

ILO STAFF UNION

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15 October 2020

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

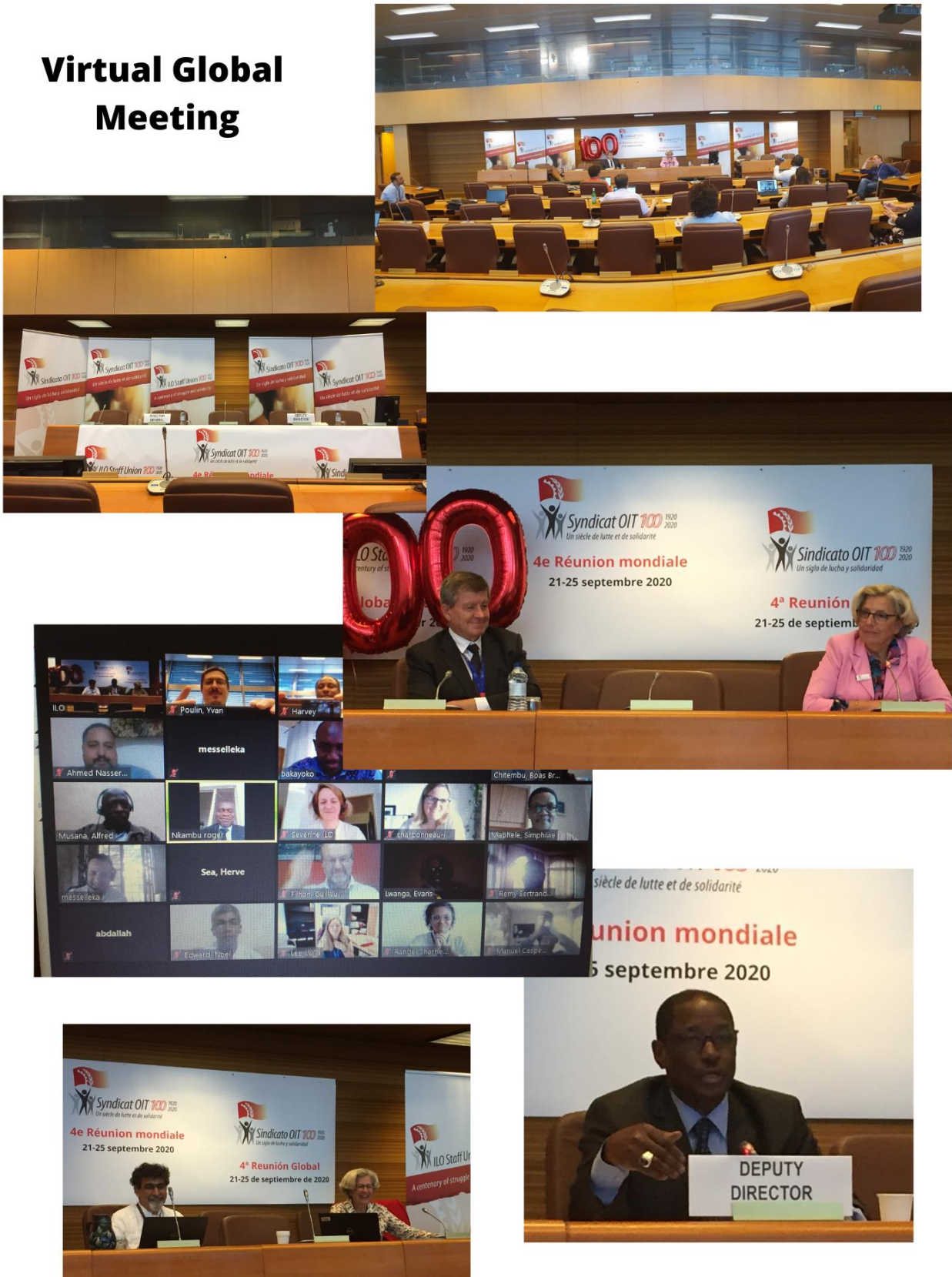
SECOND SESSION

15 OCTOBER 2020

Annual Report of the ILO Staff Union Committee
for the year 2020



Virtual Global Meeting





ILO Staff Union Committee Annual Report for the year 2020

Introduction

The Committee is honoured and pleased to present a report on its activities for the year 2020, a year which is certainly exceptional in many respects for the Staff Union.

It is, of course, the year of its centenary celebrations, but the Committee had no idea that an unprecedented health crisis would erupt without warning, upsetting the grand plans the Staff Union had foreseen for these celebrations. **The 16th of March 2020 marks the date of an unprecedented and virtually universal confinement of all ILO staff.** The Staff Union had to react quickly to focus almost exclusively on the measures taken by the ILO administration to best ensure the safety and the physical and mental well-being of the confined staff overnight. There was an urgent need to reinvent the processes of consultation so that social dialogue, despite the storm, could stay on course. It was tough but also encouraging. We also had to maintain, at all costs, the link with our members and all the staff, to ensure that the sense of belonging remained and that our colleagues were not left on their own, and our young interns did not feel isolated.

What the Staff Union also failed to imagine was that this unprecedented situation would last so long. More than six months on, the pandemic is still active and is having a major impact on the way staff and their Union work. We have a duty to adapt to these new circumstances and to continue our activities and struggles. Because the latter are still relevant –the breakdown of the UN common system, threats to employment leading to an ever-increasing precariousness of the staff, the need to rethink forms of work while preserving what has been achieved, and the finalization of certain negotiations that are vital for ILO staff.

That is why, despite all the obstacles, the Staff Union decided to continue its activities, and in particular to maintain the holding of its Global Meeting in September. This Meeting brought together all its staff representatives in a virtual forum to update its vision and mission for the next five years and, collectively, to discuss its objectives and related means of action. The Meeting adopted a text which the Staff Union Committee hopes each member will be able to identify with, adhere to and take on board, in order to embark on the next centenary with solidarity, courage, unity and determination.

The Staff Union Committee would like to wish you a very happy anniversary!

Broadcast from the ILO HQ Security Team, 15 March 2020

URGENT: HQ staff mandatory teleworking / 16 March

With effect from Monday 16 March 2020 and until further notice, all staff at HQ are required to telework.

HQ staff who need to access files or equipment may collect these during office hours on Monday 16 March, following which they should return home. Please travel with your identification and Carte de légitimation.

Critical staff to cover essential services have been notified by their supervisors.

Additional information and instructions are available via your work email and on the intranet: intranet.ilo.org

To confirm receipt, please respond with one of the options below.

Thank you for your cooperation.

ILO HQ Security Team

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 2020

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.

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

Co-Secretaries: Yvan Poulin, Clara Van Panhuys

Members: Carlos Carrión Crespo, Harvey Addo-Yobo, Séverine Deboos

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

The generalized confinement of the majority of the staff as of 16 March 2020 has confronted the Staff Union with an unprecedented and rather stressful situation. Indeed, the Staff Union was wondering how it was going to be able to fully play its role "remotely". As it turned out, social dialogue within the ILO was unexpectedly strengthened. A constant relationship, perhaps more informal than before but in any case more regular, between the two co-Chairs of the JNC and a permanent maintenance of communication channels between HRD and the ILO Staff Union enabled the two social partners to get through the most tense periods of the pandemic in a spirit of good consultation and cooperation. It was indeed essential that the staff we represented felt that the numerous directives concerning their safety and well-being at work (even at home ...) were the subject of consultation with the Staff Union.

However, **despite** these recent months of improvement, the Committee believes that social dialogue is still very uneven, particularly in terms of access to information, and especially in contexts of heavy negotiations. On a day-to-day basis, the nature and frequency of meetings with the administration (particularly HRD) are good and cordial, but with regard to formal social dialogue (information, consultation and negotiation), the Staff Union still encounters enormous difficulties in enforcing the Recognition and Procedural Agreement as designed and signed. We can still cite recent examples of the lack of automatic consultation with the staff representatives regarding the IGDSs that affect the working or employment conditions of civil servants. This is a waste of time, energy and efficiency for both parties involved and especially for the Organization.

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.

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, Azza Taalab, Clara Van Panhuys, Christiane Wiskow

Achievements:

In 2020, the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC) met 6 times in connection with General Service (GS) competitions and RAPS sessions. Since January 2020, 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 in the review of job descriptions (JDs) and at each of the three (3) procedural stages in the filling of vacancies (see also Annex I of the Staff Regulations):

Request for 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 40 JDs have been reviewed by the Union so far. The SUC aims at ensuring that vacant positions are real career opportunities for qualified colleagues.

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:

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.

As in previous years, 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 a trend to exclude many potential better-qualified candidates for the benefit of English-speaking candidates, 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 independent panel members is still pending.

HRD's refusal to apply the Staff Regulations correctly with regard to minimum requirements (especially recognition of equivalent experience) remains a challenge.

Six years after the signing of the collective agreement on a procedure for recruitment and selection, 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:

- 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.

Coordinators: Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, Clara Van Panhuys

Members: Laurence Dubois, Séverine Deboos, Guillaume Filhon

In accordance with the decision from the First Session of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in 2019, the ad hoc TC Working Group has been created, based on a call for interest to participate and is composed of Staff Union members both in HQ and in the field. It has prepared a report through a compilation of practices, which provides strong arguments regarding differences in conditions of service, including career progression and recognition, between staff paid from the Development Cooperation Budget and staff paid from the Regular Budget, which are not always justified. The conclusions from the report and the due consideration given by the Committee recommend to address the situation following four lines of action:

- Conduct information and communication actions on the conditions of services and rights of staff on TC and RB staff, to be organized by the TC Working Group with support from the SU Bureau and communications team.
- Address with HRD any unlawful management practices and, if necessary, support colleagues who wish to pursue legal recourse in accordance with ILO rules and procedures.
- Request amendments of the Staff Regulations to address unjustified and unfair differences between TC and RB staff which may result from the current applicable rules
- Submission of the report to the Contracts Policy Working Group to feed, together with reports/notes from other working groups, into the contracts policy and other negotiations and ensure non-discrimination between staff and respect of "One ILO".

The contracts policy is still being negotiated with the administration in the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC). The need to make progress with the negotiation is being recalled by the Staff Union recurrently, calling as well for access to all the relevant information, which is necessary to proceed with negotiation. The forthcoming negotiations will also call upon due attention of the overall context of the conditions of work of the UN civil servants.

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.

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.
- 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.

Coordinator: Catherine Comte-Tiberghien

Members: Guillaume Filhon, Azza Taalab, José Tossa

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

Staff Health Protection Insurance Fund (SHIF)

This year again, the Staff Union was active and maintained close ties with the SHIF. Two of the Committee members are also elected members of the SHIF Management Committee, which allows it to be better informed of decisions concerning health coverage for the Health Fund members. "SHIF online", the system that allows insured persons to make their claims online, has reached cruising speed with a very positive satisfaction rate, particularly from our colleagues working in the field. The black spot remains access to care for all of these colleagues in their duty stations, but discussions within the Management Committee suggest a long-term solution for the entire Globe. However, the pandemic has slowed the launch of this new service. This series of tangible improvement measures reinforces the Staff Union's conviction that this Health Fund is truly adequate for the size and specificity of the Organization, provided of course that the administration puts sufficient resources into it, whether in terms of financial or human resources. An actuarial study has taken place this past year, which will lead to further discussions in which the representatives of the participants in the Fund will do their utmost to make the best decisions to ensure its sustainability.

Pension Fund

With regard to the Pension Fund, the representatives of the participants were present at the annual meeting, which was held entirely virtually, as obliged by COVID, and defended, as usual, the interests of the ILO staff. A resolution from the staff federations was brought to the attention of the Board to defend the maintenance of the Fund's office in Geneva so that multilingual coverage of administrative services in the European and African regions would be maintained.

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

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.

Coordinator: Gurchaten Sandhu (Gender Focal Point)

Members: Chantal Nahimana, Patricia Rangel Charrier, Maria Prieto, Clara Van Panhuys, Azza Taalab

Technical Advisers: Jurgen Menze, Ilka Schoellmann, Lou Tessier

With the challenges that COVID-19 brought, many of the working group's proposed activities were unfortunately delayed. Nevertheless, the working group continued to engage in relevant activities whenever possible to reach the objective of improving 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.

UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS). The UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) "is a comprehensive strategy for ensuring that the United Nations system is fit for purpose in relation to disability inclusion. It provides a foundation for sustainable and transformative progress on disability inclusion through all pillars of the United Nations' work". The UNDIS has a component on organizational culture, including employment and capacity development for staff. The ILO SUC provided feedback on the baseline report focusing on the indicators concerning employment and staff development.

Black Lives Matter

In the wake of the incidents that triggered a global movement, the Staff Union issued a message of solidarity against racism and discrimination around the world including the ILO workplace. The Staff Union renewed its commitment to tackle racism.

International Days

This year the staff union commemorated two international days; both International Women's Day and the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexphobia & Transphobia.

Intern's Diversity Month

Continuing from the previous year, the ILO SUC working group supported the Intern's Diversity Month campaign. This included inputs into the design and implementation of a diversity survey, the results of which were shared with the ILO SUC and HRD.

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 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.

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 not been able to start the 2019 exercise for G staff and has begun the 2018 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 Staff Union has provided support to colleagues who have asked for review of the reclassification exercise in the field.

The harmonization of the Recruitment and Selection process is also an important matter to ensure equity and transparency. After the review of Job Descriptions (JDs) in the field was completed, a similar exercise for staff in headquarters will begin soon.

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, Maria Prieto, Yvan Poulin, Azza Taalab, Clara Van Panhuys, Christiane Wiskow

Training policy: The operational meetings of the Joint Training Committee (JTC) will soon be convened, after the return to the office. 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 merit increments are now tied to the performance reports and those corresponding to 2019 were published. 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 constitutes a real tool to help colleagues in their career development. As a result of the full-time telework and suspension of duty travel, the Staff Union encouraged colleagues to use the mid-term review process as an opportunity to adjust the outputs proposed at the beginning of the year.

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: 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.

Coordinator: Harvey Addo-Yobo assisted by Yvan Poulin, Patricia Rangel Charrier and Céline Moiret

The communication team met every week virtually to prepare the weekly headlines and press releases, which became rampant during the COVID-19 pandemic lock down. The members of the team kept in close contact with one another so that the Staff Union and the staff could get in touch very quickly in the event of an emergency. This rapid-response capability proved so crucial during the launch of the Staff Union's centenary in February and during the lock down in March, and that ensured that staff were informed of developments on time.

The Staff Union communicates mainly by means of headlines, and bulletins and broadcasts (issuing a lot more this year).

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

- The launch of the Staff Union Centenary year;
- Information about COVID-19 and encouragement to staff each week
- Welcoming staff in the HQ building as the Office opened officially
- Assisting with logistics during the virtual Fourth Global Meeting of the Staff Union

by providing the design and material for posters and publications on welcome screens in HQ, the website, Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms.

UNION magazine (now *Union Blog*) has been fairly quiet this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as the editors have been busy with other matters. Besides that, there were not many contributors. 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 but there is now the need to revamp it. This is going to be 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 expertise 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 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
- 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, Clara Van Panhuys

Mentoring union stewards in their work

Throughout the past year, the Staff Union Committee actively supported its network of union stewards at headquarters, despite the lockdown, through increased use of the WhatsApp group, where Stewards were kept informed of developments and were able to communicate their needs and news. This has allowed us to elect new union stewards and ensure the continuity of our representation despite the obstacles.

In one case, the union steward coordinators assisted individual union stewards by organizing meetings with the staff and management. The meetings helped the union stewards to play an active role in their constituency.

Union membership campaign and organization

At this point in October, the Staff Union has so far acquired 129 new members this year – 115 in the field and 14 at headquarters.

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.

Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (COSH)

Titular members: Christiane Wiskow, Ana Catalina Ramirez

Substitute member: Patricia Rangel Charrier

Working group on occupational safety and health and environmental issues

Coordinator: Christiane Wiskow

Members: Patricia Rangel Charrier, Ana Catalina Ramirez, Jean-Louis Dominguez, Jurgen Menze, Harvey Clavien, Tzvetomira Radoslavova

Achievements:

This year's work has been marked by the COVID-19 related measures and their effects on safety and health of ILO staff, starting with the mandatory telework period in March at HQ and in many countries and later preparing for Return to Office (RTO) measures. While we were all challenged by this situation requiring continuous adaptation to new information and regulations, we would like to point out that this has brought momentum to OSH issues within the ILO offices.

The Staff Union has participated in all COSH meetings that exchanged information on the COVID-19 situation as well as RTO preparations, in terms of risk assessment methods and measures taken at HQ. We welcomed the active involvement of HQ staff in the risk assessment and RTO preparation. Further, we continuously provided comments and inputs to guidance documents prepared by the administration and made sure that concerns voiced by colleagues across the world were transmitted to administration.

The Staff Union also provided general as well as specific OSH information to staff representatives, for example at the Global Meeting. We further responded to requests from staff representatives in country offices – both COVID-19 related and concerning general OSH issues – and facilitated communication and information exchange with the ILO OSH Coordinator. The Staff Union also organized a virtual meeting with colleagues in Beirut to listen to their needs following the devastating explosion, and to identify meaningful support measures. In addition, the Staff Union engaged in the joint COSH working group on work-related stress management and mental health that completed a review of IGDS documents to identify the possible need for addressing gaps and updating and consolidating existing guidance. Furthermore, the Staff Union continued communication with the building renovation project to bring staff concerns to their attention.

Challenges

Despite progress made on the OSH training materials, the COVID-19 response absorbed all the capacity in terms of time and expertise, so that the implementation of the training could not start as planned. Yet, many representatives flagged these training needs as urgent.

The recognition of the importance of internal social dialogue and its effective implementation even during crisis response, i.e. the consultation of staff and their representatives, still needs enhancement in many offices. Further, the involvement of COSH in shaping OSH measures in the context of COVID-19 response and RTO procedures is not a given yet, it has to be strengthened in many offices as well, including at HQ.

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

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.

Coordinator: José Tossa, assisted by Séverine Deboos, Sergio Velasco and Jean-Louis Dominguez

Achievements obtained or in progress:

- The effective implementation of the new structures in the field, in all regions, is now a concrete reality. However, follow-up by the Committee is necessary to resolve certain specific difficulties, in particular the rebalancing of staff numbers between the different offices for which the same results are required.
- The establishment and effectiveness of the Independent Review Groups (IRGs) for field reclassifications is effective. In Africa, the structure has been effective since 2019. The other regions are in discussion with the Administration (Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America) for its implementation as soon as possible. It should be noted that this arrangement is also provided for in the agreement for the implementation of the new job descriptions (Circular No. 639), effective since September 2019.
- Recruitment and selection procedures through the implementation of the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC) is under discussion with the Administration, particularly for the Africa region.
- The issue of SHIF reimbursements is experiencing positive improvements, particularly with the implementation of an electronic claims submission system since mid-May 2019. Certainly, this new tool has helped to shorten the waiting time for reimbursement. The fact remains that the promise of global contractualization is a promise that has been slow to materialize. The Committee must support this request, which is of a life-saving nature, in order to ease the lives of colleagues and their dependants.
- With regard to career prospects through the new mobility policy, the inadequacies of the system are known and have been identified through discussions with the field. The Committee must pay particular attention to this, especially during the revision of the IGDS currently under discussion with the Administration.

- The Committee has also taken great care to ensure that the principles and means applied to manage the pandemic and its consequences on staff are applied in an equivalent and appropriate manner in the field and at headquarters.
- Finally, with regard to the fight against discrimination between international and local staff, security and evacuation policies, including entitlements and benefits related to high-risk duty stations, gaps remain and merit concrete initiatives that could be discussed with the Administration.

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.

Treasurer: Severine Deboos

While all the necessary financial provisions had been made to ensure that the Staff Union could organize the celebration of its Centenary and its Global meeting – in accordance with its statutory requirements – plans had to be reconsidered given the crisis context due to the COVID-19 epidemic and disruption of the planned activities.

The level of expenditure for the year 2020 is well below the forecasted budget with savings on all missions, hospitality, costs of communication and meetings.

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: Catherine Comte-Tiberghien

Members: Guillaume Filhon, Patricia Rangel-Charrier

Technical adviser: Chloé Charbonneau-Jobin

As observed in previous years, legal consultations are steadily increasing especially from field duty stations. The Staff Union continues to work to ensure that cases are resolved informally rather than through litigation. The Staff Union aims at achieving a higher rate of informal resolution of disputes but notes that this can only be achieved if conflict prevention is fully integrated in the culture of the organization and that all managers are trained accordingly. The Staff Union deplores a number of situations where despite informal resolution (i.e. without having to submit a formal grievance or complaint), the concerned officials suffered a prejudice precisely due to the lack of a preventable conflict. In addition, the Staff Union observes a strong tendency for officials to consult it to ensure the accuracy or completeness of information received by the HRD. This is a concern as staff members should be able to rely with confidence on information provided by the HRD to enable them to make decisions.

In the past year, most of the consultations leading to some kind of Staff Union interventions concerned the following topics:

- Questions on terms and conditions of employment and in particular for TC staff including issues of precarious contracts;
- Recruitment and selection procedures and, in particular, the specificities between RAPS and CALLs;
- Requests for indemnification before the Compensation Committee;
- Termination of appointment (for reasons of health or alleged unsatisfactory performance);
- Salary and entitlements upon promotion and/or appointment;
- Mental health at work;
- Accommodations in the workplace;
- Other labour relations issues including some allegations of workplace harassment (psychological and sexual harassment).

Highlights

The Staff Union supports and represents its members before different instances both internally and externally in accordance with the rules concerning conflict resolution of the Staff Regulations (Chapter XIII). For the period under review, the Staff Union wishes to bring to the attention of its members the following specific examples of cases, which in some aspects are ground-breaking.

In 2019, with the support and assistance of the Staff Union, an official's claim to have a psychiatric illness recognized as being attributable to the performance of official duties succeeded. It is the first time the Office recognizes a psychiatric illness as service-incurred. After a successful appeal before the JAAB, it was remitted for re-examination before the Committee of Compensation, which unanimously concluded that there was a sufficiently direct and clear causal link between the illness and the performance of the official's duties. This case will most probably serve as a precedent in the application of the statutory procedure. Additionally, the Office acknowledged that it could perhaps set an example for other international organisations whose practice appears to be more restrictive and additionally, that it could pave the way for the recognition of other psychiatric illnesses as attributable to the performance of official duties. From the Staff Union's perspective, this is a major achievement as a significant portion of labour relations issues involves a mental health component (as either a cause, a contributing factor, or a consequence).

Another official contested the decision to terminate her engagement for health reasons with the support of the Staff Union. The JAAB panel found that the decision was illegal due to a procedural flaw, that it was taken without authority and that the notice period was manifestly unreasonable. Therefore, the Panel recommended to set aside the decision and to compensate the official. Unfortunately, the Director-General did not follow the panel's recommendations and the official submitted a complaint before the

Tribunal. The Staff Union will follow closely this case as it concerns also the broader issue of the employer's duty to accommodate officials with a disability.

The Staff Union represented an official before the Tribunal against a decision to dismiss a complaint for harassment. It was the first time that a formal complaint before the Tribunal alleged violation of the "new" administrative resolution of harassment grievances negotiated between the Staff Union and the Office (Article 13.4 of the Staff Regulations). In this decision, the Tribunal upheld the complainant's plea that there had been a violation of the statutory provisions as she had not been given the possibility to respond to witness testimonies in the course of the investigation into her harassment allegations. This case is important to ensure in the future that the ILO has the best practices and policies concerning the treatment and resolution of harassment complaints.

Concerning the aftermath of the Geneva pay cut case, successfully challenged by over 250 ILO Staff Union members before the ILOAT in 2019, the Staff Union noted with serious concern the decision rendered in the summer of 2020 by the UNDT on the same issue. This decision is contradictory to the ILOAT decision and consequently, within a same duty station, officials of the same grade are paid differently in breach of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. The consequences of these contradictory decisions are not limited to the Geneva duty station but potentially affect all of them across the UN Common system. The Staff Union will continue to monitor very closely the situation and will consult with its Federation (CCISUA) and other Staff Federations concerning the revised methodology for salary surveys for all categories of staff but also the issue of the review of the jurisdictional setup of the UN Common System requested by the UN General Assembly.

Finally, several months into the COVID-19 pandemic, the Staff Union is actively involved in dealing with issues concerning mental health, questions concerning the ILO's duty to accommodate as well as the necessity to revisit the current teleworking policy.

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: Gurchaten Sandhu (point focal UN Globe) Carlos Carrión-Crespo, Yvan Poulin, Manuel Céspedes Ocampo, Maria Prieto

The Staff Union has continued to work for a better understanding among CCISUA members and the Geneva group of the importance of first obtaining a genuine collective bargaining mechanism within the United Nations and for this to gradually become a reality in other unions and staff associations.

Within the CGAS (*Communauté genevoise d'action syndicale*) the Staff Union has mainly worked on the commemoration of the 1st of May, during which it had to reinvent itself because of the health conditions dictated by the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

The Staff Union has also been very present in defending the rights of colleagues in the field, using all the synergies that exist between it and local unions. It has also continued to support all the creations of local Federations of Associations and UN Staff Unions in order to be better equipped for future campaigns to defend employment and working conditions in the field.

V. 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.

Members: Manuel Céspedes Ocampo, José Tossa

The year 2020 started with all of the ILO’s field offices working with IRIS.

The Staff Union continued to monitor very closely the impact of the IRIS implementation on concerned colleagues in field offices, making sure that the duties performed in the IRIS context are aligned to the appropriate grade. A collective agreement on a new set of generic job descriptions (JDs) for National Professional Officers and General Service categories, in the field, was signed with the administration. The new JDs take into account changes in work requirements due to the IRIS roll-out in field offices.

The training and training material to be provided in the language of the region’s offices remain challenging.

II. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Africa

Titular member: Roger Mavinga Nkambu (outgoing)

Substitute member: José Tossa (outgoing)

1. COVID-19: Since the end of the first quarter, the year 2020 has been marked by the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led most States to take measures to protect their populations. These measures include "compulsory confinement", which has forced people to stay at home. And for those who are employed, to telework. This new experience, which the majority of colleagues in the Africa Region are still confronted with, is not without new challenges to which each office has proposed alternatives and to which the staff must contribute in order to achieve the assigned results.

The majority of the offices in the Region have equipped their staff with the means of communication in order to remain reachable, including a prepaid phone and/or SIM. "Essential" staff who needed to telework were provided with laptops and pre-charged modems for the internet. Other colleagues worked with their own equipment. This system made it possible, to a certain extent, to keep the activities afloat. The leadership of the regional administration, the support of the directors of the offices and UN System Coordinators and the agility and commitment of the staff made it possible to find alternatives for the continuation of activities in the field.

Teleworking has led to the resurgence of other types of difficulties to which staff have had to adapt. Among these difficulties are: the unsuitability of the working environment; the appearance of unusual and demanding colleagues (dependants) with their share of worries; untimely water and electricity cuts which affect the timely completion of actions; the pressure of demands which have almost all become "urgent"; the omnipresence and long duration of daily meetings which induce weariness and nervousness; the dependence and unreliability of technological means of communication; the difficulty of synchronising work schedules with colleagues who do not have access to the Internet and communication facilities; the inadequacy of logistical means to provide answers to certain requests; the difficulty of delivering results in time and ensuring effective supervision of subordinates; the incomprehension of certain managers for actions taken late, etc.

In the face of these difficulties, social dialogue at all levels has been one of the most important levers that has made it possible to find alternatives to mitigate their impact. The information gathered in the field was fed back to the Staff Union Committee in order to feed into regular consultations with the structures responsible for the Organisation. The guidelines and other decisions were communicated to the staff representatives with a view to restoring hope and ensuring the Staff Union's unfailing presence alongside its affiliates, irrespective of their professional category.

2. CAPS/SHIF: With the support of the Staff Union Committee, the Region has long advocated for contractualization with local health care structures. This is to get around the difficulty of pre-financing health care. In addition to setting up a computerized online invoice submission system that has significantly reduced waiting times, the SHIF has decided to contract globally with health structures for the entire ILO global network of offices from the WHO network of partner hospitals. The implementation of this already announced system is still pending.

3. Reclassification procedures: Several offices were unable to obtain some basic information on the revision of the job classification system despite meetings held with the support of the Staff Union on this complex issue. As a result, some offices refused to acknowledge receipt of the notification of their job description from the Director of HRD. Those who understood the process submitted their requests for reclassification and/or expressed reservations after acknowledging receipt. Further information continued to be provided to clarify any ambiguities. In addition, colleagues awaiting the outcome of their requests for reclassification are wondering what the outcome will be, in reference to the new JDs.

4. Assistance, support and advice: Advice was provided to colleagues who consulted the Staff Union on various concerns. In order to prevent unfortunate situations in the long term, the ILO needs to continue to build the capacity of its managers and increase training/awareness raising opportunities for its staff.

5. Contracts policy: At the regional level and in close collaboration with the Regional Office, progress has been made, notably on the eradication of 3.5 contracts, significant progress on the PSI, the creation of Regular Budget posts in some offices, recruitment with transfer to the same grade.

6. Establishment of the IRG (Independent Review Group): The Group at the regional level is operational. From January to date, due to the fact that there has been no rejection of files by HRD, no request for appeal has yet been received. As a reminder, the members appointed jointly by the Regional Office and the Staff Union at the regional level have received joint training (HRD/Staff Union) for their introduction in Dar Es Salaam in mid-October 2019. This consultative mechanism plays a prominent role in the reclassification application process, especially in the context of the implementation of the new Job Descriptions, effective since September 2019.

7. Staffing balance between the offices in the Region: Successive reforms have paid little or no attention to ensuring that the human resources available in each office correlate with geographical coverage. In consultation with the Regional Office, adjustments are being made in this area with a view to strengthening certain offices that could no longer cope.

8. Directors' Retreat: The Titular Member participated at distance, on 5 February 2020, in the African Region Directors' Retreat held in Cairo in February 2020. The Staff Union's message was communicated to the Regional Director.

Americas

Titular member: Maria Elena Lopez Torres

Substitute member: Sergio Velasco (outgoing)

Since the last AGM meeting in February 2020, the region has had the process of elections in the different offices, which culminated last August.

Teleworking and the situation of COVID-19 in the region

The region is teleworking from March 2020 to date. The use of masks, social distancing and quarantine has become mandatory in many of our countries.

COVID-19 has hit our region drastically; despite all this the staff have shown great professionalism and commitment to meet all the objectives that the organization has set.

The current working conditions will undoubtedly leave their mark and we are confident that management and workers will draw conclusions and be better prepared for the future. We will soon be back in the offices and new challenges will be presented, not only related to working conditions but also to the workload that awaits us. COVID-19 has added work to us and requires quick action without neglecting what was already planned.

We have experienced very long working days going from a virtual meeting or webinar, answering and filling in multiple surveys and forms. The overload of work was present during these months generating stress among colleagues.

The pandemic and the coronavirus are posing a new reality, with much uncertainty, and constant changes that we have never experienced before; this situation is being gone through in all countries.

Human resources

We thank the Regional Human Resources team for their dedication and concern for the physical and emotional health of all staff in the offices.

We have coordinated talks and workshops on the: Psychological Effects of the Coronavirus and quarantine, Resilience, Techniques for times of change and adaptation, Managing teams in times of change and

Handling the demands of our staff. The participation of colleagues has been very good, and there has been much interest in the topics discussed.

At the moment we are implementing a programme of preventive strengthening of emotional well-being and resilience that has virtual workshops, an emotional support line and online sessions, which will be launched from the 5th of October.

We have colleagues who have sent us their concerns about the applications submitted last November for the revision of their new job descriptions, but so far they have not received any response. We look forward to receiving some communication from HR Regional.

Reclassifications and selection of staff

During this period several reclassification processes have been carried out with positive results for some colleagues; we have other processes that are under review, and due to the situation of the pandemic these have been delayed or are pending approval.

Return to the offices

In almost all offices, risk analysis and SOP (Standard Operating Procedures) documents have been prepared and submitted to the Regional Office and sent to Eloy Alonso-Maestre for review and approval. These documents have been previously consulted with the Staff Union in all offices.

Although in several countries we do not have a defined date for the return, all offices already have these documents approved.

We have 2 offices in the region that have resumed work on a face-to-face basis – these are the Port of Spain Office and the Cinterfor office in Montevideo.

Staff Development Funds

In these times of quarantine the regional HR team is encouraging staff to take training courses, either individually or in groups. On issues related to their professional and work development.

Group language courses in French and Portuguese

We also have several colleagues taking the Project Management Course given by the Turin Centre.

Applications are processed through the HR Units of each office in coordination with the Training Committee.

SU bank accounts in the Offices

During the Fourth Global Meeting that was held virtually from 21 to 25 September, we reiterated the consultation on the Staff Union's bank accounts, whose ownership is still in the name of some members, usually the President and Treasurer. This leads to fiscal problems with the authorities of some countries, problems for these officials and problems of immobilization of funds in the event of death of one of the holders until the end of the succession process. This is an issue that continues to arise and we still do not have a clear solution to it.

A pilot plan was reported that is being implemented in one of the regions; we would like to receive more information about it to see the possibility of implementing it in our region.

CAPS/SHIF

We have noticed a noticeable improvement in the processing time for refunds. Staff are more satisfied with this and we congratulate them on their efforts.

The implementation of the new SHIF ON LINE system is quite user-friendly and useful. Now it is possible to give a better follow up to the reimbursement claims.

The SHIF ON LINE platform is now also available to our retired colleagues.

It is with concern that we see that the post of Regional Coordinator of Human Resources in Lima has not been filled for more than two years. In these moments of crisis of COVID-19 it is necessary to fill this post so that the team is complete.

Before finishing this report we would like to pay tribute to Julio Gamero Requena, a great human being, colleague, friend and excellent professional.

As representatives of the Staff Union of all local and international staff in the Americas and the Caribbean we reaffirm our commitment to work for a stronger Staff Union by protecting and trying to improve working conditions and the working environment.

A challenge ahead of us is to improve and strengthen the links between union representatives in our region and likewise improve the channels of communication with the SUC at Headquarters.

Asia and the Pacific

Titular Member: Pong-Sul Ahn

Substitute Member: José Tossa (outgoing)

Stronger union

The union membership continues to grow in the region. The unionisation rates in some duty stations are as high as recruiting almost all eligible staffs. The continued growth of memberships has been attributed by staff unions' increasing and dynamic activities, including learning sessions, mini workshops, trainings, and staff retreats. On 20 August, an online regional training on the ILO Pension Fund was held with the participation of a total of 196 people. Several Staff Unions organised staff retreats, which have also helped strengthen solidarity among the members. All this has put a cornerstone in improving the visibility of SU activities. Enhanced communications at all levels have been an important tool to build trust with members. There are a few duty stations, such as Vientiane, Dili, UB, and Kuala Lumpur where staff unions are not established and hence staffs' concerning issues are not properly addressed. The Regional Titular explores unionising those duty stations, by having shared more information with the staffs on SU activities.

Dialogue with the management

The COVID pandemic has triggered to increase frequent dialogue between the Staff Union and Management because both parties have had a common goal for the safety of the staff. Effective collaboration between SUC and management in Bangkok resulted in mitigating substantive health risks from hazardous materials (asbestos) in the process of the ESCAP renovation. SU and Management in Hanoi formed a joint team, so-called *in making "Better Workplace"*, to address staff concerns and to improve working environments, including application of flexi working hours. In the meantime, there are also adverse views that SU rep in certain duty stations were not fully consulted by management on critical office issues affecting the wellbeing and working conditions of the staff.

Staff Union response to COVID-19

Staff Unions in the region actively participated in COSH during the pandemic. COSH has been proactive in discussing the staff's health concerns and preparing a return to office. COSH has been expanded to the COVID-19 task force, involving TC projects, to discuss the impacts of the pandemic to the staff and take necessary measures. A new COSH has been established in Phnom Penh and its members trained by OSH experts of the Liaison Office in PP. During the teleworking period, different staff have faced different challenges such as slow internet connection, no laptop provided, lack of provision of PPE by the office, psychological stress, and overloaded tasks by supervisors. Staff Unions have constantly monitored the country situation of COVID-19, consolidated the members' grievances and concerns and shared those with the management at national, regional and global levels. Several SUs conducted surveys on physiological stress, impacts of teleworking and wellbeing. COVID-19 related office rules and regulations need to be applied flexibly to better take care of individual staffs' circumstances.

SHIF coverage

WHO recommends UN staff to take vitamins to increase the immune system against COVID-19 but SHIF does not cover it. Many staff were curious to know reimbursable healthcare items that SHIF can reimburse. There was a lot of confusion about payment when the staff and their dependants voluntarily conduct a COVID test. There was a high demand from the staff that SHIF make advance service arrangements with high-standard hospitals for staff and their families.

Recruitment & selection and contract policy

In the region, transparency and accountability in the Recruitment and Selection processes remain questioned because the staff constantly challenge the non-transparent and unaccountable procedures. The R&S processes on a NO position in Dhaka has to be rerun as its selection was proved to be defaulted. Some duty stations involve SU reps in interview panels, while other duty stations either involve in them as an observer or deny engagement of SU reps in R&S. The Staff Union in the region urges the ROAP Management to apply the CBA signed in March 2014 to Asia and the Pacific, in order to guarantee the role of SU reps in all R&S practices including TC projects. The TC staff should have long-term contracts aligned with the project implementation period, and a career development programme should be incorporated in the projects. ILO adopted the Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work, which emphasises the importance of investing humans through upskilling and reskilling of the people. This recommendation is very relevant to the interests of the ILO Staff, so the Office should invest more resource to support the staff to enhance their skills, knowledge and experience with the combination of an active policy implementation of geographical and functional mobility of the staff.

UN reform

UN reform increases tension to the Staff. The ESCAP building is being renovated to create more space and bring more UN agencies into the ESCAP. The Staff Union in Bangkok faces issues related to hazardous materials and open office space in the renovation of the ESCAP building. CO-Hanoi moved into ONE UN Premises in December 2019 and faces its identity issues because ILO is not allowed to use its own logo inside the building. CO-Manila is looking for a new office and moving in the UN House is an option. Some staff express their concerns with that. The COVID pandemic has triggered to increase the level of collaboration between ILO and other UN agencies for joint country-level responses, which creates administrative problems together with workloads for the staff. There is a need for the staff to be quickly updated on the changed policy and regulations related to the UN Common System.

Local salary survey results

Local salary surveys have been conducted in duty stations of Dhaka, Manila, Phnom Penh, Islamabad, Kathmandu and Yangon. The survey results were negative in several duty stations and the ILO SU took joint actions with FUNSA, including issuance of statements and meetings with the UNRC. It is getting more and more difficult in the salary survey as the comparators are not interested to participate in the surveys, because they are not getting any benefit from their participation in the salary survey. The Staff Union and the Administration should join hands to push for the revision of the Salary Survey methodology in the Non-Headquarters. Capacity building training for SU reps at LSSC is necessary. The Staff Union will fight to avoid the introduction of dual or tertiary salary scales in the future.

Job description review

New generic Job Description has been implementing. Before its full implementation, the field staff were given time to make their appeal if they are not satisfied with the new JD. From our region, there are around 20 staff who made an appeal of dissatisfaction. Regional Staff Union calls on HRD to communicate with those colleagues as to how and when their cases will be discussed and dealt and what steps will be taken for those.

Discrimination, harassment and abuse of authority

It is a common view that discrimination and harassment takes place in our workplaces and its happenings are rather rampant, especially in the form of abuse of authority by supervisors who misuse power against the staff. The staffs, particularly in TC projects, are more vulnerable to discrimination and harassment than regular staff. The staff fear to raise their voice against nepotism, harassment and invisible discrimination. Greater awareness-raising is needed for prevention, and the Office's zero tolerance policy should be effectively implemented to all cases.

Europe and Arab States

Titular member: Rania Bikhazi (outgoing)

Substitute member: Jean-Louis Dominguez (outgoing)

Regional Office for Arab States:

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis in Lebanon and following an unfortunate misconduct case that was finally closed at the end of 2019, a number of staff members have decided to quit the Staff Union and have expressed their dissatisfaction vis a vis management and the SUC in the way workplace related crises were handled. Work relations have been tense, stressful and an overall sense of mistrust has been prevailing in the office. During the lockdown and due to teleworking arrangements, stress levels have significantly increased due to the increase of the workload and connectivity problems frequently faced in Lebanon. On top of that, came the explosion that devastated Beirut, displaced many ILO staff members in Beirut and caused severe emotional damage.

In relation to the COVID-19 and lockdown measures, SUC Beirut was requested by Management to be part of a Return-to-office Task Force composed of a Management representative, OSH Specialist, and SU President. The Task Force's role was to organize the safe return of colleagues to the main Beirut offices and field offices in the Arab region, help in drafting risk assessments and SOPs, develop return to office plans and make sure staff's personal situations and underlying medical conditions are taken into account by HR and Management. SUC appreciated and recognized the efforts of Management to include the SU in the Task Force and regularly consult SUC on major decisions.

Following the Beirut blast, SUC was also involved in the process of checking that all ROAS colleagues were safe, took some time off to rest and recover, smoothly relocated to safer areas in Lebanon and had proper access to electricity and internet connection for those who wished to continue working. In consultation with SUC Beirut, Management took the initiative of contracting a psychiatrist to accompany emotionally affected staff and involving the ILO Staff Welfare Officer. In addition, SUC advised Management on a number of proactive steps such as:

- allowing staff members to submit requests for special leave days,
- organizing a post mortem to draw lessons learned from the Beirut Blast and the office's reaction to it, making sure that the business as usual work modality is not taken for granted and that proper time is given to staff to rest and recover.

The main concerns raised by the staff in the Arab States offices:

- Precariousness of contracts
- OSH related issues in the times of the pandemic and general overall maintenance of the office
- Perceived favouritism of Management vis a vis certain staff members
- Occasional lack of transparency of Management
- Some forms of workplace bullying and harassment
- Salaries and Pension Funds: National Staff are asking for the dollarization of the salary scale in light of the financial crisis in Lebanon specifically
- Reclassification mainly of G staff who have been feeling stuck in their grade for several years now

Overall, communication between Staff Union and Administration has been regular and efficient. Management has been listening to SU recommendations and taking some of them into account. Regular meetings (almost quarterly) have been organized with Management and several ad-hoc meetings occurred to discuss specific cases/complaints. In the context of COVID-19 and the Beirut blast, communication between the SUC and the Administration has drastically increased and regular follow-up is being made.

ILO Ankara and Moscow Offices:

In general, there are good work 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. An important point raised is the need to improve the ILO regulation on breastfeeding and maternity leave in line with UN Secretary General's Bulletin on 'Policy on Breastfeeding'.

Main issues raised by both offices are:

- Local Salary Survey Committee (LSSC):

There is the Local Salary Survey Committee (LSSC) in which the ILO is represented. Results of the comprehensive salary survey were seriously questioned and criticized by the local staff as the salary increases remained much lower than the inflation rates in the country and were adversely affected by the exchange rate fluctuations. Furthermore, the results further aggravated the gap between G and NO staff salaries that deepens the inequality within the UN staff members. The ILO SU members raised this critical issue to the attention of the SU Secretariat and the legal advisor of the SU to seek their guidance and support to submit a complaint file to the ILO Tribunal. However, after having extensive discussion with SU, due to time constraints and as per the advice of the legal advisor, a complaint file could not be submitted to the Tribunal. There has consequently been some membership resignations during this period in Ankara.

In the same spirit but concerning professionals, there are some concerns on not seeing the implementation of the results of the latest ICSC cost-of-living survey that would have resulted in an increase of the post-adjustment multiplier from 13.3 to 19.2. All UN agencies based in Turkey are implementing the ICSC decisions, except the ILO. It means that for the same grade/step, the ILO officials are paid 5.2% lower than their counterparts in other agencies. This matter should be closely monitored and remedied.

At the ILO Ankara office, staff believe that special measures could be considered to address the current challenges with following suggested solutions:

- It is suggested to consider fixing the local staff salaries at a USD amount to protect UN staff from immense exchange rate fluctuations and high inflation.
- Apply a non-pensionable bonus in order to compensate staff members' losses.
- Moreover, in Turkey all G staff are graduated from university or have master degree, so if having graduated from high school is enough to be G staff, there should be premium payment for the G staff graduated from university.

The same concern applies to the Moscow office where the ILO is represented in the LSSC and has been a Coordinating Agency for the UN Agencies in the RF since 2016.

There is no interest for the LSSC in the country to take any actions and collaborate with the comparators. The exercise requires too much work and time of the local staff to get any info from the comparators that are not interested in participation in such surveys. There could be much interest if there is mutual benefit such as a report shared to raise the sense of competition among the companies.

As a solution proposed, the training for the members of the salary local committee would help to increase capacities for future surveys.

- Staff Development:

Due to limitations in the eligibility criteria set by HRD on the usage of SDF for DC staff, unfortunately a limited number of staff could benefit from the SDF given that the majority of Ankara staff are on DC contracts with less than 3 years of work. However, the Office uses the SDF for joint staff training programmes so that all staff members benefit to the extent possible from the funds. It is important to note that the total amount of funds allocated for ILO-Ankara is not sufficient to cover the training needs of all relevant staff. The eligibility criteria should be revisited to make it more inclusive and flexible, particularly for the DC staff.

- **SHIF:**

Although there has been a small-scale improvement after the introduction of the online submission system and during Covid 19, claim reimbursements are still delayed.

All the other UN Agencies Medical Programmes in Turkey do not make any distinction between public and private and make the reimbursing for surgery and hospital beds 100%. Why in the ILO is hospitalization and surgery at 80% in non-public hospitals noting that there are no reliable and proper medical services in public hospitals in some countries?

Some UN Agencies have agreements with hospitals (UNDP and UNFPA with Florence Nightingale Hospital, etc...); the ILO should be moving forward with establishing such agreements with clinics and hospitals.

SHIF Policy is also excluding the dependants (specifically wife/husband) of the staff whose personal income is higher than a certain amount: This should be revisited.

Suggestions to improve the SHIF:

- Send electronic reports on reimbursement rather (the green documents).
- Make electronic SHIF cards, so there would not be any need to send all over the world (and thus, no delays with pouch) and it would save money.
- Improve communication channels and make them electronic.

The main concerns raised by the staff at the Ankara and Moscow offices are:

- Exchange rate fluctuations and deterioration of purchasing power.
- Low increase in salaries and increased inequality between G and NO staff salaries.
- Teleworking arrangements and work life balance (workload and stress).
- SHIF payments.

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:

- The Performance Appraisal Framework is not linked to any career growth prospects
- No possibility of professional growth for G staff in these small offices and the new job descriptions do not reflect the work undertaken by the GS staff in these offices.
- The pension statement of the ILO should include the contribution paid by the organization. In Brussels, the pension is taxed despite being a differed salary. Consequently, the “accord de siège” needs to be renegotiated with the Belgian government specifically in order to have the same benefits of EU officials.

In Brussels specifically, the local staff salaries are blocked since June 2017 since the LSS has not been properly managed by the UNOHR. This matter needs to be followed-up closely to ensure remedial action is taken.

ILO Budapest Office:

Good overall collaboration between the Management and the SU during the times of COVID-19 and the related lockdown.

On the issue of the salary survey, there is a working group with members from all UN agencies present in Budapest trying to address the issue of the salary survey and methodology used. Between the salary surveys conducted in January 2013 and October 2018, the GS-5/01 net salary decreased from \$20,669.81 to \$17,978.26 (-13%). Grocery prices have increased by 40% on the average since January 2010 and real

estate prices in Budapest grew by 86% between the end of 2013 and the same period of 2018. The issue of the methodology used must be raised by the ILO SU and umbrella federations to put pressure on the ICSC to revise it.

On the Performance Appraisal matter, the office would like to see it linked to career development prospects and become a motivational tool and not a formality.

The main issues of importance raised by the Budapest office relate to the teleworking modalities, the salary survey and the SHIF settlements.

Turin

Titular member: Jesus Garcia Jimenez (outgoing)

Substitute member: Laurence Dubois (focal point)

In 2019-2020, the 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.

2019-2020 has been marked by the full implementation of the agreement on project-based contracts, after the inclusion as eligible staff for personal promotion all variable budget contracts staff; however there was a limited progress on some pending matters carried forward from 2018-19, such as, the career development of staff and work life balance.

Regarding work life balance, the Assembly and the SUC have insisted on the importance of going ahead with this process, in coherence with the “Enabling Environment Guidelines”, distributed from the Secretary-General António Guterres. The Secretary-General recognizes the importance of flexible working arrangements in balancing the demands on staff while at work with life outside the office and the challenge of finding new and better ways to manage people, time, space and workloads effectively. He also gives different interesting options of flexible working arrangements. Many of them are in line with the survey the ITCILO SU carried out on work life balance in 2018.

The Staff Union also highlighted in several JNC meetings the importance of reaching an agreement with the management, on guaranteeing an adequate career development for the current staff and, at the same time, securing staff of the highest calibre in terms of efficiency, competence and integrity.

There is a lack of horizontal mobility and collaboration between technical training programs and a tendency by the management to create competition between units. The SUC has reported to the Senior Management the discontent that has been manifested by several of the Staff regarding the manner in which several vacancies have been filled, and called for an open discussion regarding the career development issue. The lack of uniformity of recent appointment decisions and the failure to address career development will continue to put a strain on the relationship between the Staff Union and the Management until such time as both issues are adequately addressed.

In addition, The Staff Union Committee requested that the Director of the Centre set aside the April 1, 2018 decision to apply the revised post adjustment for professional and higher categories of staff based in Turin. This on the basis that such a decision was based on an unlawful decision of the ICSC as sentenced by the ILOAT in its judgment of July 3, 2019 and taking into account the previous practice of aligning with the ILO on this matter as evidenced in HRS’s information notes 63/2018 and 65/2018 respectively.

The SUC also shared with the Management our concern regarding the use of “non-staff personnel” (through “partita iva” or other similar mechanisms), who are working for extended periods and disguising, with this kind of formula, a real employer-employee relationship.

The Staff Union met several times with the interns during 2019, who prepared a proposal all together (17 of them) that the SUC sent to the management; this proposal was presented to all the staff in Assembly by one of the interns.

2019 was the year of the first Joint Retreat between the SUC and the senior Management. SUC saw this Joint Retreat as an opportunity to discuss important issues with the senior Management in order to improve the working conditions of all staff members.

III. OTHER BODIES

Former Officials’ Section

Executive Secretary: François Kientzler

This report from the Former Officials’ Section, in view of the ongoing pandemic, is special. Members of the Bureau of the Staff Union's Former Officials Section had not had access to their office for 6 months, from mid-March 2020 until 17 September. On that day, François Kientzler, Executive Secretary of the Section, after having followed all the protocol in force, was granted access to the ILO. Members of the Bureau met for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic on Wednesday, 23 September, outside the ILO.

We would like first of all to pay tribute to our late colleague, Nari (Venkataraman Narasimhan), who passed away in December 2019, and who has been a faithful treasurer of the Former Official’s Section since his retirement after having served as Treasurer of the ILO Staff Union for many, many years. He was known to all the Former Officials of the ILO and he assumed his responsibilities as Treasurer until his strength and life passed him by. He is greatly missed.

During all these months spent without access to the ILO we were able to maintain our contacts with our members and the Staff Union, in particular with Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, Chairperson, and her secretariat. The Former Officials’ Section, with its own office and access to the ILO's computer system, was able to continue to consult the ILO intranet and its e-mail inbox from outside, just like the active staff members who were teleworking. We have also been able to respond to all the e-mails that were sent to us and to hear the concerns and sometimes the thanks that have been expressed by many retirees. We were able to access all the information disseminated by the ILO via the intranet, communicate by e-mail with our members and send them a letter in August. However, we have only been able to access our files since mid-September, which has not allowed us to make the required updates and, above all, to make progress in the publication of a new issue of the *Message*, which we are first publishing on our website.

Representatives of the Bureau of the Section attended the Staff Union's General Meeting in February, just like every year. Given the pandemic, the event which had been planned for the spring to celebrate the Staff Union’s centenary, and which was to be a joint event for both active and retired officials, has not yet been able to take place. However, a link has been established on our website to the Staff Union's blog, which contains interviews with the former Chairpersons of the Staff Union who were to take part in the celebration. The Section reaffirms its willingness to be more available to retirees in the regions to help them structure themselves, and is ready to make space available to them on the Section's website. It is counting on the regional Staff Representatives to facilitate this collaboration. The Section continued to receive information, in particular on the Pension Fund via AAFI-AFICS Geneva, and has participated in two video-conferences of its Council.

Our website, hosted outside the ILO, was regularly updated thanks to Azéddine Séfriu, our webmaster, with information we obtained from the ILO intranet and the Staff Union. Statistics on the number of visitors

to the site highlighted its importance, reaching almost 500 in August. We have posted several articles that should appear in issue No. 68 of the *Message*. In this regard, Ivan Elsmark, *Message's* editor for over 20 years, has ceased his regular involvement and we are looking for another editor. We are considering a new format for this publication. We have also posted the last two issues of the *Message* (Nos. 65 and 66-67) which have not yet been archived by the ILO Library.

In fact, the year 2020 was to be a turning point in the organization and functioning of the Bureau of the Section. Our long-serving and loyal secretary, Marianne, retired at the end of December 2019, and we did not wish to replace her both for reasons of economy and because most members of the Bureau of the Section are computer literate. We have three PCs at our disposal. Two new members had just joined the Bureau and were confirmed in their nomination in the elections at the end of 2019, Carmen Sottas and Guy Bezou. John Meyers was co-opted at the beginning of 2020 as two of the Bureau positions were vacant. We congratulate all three of them, but regret that they have not been able to express their full talent and commitment to the members of the Section to date. The meeting of the Section's Board on 23 September took stock of operational constraints but also of current and recurrent topics, namely the sickness and health protection of retirees and pension issues.

In order to explore different ways of transmitting the claim reimbursement forms to retirees, in the spring of 2020, the SHIF extended the possibility of sending them out electronically. This should be of great benefit to retirees from countries outside Geneva who have and use internet access. A test period was offered to some retirees and now the system is being extended to all. However, the transmission by mail or direct deposit of claims to the ILO remains, and will continue to remain, possible. The Bureau has not yet had an opportunity to take stock of this new practice with the Executive Secretary of the SHIF, whom it wishes to invite to a future meeting.

We have continued to contact all the retiring staff members whose names we receive each month from the Administration; this year, the number of retiring staff members was low. We have registered several memberships in the Section. The ILO Administration also sends us notices of the deaths of former officials or their spouses of which it is aware; we compile a list of deceased ILO retirees, former officials or spouses who are entitled to benefits; and we have published it on our website. Despite the coronavirus pandemic, we have recorded a significantly lower number of deaths than in previous years during the same period. This may be due to the caution of seniors during this pandemic period.

Finally, while some retired members of the Section have died, others have joined, and still others have changed addresses. As we have only recently been able to access the ILO we have not been able to update our files as we would have liked. But the door to the ILO has been opened again, and this task awaits us. We hope, by remaining cautious and following the protection guidelines, to be able to resume a more normal and regular activity. The Bureau of the Section has met in Gex in an association's premises; this can only be a temporary situation for us. We hope to be able to return to our ILO premises as soon as possible but, of course, with due respect for all the health protection and provisions, particularly for the elderly, that the ILO has put in place.

International Civil Servants' Mutual Association (MEC/AMFI)

Staff Union representative: Pierre Moulet

The year 2019 was an exceptional one, both for GPAFI and the MEC, with a significant increase in revenues.

For the MEC, the increase in revenues was mainly due to the excellent results recorded on bank management mandates at 31 December 2019. The unrealized losses recorded until then have all been offset and a significant unrealized gain has been recognized. However, given that a significant portion of the assets are invested in the financial markets, and in view of the dizzying fall in these markets due to the coronavirus, the members of the Board of Investment wished to pursue their course of action, in force since the subprime crisis in 2007-2008. Namely to adopt the utmost caution in order to ensure the MEC's

long-term survival. Consequently, the Board of Directors decided not to distribute the entire surplus income, but to propose an overall remuneration identical to that of 2018, i.e. 1.05% divided between an interest rate of 0.20% and a bonus of 0.85%. Then to allocate the balance, i.e. CHF 4,762,641, to the extraordinary reserve in order to cover a possible capital loss on investments.

Even if the ordinary and extraordinary reserves, which were significantly increased following the subprime crisis to reduce the risk incurred by the MEC, and which amount to CHF 70 million for the Fund in CHF and at 31 December 2019, i.e. 18% of the balance sheet total minus the reserves excluding the new allocation, prudence must continue to be favoured. All the more so in an environment of declining revenues and negative interest rates.

As regards GPAFI, there was a strong increase in surplus income, which stems from the increase in management fees of the insurers linked to the increase in the number of policy-holders and the renegotiation of insurance contracts. Regarding the latter, the discussions initiated in 2018 with insurance companies were continued. A review of relations with all partners was carried out to make contractual adjustments and, if possible, to simplify operational processes. One of the objectives was also to be able to maintain premium stability over several years in order to avoid year-end anxiety, which was accepted by GPAFI's partners. As far as the setting of premiums is concerned, it is important to understand that the level of premiums depends on the stability of an insurance contract. The main contract, i.e. the complementary health insurance, taken out with UNIQA, is a balanced contract, i.e. the premiums are sufficient to cover the costs of the insured and of the insurance. In this context, it has unfortunately not been possible to accept ITU retirees in the supplementary health care insurance, following the transfer of the basic insurance for ITU staff members to UNSMIS. Indeed, as medical expenses are statistically higher from a certain age, the risk that an imbalance involving an increase in premiums for all insured persons, i.e. more than 9,400, might occur in the near future could not be accepted.

With regard to the year 2020, it is very difficult to say how long the current pandemic will affect the activity and in what way. Nevertheless, the AMFI plans to launch the call for tenders for the change of the IT system, the cost of which is estimated at CHF 1,200,000, as well as the call for tenders for loan insurance. The risk analysis will also have to be updated and the tax compliance audit finalized.

The ILO InternBoard

Staff Union representative for relations with the InternBoard: Patricia Rangel Charrier

As in the past, the Staff Union has participated in several regular meetings organized by the InternBoard to ensure that the concerns and difficulties of the interns were taken into account. Excellent collaboration through immediate and constructive dialogue was also in place with the head of the HR/OPS branch, the person in charge of the internship programme at HRD, and notably through the presence of the Staff Union representative at the introductory meetings organized at the time of the welcome of new interns.

Due to the high turnover of interns within the departments, the Staff Union is fully committed to informing them of their rights and freedom, with the mission of supporting them in their efforts to find support when difficult situations arise, with respect for full confidentiality as a guiding principle. It goes without saying that they can also consult directly with the legal adviser, without having first sought the Staff Union's opinion. In fact, we were informed of a possible harassment situation and, without delay, the necessary measures were taken.

In line with the previous year, the coordinator of the Staff Union's Diversity, Equality and Work-Life Balance working group was fully involved in the Interns' Diversity Month campaign, notably with a contribution to the design and implementation of a diversity survey, the results of which were shared by the Staff Union Committee and HRD.

Under the impetus of the General-Secretary of the Staff Union and with the collaboration of HRD, INTSERV and Eldora, the team of interns successfully presented the new project of free access to the cafeteria salad buffet for all ILO interns.

In view of the COVID 19 pandemic situation in Switzerland and around the world, in particular the closure of borders and the reduction of flights, HRD immediately invited the Staff Union to learn more about the possibilities offered to interns to leave Geneva, and to continue their internships through teleworking from their home countries. While reassuring them of the continuity of payment of their internship allowances. For those who have encountered difficulties in taking a flight or any other personal or financial problems, the work of HRD has been remarkable.

With pride, and a recognition of how far we have come and that challenges lie ahead, the ILO Internship Programme is considered to be the most successful programme within the United Nations for the year 2019. This deserves to be highlighted, and thanks given to all those who believe in working together to ensure that decent conditions are also applied to this bright youth who will take over the task of building a just, fair, safe and inclusive world of work.

ANNEX
(For adoption)



**OUR VISION, OUR MISSION,
OUR OBJECTIVES AND COURSE OF ACTION
2020-2025**

VISION

A global Staff Union, at the dawn of its second Centenary, which accompanies the transformation of the ILO and ensures a decent work environment, by representing all staff* as an equal and strong partner in social dialogue.

MISSION

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

by:

- mobilizing and organizing for an even stronger and better equipped Staff Union;
- safeguarding and improving decent working and employment conditions for all ILO staff;
- negotiating fair, transparent and effective collective agreements with the Administration

*“All staff” includes all, without distinction what so ever.

OBJECTIVES (2020-2025)

<p>Industrial relations: ensure sustainable well-functioning social dialogue and collective bargaining through the effective implementation of the Recognition and Procedural Agreement (2000).</p>
<p>Job security: Negotiation of a protective, fair and inclusive contract policy to put an end to recurring precariousness and reduce disparity between different types of contracts. Working for a fair and standardized joint recruitment process for all staff through improving or creating joint bodies for mobility and redeployment.</p>
<p>A career development path for all staff linked to a fair and transparent performance appraisal system - with equal access to the staff development fund - and connected to adequate training; a negotiated and adequate job classification process, a fair recruitment and mobility system that respects staff diversity, and a transparent rewarding mechanism.</p>
<p>Enhancement of staff security, Occupational safety and Health and both physical and mental health and well-being for all ILO staff around the world in the context of multifaceted crises and ensure equal treatment of all staff as well as support crisis response initiatives in fragile contexts.</p>
<p>Full social protection: Ensure effective, efficient and sustainable health care and pension funds. Advocate for and negotiate the creation of unemployment and maternity / paternity / parental insurance schemes.</p>
<p>A diverse, inclusive, equal and equitable workplace through combating all forms of discrimination, and promoting an ILO free from violence and harassment: Drawing inspiration from recently adopted C.190 and aligning with UN system wide rules and regulations against all forms of violence and harassment at work.</p>
<p>Protection of the independence of the international civil service: defend and support the exclusively international character of the staff (Article 9, paragraphs 4 and 5, of the ILO Constitution), promote its impartiality and defend the integrity and independence of ILOAT.</p>
<p>An even stronger and better equipped Union: Maintaining and expanding our membership, enhancing solidarity, strengthening capacities of Union representatives, improving internal operations, communication and coherence in its actions.</p>

COURSE OF ACTION (2020-2025)

MISSION	MEANS ¹
1 - Mobilizing and organizing for an even stronger and better equipped Staff Union:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase membership rate among staff. - Enhance communication in English, French and Spanish, i.e. web page and social media platforms, and the capacity of the SU to the members in order to get their timely support. - Training for : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all executive members of the staff union (HQ and field staff representatives, union stewards, secretariat); • Members on their rights and obligations. - Promote One ILO staff union through internal coherence in the actions and decisions taken. - Strengthen existing alliances with all actors playing a role in the improvement of working and employment conditions of international civil service (global trade union federations, CCISUA, civil society, etc.).
2 - Safeguarding and improving decent working and employment conditions for all ILO staff:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collect information through stewards and members network at HQ and in the Field for analysis of good practices and areas for improvement; identification of Staff Rules violations. - Ensure equal rights and the absence of discrimination by negotiating a new fair contracts policy in application of the "One ILO" principle. - Within the framework of Statutory Joint Bodies, formally report identified violations of existing rules and practices and propose improvements and/or amendments drawing from best practices. - Undertake any appropriate action (including legal or collective action) to address violations and/or absence of commitment to address problems or willingness to introduce improvements. Campaigning and organising staff with a view to achieving improvements and transformation in the larger framework of the UN Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals and the Declaration for the Future of Work. - Negotiate for an improved and effective implementation of a teleworking policy and other working arrangements related to work-life balance and appropriate work environment - Promote the creation of OSH Committees in each duty station. Ensure well-trained representation in OSH committees. Negotiate the review of the Performance Management Tools and procedures,

¹ This list is not exhaustive.

	transparency of the Reports Board, to avoid potential discrimination of and/or harassment on staff members.
3 – Ensure effective social dialogue and negotiate fair and effective collective agreements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain parameters for a sound Industrial Relations (IR) framework (based on equity, trust, equal access to Information and an arbitration mechanism). - Ensure that all negotiations are conducted through a gender equality, non-discrimination and intersectional lens. - Strengthen the capacity of staff representatives in negotiation techniques, on a regular basis and when needed.