint proposal, which would have preserved the employment of all five staff members affected by the print shop closure.

The SUC also collected signatures from one hundred and eight (108) staff of ITCILO on a declaration. Management refused to undertake a formal dialogue with the SUC in order to find a solution to ensure the continuation of employment of the GrafArt colleagues.

## **III. OTHER BODIES**

### **Former Officials' Section**

**Executive Secretary:** François Kientzler

Membership of the Section of Former Officials of the ILO is open to all retired officials, whether General Services or Professional, who have worked at ILO headquarters in Geneva or in one of its field offices. It is governed by the Bureau, a 10-member body that normally meets every two weeks (except during the summer). The Section's office at headquarters is next to the Staff Union's offices on the sixth floor (Office 6-016). Section members are contacted by email, by post, the twice-yearly bulletin *Message* and the Union's website (<https://anciens-bit-ilo.org/fr/>).

The highlight of 2019 was of course the celebration of the ILO's hundredth anniversary and the participation of former officials at the invitation of the Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder. Through its various communications and meetings with the administration (PROTOCOL, DCOMM, Archives, REPRO, DISTRIBUTION and INTSERV) the Section has been able to strengthen its ties with the ILO's active staff, with whom a number of very constructive meetings made it possible for former officials to play a major part in the centenary celebrations. In response to an appeal by the Section's Bureau, almost 100 contributions were published on its website and in issues Nos. 62, 63 and 64 of *Message*, with more to follow in future issues.

After taking part in the launching of the centenary year in January 2019, former officials were involved in a series of conferences on various themes that were organized by ILO departments in the course of the year. Two major events were celebrated by the former officials themselves. On 28 May 2019, at the suggestion and invitation of the Section, 400 or more former officials met in the Governing Body room to watch videos and interviews retracing key moments in the ILO's history in which it played an active role, such as its defence of Solidarność in Poland and the end of apartheid in South Africa. The event was opened by the Director-General who was present throughout the proceedings. At the end of the meeting the participants moved to the Colonnades, where a cocktail reception was organized by the Former Officials' Section. Another memorable occasion took place on 11 July 2019, when the Director-General invited some 300 former officials with their families to a centenary lunch, the highlight of which was the cutting of the anniversary cake.

The two events were greatly appreciated by all those who were involved (further information, including videos and photos, is available on the Section's website). In addition, an exhibition on the centenary was organized by the ILO Arts Circle along with a display of postage stamps highlighting the Organization's activities over the past hundred years. The Former Officials' Section will also be involved in the centenary celebrations of the ILO Staff Union in 2020.

The proximity of the Section's office to those of the Staff Union makes it easier to maintain regular contact with the Union's Secretariat, Chairperson and Secretary-General and with the other members of the Staff Union Committee. These contacts are mainly concerned with issues of common interest such as the Staff Health Insurance Fund and the Pension Fund. The Section was actively involved in the Staff Union's campaign against the reduction in Professional staff salaries in Geneva and gave its support to the Union's vast mobilization of the staff in the spring of 2018. Earlier this year we learned that the appeal which it had initiated, encouraged and backed before the Administrative Tribunal had been successful.

One of the foremost concerns of the Former Officials' Section is the functioning and maintenance of our Staff Health Insurance Fund (SHIF), and it has on a number of occasions had cause to bring members' personal circumstances to the Fund's attention. It welcomes the fact that the SHIF's updated Regulations and Administrative Rules have been printed and circulated among former officials, many of whom have no access to the Internet. So many amendments have been introduced in recent years, many of them concerning preventive and alternative medicine, that a reprint had been needed for some time.

The Former Officials' Section is represented on the Council of the Association of Former International Civil Servants (AAFI-AFICS) in Geneva, along with a number of other associations of former officials of international organizations. The Council holds meetings to discuss pensions and health protection issues, especially the functioning of the Pension Fund and the future of the UN's health funds – two issues that are regularly raised at the United Nations in the context of what is known as After Service Health Insurance (ASHI) – health protection and the health of former officials. According to the latest information, the Pension Fund's Geneva offices are being reorganized and are expected to move to their new premises at the WMO (near the rue de Lausanne) later in the year.

The Section continued to strengthen its links and communications with former officials. Its website (<http://www.anciens-bit-ilo.org>) is regularly updated with information of direct relevance to them and with the latest news from the ILO, such as the mobilization of the staff and the strike called by the Staff Union referred to above, and every effort is made to keep the site lively and up-to-date. At the same time, the Section puts a great deal of time and effort into the publication of Message, which is always eagerly awaited by retired ILO officials. It is always encouraging to find volunteers who are willing to contribute articles or to help with translating and editing; their contribution to the publication's success is very much appreciated.

The Former Officials' Section regularly takes part in the annual pre-retirement seminar, when it can meet future retirees in person. The few minutes spent chatting with each participant is a good way to encourage them to join the Section. The fact is that, even with the facilities made available to it by the ILO, the Section

still needs financial support if it is to continue to be active and of direct use to former officials. As it is, many young retirees hesitate to join the Section as they know that Message and the website are available at no cost. If it is to continue functioning, the Section needs money to cover the cost of a secretary and of a Webmaster, even though the members of the Bureau themselves are all unpaid. That is why all future retirees are urged to join the Section at the next pre-retirement seminar in November 2019.

The Former Officials' Section supports the ILO Arts Section, which is a member of the Sports and Leisure Association and which organizes an annual exhibition at the ILO.

Lastly, the Director-General invites former officials to a reception in May and December every year, and these are an excellent occasion for them to get to know one another. The Director-General's attendance at these receptions is always greatly appreciated.

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

**Staff Union representative:** Pierre Moulet

MEC loans remained roughly at the same level in 2018. Though housing loans for real estate transactions in the Franco-Swiss region are higher than in previous years as mortgage interest rates are particularly low.

Negative interest rates had quite a negative impact on MEC investments, especially as regards its cash position in Swiss franc bank deposits, where the return was of course negative, and its investment management mandates with banks. The Investment Committee recommended that the Governing Body cancel its management mandate with UBP as it has been underperforming for several years, with losses amounting to CHF 771,472. The provision for unrealized losses on management mandates had to be increased towards the end of the year by CHF 1,753,564 in order to cover the deficit resulting from the poor performance of financial markets during the last quarter. This in turn had a negative impact on the MEC's financial results for 2018, which were down 22% on 2017.

With regard to ordinary loans, the Credit Committee found that the level of debt had risen, as MEC members found it more and more difficult to cover day-to-day expenditure. In a number of cases, ordinary loans approved by the Credit Committee in 2018 were used by members to pay off unpaid debts owing to creditors or debt collection offices directly and thus to redress their financial situation. Other requests unfortunately had to be refused, as members' debts were so high that a loan would in any case not have made much difference.

Given the current financial context, managing the MEC's assets is proving quite difficult for the Investment Committee. Given the negative return on its investments, it is hard put to protect members' capital as it is designed to do. As a result, the Governing Body has been obliged to lower the proposed interest on Swiss franc deposit accounts to 0.30% (from 0.60% in 2017) and to distribute a bonus of only 0.75% (down from 1.30% in 2017) by withdrawing CHF 732,475 from the extraordinary reserve. That said, an overall interest rate of 1.05% is still substantially higher than that offered on similar accounts by financial establishments. As for US dollar accounts, where the capital reserve objective of 12% of the final balance less reserves has been attained, the proposed rate of interest for MEC members will be significantly higher as from 1 January 2019.

The position of external auditor was put out to tender in 2018 and the contract was once again attributed to PricewaterhouseCoopers SA. At the Governing Body's request, however, the audit team was completely changed.

In the years ahead the MEC is going to have to go through the challenging business of introducing a new computer system. With all the computer tools that are now available, it will now be possible for certain

tasks to be automated and more time to be spent advising and assisting its members as the MEC is required to do by statute.

The integration of the Insurance Group of International Officials (GPAFI) into the MEC's structure was carried out successfully in 2018. The number of persons insured through the GPAFI is steadily increasing, and the ultimate objective remains a complementary health scheme. Considering that some sports, such as mountaineering, underwater diving and motor sports, are not necessarily covered under basic insurance and that members on sick leave at half pay can offset the reduction in salary and consequent financial difficulties by taking out insurance against loss of earnings, it is unfortunate that international officials are still largely unaware of the benefits of accident and income protection insurance.

### **The ILO InternBoard**

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

The Staff Union has tried to arrange regular meetings with the InternBoard to look into any concerns and difficulties that interns may come up against. It is also in touch with the HRD official handling the intern programme. One of the Union's representatives attends the regular induction meetings and its open-doors is now well established.

A good illustration of the tripartite approach to interns is that the Staff Union is regularly invited to take part in Intern Development Day, which is one of the major events organized by the InternBoard.

Because the InternBoard has a huge turnover, the Staff Union makes sure that it is kept systematically informed of the Union's structure and of exactly where the InternBoard fits in. Because there have been allegations of sexual harassment this year, it is important that the members of the InternBoard be fully aware of their rights and of the fact that, as a subsection of the Staff Union, they are entitled to apply to it for legal assistance.

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