



15 January 2021

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
FIRST SESSION**

2020

Record of decisions

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee declared the first session of the Annual General Meeting open and welcomed the participants.

1. Election of the Chair of the General Meeting

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee reminded participants that it was customary for the Chair of the General Meeting to be elected for both sessions of an Annual General Meeting. Ms Anna Biondi, whose name had been proposed, was elected Chair of the Meeting by acclamation.

2. Adoption of the agenda (doc. SU/AGM/2020/1/D.1)

The Chair welcomed the representatives of the ILO's field staff – the regional titular members of the Staff Union Committee, including the Turin Centre. She then moved to the agenda and asked if there were any items that the Meeting wished to add.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee announced that a big demonstration of interns from all the international organizations in Geneva was at that very moment taking place in the Place des Nations. A delegation of ILO interns would be joining the Meeting at the end of the session to deliver a statement.

She also asked for an item to be added on the celebrations marking the centenary of the Staff Union.

The General Meeting adopted the agenda as amended.

3. ILO Staff Union centenary celebrations

An aperitif had been held that very day to launch the centenary of the ILO Staff Union, at which the presence of the Director-General had been greatly appreciated by all present.

A picnic was being organized at the ILO to commemorate 1 May, after which those taking part would be joining the annual parade in the centre of Geneva.

Another important date in the centenary celebrations will be 14 May, when past and present members of the Staff Union will be meeting to share their reminiscences. All the former Chairpersons of the ILO Staff Union would be invited and would be recalling the salient moments of the Union's history.

The presence of staff associations and workers' federations at the International Labour Conference would also be an opportunity to hold a special event, on a date to be decided.

The Global Meeting, which will unite all the Staff Union representatives in the field, will take place from 21 to 25 September 2020. The Staff Union's objectives for the next five year will be defined during this meeting. All the Chairpersons of the local Staff Union committees in the field will attend. An ILO staff party is planned for 24 September, with events taking place all day and into the evening in collaboration with the ILO's Sports and Leisure Association.

A chain of solidarity of the five regions will take place on 5 October. This will take the form of a virtual human chain stretching from East to West across the world, and will serve to illustrate the fact that the Staff Union's presence in the regions really constitutes "ONE UNION".

The representative of the Section of Former Officials of the ILO congratulated Ms Anna Biondi on her election to chair the General Meeting and said that the celebrations being organized would do a great deal to enhance the ILO's image. The ILO had the most representative Staff Union in the world and people needed to be aware of the fact. As the Section's representative, he assured the elected Committee members of the Former Officials' cooperation and solidarity.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union of the ITC/ILO also congratulated the ILO Staff Union on the forthcoming celebrations and said that the Centre was looking forward to being actively involved in the celebrations.

The Chairperson of the ILO Staff Union asked the staff representatives in the field to see what they could find in their local archives, as there was not much to be found in the Staff Union's archives at headquarters.

4. Discussion of the draft Programme and Strategy of the Staff Union for the year 2020 (doc. SU/AGM/2020/1/D.2)

The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee took the floor to give a broad outline of the seven objectives of the Staff Union's Programme and Strategy for the year 2020. She recalled that, in 2015, the Staff Union had explained in detail its mission and vision up to the centenary celebrations in 2020, and the priorities it had set at the time were still valid.

Beginning with Objective 1 (Improve industrial relations), she said that social dialogue should never be taken for granted. During the past five months, because there had not always been proper consultation, the Staff Union had had to remind the Administration on a number of occasions that social dialogue was one of the pillars of the ILO and, as such, should be a permanent feature as long as the Organization existed.

Regarding Objective 2 (Job security), she recalled that a working group had been set up on Technical Cooperation (TC) at the General Meeting in October 2019. Since then, the group had been active and it had successfully identified the main problems and differences between Regular Budget (RB) and TC contracts.

Turning to Objective 3 (Full social protection), she provided the Meeting with information on the Staff Health Insurance Fund. The actuarial report that the Staff Union had received did not warn of any risks in the medium term, but serious discussion was needed to make sure that the Fund continued to function efficiently. The possibility of an increase in contributions could not be excluded.

With regard to Objective 4 (Fair and equal conditions of employment for all staff), she raised the matter of the emergence of UNDIS, the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy. The Staff Union for its part was taking a cautious approach to its possible implementation in the ILO's programmes and recruitment policy, both at headquarters and in the field.

A participant in the Meeting asked to be brought up to date on current differences in job descriptions between RB and TC, particularly in terms of required qualifications. The Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee replied that the matter would be on the agenda in the framework of the discussion on a new contracts policy, adding that the Staff Union's current room for manoeuvre was somewhat limited. In the field, on the other hand, a new collective agreement on the new job descriptions had been reached, which the regions were encouraged to use when recruiting TC staff.

On Objective 5 (A career development path for all) the Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee observed that the findings of the upward feedback exercise pointed to a lack of motivation among the staff. The Staff Union had contacted the Human Resources Department with a request that it look into the possibility of improving the performance appraisal system.

Regarding Objective 6 (An even stronger Union), the Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee stated that the Staff Union was doing its utmost to communicate effectively and to listen to its members in order to improve. In the context of new memberships, she underlined that, while the Union Stewards do a tremendous job, it was up to every member to talk to new colleagues about joining the Staff Union.

Lastly, on Objective 7 (Enhancing staff security, safety and health), the Chairperson of the Staff Union recalled that the Staff Union was always eager to hear what its members and the regional titular members had to say. For example, in the case of the United Nations building in Bangkok (ESCAP), which still had traces of asbestos and was due to be renovated, the Staff Union had asked the Administration and the Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (COSH) to put pressure on the United Nations to make sure that health and safety standards were applied to all members of staff.

The Staff Union also expressed its wholehearted solidarity with its colleagues in Beijing who were threatened by the new coronavirus. The titular member for Asia and the Pacific stated that the virus was currently widespread throughout Asia.

The Staff Union had met the DDG/FOP, who had mentioned the lack of information and instructions on the new coronavirus. The Staff Union expected the Administration to provide it with regular updates on such a worrying subject.

With regard to Part III, no comments were made.

The Programme and Strategy of the Staff Union for the year 2020 was adopted as amended.

**5. Draft budget for the financial period 1 January - 31 December 2020
(doc. SU/AGM/2020/1/D.3)**

The Treasurer thanked her predecessors for their prudent management of the Staff Union's funds and presented the detailed budget for the financial year 2020. Because so many special events were planned during the year, the draft budget would show a deficit. This deficit would, however, be easily absorbed by the economies that had been made in previous years.

The budget for the financial year 2020 was adopted.

6. Any other business

A delegation of ILO interns arrived from the Place des Nations where they were staging the annual strike of United Nations interns under the banner "New decade still unpaid". They described the situation of unpaid internships in the United Nations system, and they questioned the UN Secretary-General's statement that it was only normal that interns should not be paid.

The Chairperson of the Staff Union assured them that they would have the Union's support and that she would transmit their views to the Director-General of the ILO at his meeting with the Staff Union the next day. The General Meeting fully endorsed the interns' appeal for support.

The session closed at 3.10 p.m.