

COVID-19 – Update No. 20 from the Staff Union

Dear members, dear colleagues,

The pandemic has already influenced the way we work and live our lives for the better part of 2020, and as we go into the final months of the year there is no sign of imminent relief. This situation is demanding incredible levels of endurance from all of us. More than ever, it is imperative that we take good care of ourselves and each other as we continue to manage this situation.

It is therefore crucial that we all sustain our physical and mental health. In this regard, call, check on your colleagues, and let us all look out for one another to help ease the pressure.

As the end of the year is approaching, please pay extra attention, especially if you are unable to be with your family and friends for the upcoming festive period. Being kind to yourselves and the people around you will be absolutely vital to your ability to continue your life and work during this pandemic.

Clearly define your working hours, clarify expectations on deliverables with your team and have an open dialogue with your manager about your well-being needs. Making time for social interaction and physical activity remains an essential step towards achieving a healthy work-life balance. Managers are kindly requested once again to exercise flexibility during this end-of-year period and are invited to arrange schedules in a collaborative way that allows all colleagues, regardless of contract type, to get much-needed time to rest and recharge during the coming month.

Even if travel is not possible or not in your plans, we would like to encourage you to take some well-deserved time off to rest and disconnect at your respective duty station or country of assignment. This may not be exactly what you had hoped you'd be doing, but it is an important part of self-care that ultimately allows us to better support those who depend on us.

As the end of the year is coming, the Staff Union is currently paying particular attention and focusing on some of you in particular:

- Those who have been designated as “critical” or “essential” staff around the world and who continue to contribute their skills (IT and video technicians, those officials responsible for facilities and security, SHIF, HR, etc.), in order to support global ILO activities. Just because they have been assigned to work in the Office does not mean that they should not benefit from the same empathy and flexibility.
- Those having discussions with HRD or their manager about an end of a contract may be alarmed by some written notifications. The Administration has a legal obligation to inform an employee about a contract ending, but this does not mean that no effort should be made to seek solutions, particularly if you have dedicated your working life to this Organization for several years. Don't give up and don't hesitate to contact the Union at every level (union stewards at HQ, staff representatives in the field, the Committee and of course our Legal Adviser, if necessary). We are here to support you and many individual cases can be solved if they are reviewed sufficiently in advance.

We are confident that together we can succeed in overcoming the other challenges that the pandemic has in store for us.

Take care of yourself, stay safe, and stay in touch. Try to think positively as much as you can, for example by doing things that you enjoy.