

# ILO STAFF UNION

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## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** **FIRST SESSION**

**20 February 2020**

### **Programme and Strategy of the Staff Union** **for the year 2020**

The first session of the Annual General Meeting will be requested to examine the attached proposal as per article 14(b) of the Staff Union Rules.

The attached Programme and Strategy of the Staff Union for 2020 will be open for discussion, modification and adoption.

# 1920





## **Programme and Strategy of the Staff Union for the year 2020**

The Staff Union Committee is pleased to present its Programme and Strategy for 2020.

**Well, that's it. Here we are!**

1920-2020 "A hundred years of social struggle and solidarity!"

This is the slogan that the Staff Union Committee has picked to celebrate a hundred years of solidarity among the staff of the ILO. It is also our way of recognising the work of the 99 Committees that have gone before and which, as our representative body, have ensured over the years that the very existence of a Staff Union goes hand in hand with that of the Organization.

Another reason we chose this particular slogan was to pay tribute to those staff members who, as far back as May 1920, opted to pursue a different path from that which Albert Thomas himself – for all that he was an ardent proponent of trade unionism and cooperation – had in mind to represent the ILO's staff, when they decided to call a general meeting that would in due course dissolve the existing Staff Committee and replace it with a fully-fledged trade union.

And, it would seem today that the spirit that led those early pioneers to such a ground-breaking and symbolic declaration of independence – in an institution that had been set up specifically to protect workers' rights everywhere – continues to run in the veins of the men and women who, ever since, have made it their business to represent and defend the interests of an international public service in which independence is of the utmost importance.

For all the members of the Staff Union and of the committees they have appointed all over the world, the year ahead will be a year to celebrate, to commemorate and to reminisce. Even more important, we shall in 2020 be looking ahead to the inevitable challenges posed by the structural transformation that the international public service has undergone, in which the spirit of independence is being whittled away by conditions of employment and of work that are proving increasingly precariousness and fragile. It is also a year in which the ILO Staff Union representatives as a whole will be holding their regular five-yearly meeting, when they will be taking a fresh look at the objectives they hold in common, as well as at how they can best serve as an effective partner in the internal social dialogue that the Organization and its personnel must engage in if the two parties are to continue pursuing the same ultimate goals in the years ahead.

It is with pleasure, therefore, that the Committee today presents its Programme and Strategy for 2020, trusting as it does that all the members of the Staff Union will contribute to its implementation to the best of their ability.

Let us together make this the most auspicious of anniversaries!

**OUR VISION, OUR MISSION,  
OUR OBJECTIVES AND MEANS OF ACTION  
2015-2020**

**VISION**

**A global Staff Union that leads the process of transforming the ILO into a better workplace, by representing all staff as an equal and strong partner in social dialogue.**

**MISSION**

**We promote social justice and equality for all staff in order to have ONE ILO**

by:

- mobilizing and organizing for an even stronger Staff Union;
- safeguarding and improving working and employment conditions for all ILO staff;
- negotiating fair and effective collective agreements.

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: **Job security:**

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

Objective No. 3: **Full social protection:**

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

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

Objective No. 5: **A career development path for all:**

- ✓ *A fair and transparent performance appraisal system,*
- ✓ *A negotiated and adequate job classification process,*
- ✓ *A transparent reward 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.*

*I – Improve industrial relations*

Objective: Maintaining and 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.

*II – Improve Job security*

**A – Recruitment and selection**

Objective: To ensure 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 aims at ensuring 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.
- 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 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 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 insist, as stipulated in the ILO Staff Regulations, that **equivalent experience is recognized** as such and that the basic tenets of the Organization and of its mandate are preserved.

## **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:

- Preparing for future negotiations on contracts, where the focus will be on three main areas: the preservation of acquired rights that are specific to the ILO, such as the long-term nature of staff employment contracts; the medium and long-term incorporation of technical cooperation (TC) staff into the regular staff, as per the Organization's rules and regulations; and the titularization of staff members who for years have been employed under a succession of contracts while engaged in work that is an essential part of the ILO.
- 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 TC staff, including recruitment, career development, recognition and merit, and access to training.

### Means of action

- Ensure that priority areas are included in the negotiation of a new contracts policy.
- Consolidate the efforts of the ad hoc working group on development cooperation to analyse the impact of human resource and other policies on the staff concerned, so that it can help the Staff Union identify the fundamental priorities and problems they come up against and ensure that, in future negotiations, it is fully briefed on the issues involved.
- Support the Staff Union position on the contracts policy with an appropriate legal strategy.
- Maintain a close and constructive dialogue with the INTERNBOARD.

## *III – 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.
- Pursuing discussions with the administration in order to consolidate the services and benefits available to SHIF members working in the field, in distant duty stations and on technical cooperation projects.
- 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.

*IV – **Fair and equal conditions of employment for all staff**, without discrimination based on age, race, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, languages, religion, colour, national extraction, social origin, caste marital status, pregnancy, personal and/or family status and responsibilities, disability, HIV status, union membership or political conviction, grade, type of contract, and duty station*

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

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.
- Support the development and implementation of a Disability Inclusion Policy in the ILO.
- Work with the ILO SUC working group for;
  - recruitment and selection on geographic representation;
  - OSH on mental health and harassment.
  - the JNC on sexual harassment and other types of harassment.
- Collaborate with HRD to revise the teleworking and flexi-time policy and to ensure its equal implementation.



- Hold consultations with HRD to revise the maternity and paternity leave policy for a more inclusive parental leave policy.
- Work with HRD on the implementation of the gender and geographical representation action plan.
- Partner with, when possible ILO GED and HRD on International Days, including International Women’s Day, IDAHOT, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, etc.
- Advocate HRD for national extraction and not only nationality to be used to designate home duty station as well as other entitlements including mother-tongue benefits.

*V – 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 are established and active in all regions for the examination of job grade review appeals.

Means of action

- Participating in the joint committee on personal promotions, and legal action where appropriate;
- Ensuring that the implementation of the reclassification exercise in the field provides equal opportunities for all; and
- Assisting the JNC when needed.

**B – Training policy and performance management**

Objectives:

- To ensure that staff concerns are taken into account in the ILO training policy in the current environment of funding cuts, and in the performance management system of the ILO;
- To ensure that training and performance management policies are implemented in a fair and transparent manner, including a review of the Reports Board;
- To promote career development through the training policy;
- To promote transparency in merit increments so that it reflects performance evaluation results;
- To ensure that the implementation of the new job descriptions in the field is fair to all staff; and
- To ensure that the proposed review of job descriptions in headquarters is fair to all staff.

## Means of action

### **Training policy**

- Implementing the training policy in line with the needs of staff at all levels and categories in an equitable manner, in the context of the JNC;
- Participating in the Joint Training Council 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**

- Addressing the staff's concerns regarding the implementation of the performance management system and assessing how the introduction of a new cycle has responded to staff needs;
- Ensuring that the PMF supports the career progression of staff; and
- Negotiating improvements through the JNC.

## *VI – An even stronger Union*

### **A – Communication**

Objective: This year being the Staff Union's Centenary and activities planned, this group will ensure that the Staff Union communicates with the staff more effectively, on centenary activities, ongoing problems and progress made, in close collaboration with the relevant working groups.

## Means of action

- Keeping the staff regularly informed of developments through the Union's new totems in HQ, broadcasts, 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.
- The communications team will meet weekly to prepare the week's headlines ("Manchette") and press releases. All members will be in close contact in the event of an emergency to ensure responsive communication between the Union and staff. This responsiveness is going to be crucial in light of the Staff Union's centenary year, and in light of planned events throughout the year.
- Newsletters, broadcasts, headlines, providing material and design for signs and publications on social networks, particularly Twitter and Facebook will be our main means of communication.

- As the UNION magazine remained very quiet last year, the communications team solicits contributors with topics from the Field and HQ to produce the magazine's annual publication this year. Do not hesitate to visit us: <http://unionmag.ilostaffunion.org>.
- The Website is currently being updated and will be revamped. It is a long-term work but the team wants the information to be as complete as possible and especially in the three languages.
- The Union will continue to build on this momentum and will do its utmost to improve communication with the staff using all the means at its disposal and the knowledge of the team members.

## **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 and information sessions for union stewards.
- Identifying and supporting departments where restructuring is going on or planned for 2020, in particular those tied to the Business Process Review.
- Regularly sharing information with the Union Stewards network through emails, and information-sharing coffees and lunches.

#### *Objective 2*

- Developing a union recruitment campaign for 2020.
- Organizing a minimum of 2 café-croissant information sessions with ILO departments in HQ in 2020, 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

## *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 mental health 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 building renovation processes (planning and implementation), through Steering Committees or other consultation mechanisms, so that the highest standards on staff safety and health and well-being apply during the renovation of the headquarters' and field buildings, 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

### **Part 3 – Periodic or regular action**

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

On 25 July 2019, the Staff Union and the administration signed a major agreement on the new generic job descriptions for staff in the national officers and general services categories in non-headquarters duty stations. The agreement is the product of two years of painstaking negotiations, and became effective in September 2019. Under the agreement, each staff member is assigned a new job family along with the corresponding grade. A number of appeals have been lodged and, in each case, the administration has three months to provide the relevant explanations and/or to find an appropriate solution.

The Staff Union is always happy to assist any member of the staff to assert his or her rights vis-a-vis the administration. The Union's legal adviser, too, is on hand to give an opinion on the merits of each case and to provide such legal advice as may be required.

The Union remains available at all times to look into any issues that are brought to its attention.

The establishment and usefulness of Independent Review Groups (IRGs) with regard to regrading in the field are very much linked to the introduction of the new job descriptions. The procedure for this is set out in Circular No. 639 and can be invoked wherever a staff member is not satisfied with the outcome of the implementation phase, and in such cases there is no time restriction. The Staff Union is following the matter closely so that the necessary arrangements can be made in all regions in the course of 2020.

Other objectives include the sharing of more and more information and the coordination of the various regions and headquarters, with regard to:

- recruitment and selection procedures, through the establishment of the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC);
- career prospects under the job mobility policy, bearing in mind the characteristics of each category of posts, especially TC and NO posts;
- the safety and security of all categories of field staff, in terms of both harassment and their health and physical safety;
- the fight against discrimination between international and local staff in safety and evacuation policies, particularly with respect to the rights and benefits of staff in high-risk duty stations ;
- the assurance that greater attention is paid to the conditions inherent in staff employment contracts, notably by conducting periodic salary surveys.

#### 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.

## *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.
- Continuing to seek efficient bank account solutions for offices that need them.
- Making arrangements for funds to be transferred to those accounts.

## *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.

## *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).

#### *V – Miscellaneous*

##### **IRIS “Users” Forum**

Objective: The final stage in the deployment of IRIS in all field offices in Africa took place in 2019. It is important that the Staff Union follow closely its implementation in the ILO’s field offices and ensure that our colleagues’ working conditions do not suffer as a result.

##### 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.
  - 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.
-