



The 34<sup>th</sup> UNOG Staff Coordinating Council

**Year in Review**

**2016-2017**

23 January 2017

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## **Preface**

This has been an extremely busy year as reform for staff representation.

Legacy reforms from the previous administration, such as mobility, the compensation review and the global service delivery model have or are coming to a head, each with their own very significant challenges and difficulties that have had to be addressed.

At the same time, preparations have been made to build a constructive and production relationship with the new Secretary-General, himself looking to fix the resultant bureaucratic morass.

This has also been a busy time for staff representation at the General Assembly where we our advocacy efforts have led to good results on the pension fund, the global service delivery model and have stymied plans by the previous administration to undercut career development.

The external financial environment has not been kind, and we have acted on a number of downsizing and restructuring projects to defend the rights of staff and ensure application of the new, fair and transparent global downsizing rules that we negotiated.

Lastly, we have worked to do what's right, from ensuring new rules to protect whistleblowers to keeping salaries or allowances in track with increases outside, and maintaining Geneva as a pleasant and productive place to work.

Ian Richards  
Executive Secretary  
UNOG Staff Coordinating Council

This year, your Council has been very busy representing your interests at the global level as outlined above by the Executive Secretary.

Representing you globally didn't prohibit us from actively representing you locally.

We represented your interests in case of downsizing/ restructuring. We also represented you in our common fight to have a new building that accommodates your work needs and requirements.

We actively represented you in all joint bodies, be them related to your welfare or to selection processes.

We stood by your sides whenever you approached us to seek for assistance to resolve work-related issues.

You gave us your trust. We gave you all what we could, so that you can always count on your staff representatives.

We will continue our fight, together with you, in order to preserve your rights as international civil servants.

Dominique Chantrel  
President  
UNOG Staff Coordinating Council

# Composition of the 34<sup>th</sup> UNOG Staff Coordinating Council

## **Staff representatives**

Dominique Chantrel	President
Paul Kelly	Vice-President
Ian Richards	Executive Secretary
Prisca Chaoui	Deputy Executive Secretary
Catherine Peck Arif	Executive Bureau member
Gloria Nwabuogu	Executive Bureau member
Jamshid Gaziyeu	Executive Bureau member
Marko Stanovic	Executive Bureau member
Mohamed Chiraz Baly	Executive Bureau member
Almario Francis	
Apostolov Mario	
Benayed Slim	
Dos Santos José	
El Garah Samira	
Funck Thomaz Samuel	
James Elizabeth	
Kalotay Kalman	
Mellet Johnny	
Patrick Magnin	
Popa Gabriela	
Rouai Slim	
Sarah Jordan	
Shamsie Syed	
Touihri Mohssen	
Vesterman Claire	
Vilches Sandrine	

## **Polling officers**

Astrit Sulstarova	President
Tor Bothner	Vice-President
Ahmed Darwish	
Amelia Delle Foglie	
Liang Guoyong	
Madeleine Cieniewicz	
Mark Pryce	
Neil Cumming	
Oleksandr Svirchevskyy	
Rafik Fathi	
Yenlin Zhang	

## **Auditors**

Philip Thomas  
Ronald Quero  
Ivana Milicevic  
Yaroslav Bulych

## **Assistant to the Council**

Froylan Silveira

## I. Mission Statement

This year's Council has worked hard and has accomplished many things. Despite some diverging views, which are source of enrichment, all Council members have worked together as a team, with transparency and full cooperation. We believe that we should be accountable to you, the staff who have elected us. This is a summary of our year's accomplishments and achievements for you to see if we have well represented you in the way you wished.

Staff representation is an honour, a privilege and with that it brings a duty to serve responsibly and to perform. We have worked hard to implement our work programme and act in your interest.

## II. Membership

While all staff are represented by the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council, as a union it depends on members' contributions. By becoming a dues-paying member, not only are you taking a real stake in your union, but you are also showing strong solidarity to the cause of staff rights.

The Council aimed at increasing the number of members who contribute financially. To encourage more staff to contribute, it maintained a series of partnership deals offering discounts with Manor, Payot, Pharmacie Populaire, Europcar, Mycolorphone, Lemman Pneus, Curves, Gidor hairdressers and Aesthetics. New partnership deals were also created with 5-à-sec, Ardentis cliniques dentaires, EVO fitness gym, Silhouette Gym, Ideal Line Versoix, Matelas Tempur, Easycycle, Sold-Sports, and Peugeot-ByMyCar Acacias.

As a result, the Council has increased its number of dues-paying members by 2 percent during the last year (from 333 to 340). However, Geneva still remains the duty station with the lowest proportion of dues-paying members due to the territorial dispersion.

Membership dues are paid monthly and are automatically deducted from payroll, for which staff only need to fill out a form provided at the end of this report. This form can also be found on our website. Contribution is only CHF 10 per month for all staff.

The Council provides a membership card for its dues-paying members. With your card, on top of the reductions offered by our partners, you also receive the following benefits,

- Access to the Council's legal assistance.
- Free use of the Council's classified notice boards.
- Participation in the Inter-Agency games is subsidized.
- Three times a year, SAFI organizes a 13 percent discount day. Dues-paying members are entitled to the discount one day before.
- Free access to the Children's Party for your children.
- Free welcome drinks and a voucher for a meal during the Staff Gala.
- If you are member of a club, with 15 dues paying members, your club becomes eligible to receive financial support from the Council.

*If you wish to become a dues-paying member, kindly find the membership form at the end of this Report (Annex 2).*

### **III. Defending staff interests**

As the representative union of UN staff in Geneva, the Council has a right to be consulted on all issues affecting the careers, welfare and working conditions of staff in any secretariat department. Based on this principle, the Council assumed a proactive role in defending staff and engage Management where there had been staff rights violations and/or lack of consultation.

Meetings with Management in Geneva took place through formal channels, such as the Joint Negotiation Committee (JNC), and meetings with the Director-General, UNOG's Director of Administration, the Chief of Human Resources, and the various department heads and executive officers in Geneva.

With Management in New York, the Council communicated through ad hoc meetings and video conferences, with the Secretary-General, the SG's Chef de Cabinet and Deputy Chef de Cabinet and the Under Secretary-General for Management, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management and their staff plus the Assistant Secretaries-General at the Pension Fund

The Council has also informally engaged with Member States in Geneva and at Headquarters in order to promote and defend staff interests.

#### **1. New Secretary-General**

We have invested considerable effort in building positive relations with new Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, conscious of the importance of good relations in the coming cycle of reform.

To this end we welcomed the fact that his first meeting as Secretary-General, within an hour of entering the UN building, was with the staff unions. At the meeting, we raised the following issues:

- simplify mobility to more quickly recruit and deploy staff and make it more staff-friendly;
- make performance management work;
- better protect whistleblowers;
- protect staff in the Global Service Delivery Model;
- work towards gender parity and geographic diversity;
- hold senior managers properly accountable;
- get a better deal for temporary staff and consultants;
- address cuts to P, FS, GS and National Professional Officers (NO) compensation;
- improve staff safety;
- allow GS, FS and NO staff to apply for P posts;
- protect the Pension Fund; and
- reset staff-management relations.

A number of these proposals were contained in this advance policy document, which was prepared by staff unions in response to Guterres' call for a more simplified, decentralized and flexible Organization with a more motivated staff, better whistleblower protection, as well as gender parity and geographical diversity.

Guterres committed himself to trying to find solutions to the issues raised during the meeting and to improving staff-management relations. He said he would always be available to meet.

He pledged to find common ground on issues for which staff and management might traditionally be on opposing sides, such as contract stability and performance management.

He also committed himself to do whatever could be done to help staff in the most remote and dangerous locations.

Finally he noted that the UN would have to prove that it was able to reform itself and be more effective.

As staff unions we believe that actions and impact are what count and we will be monitoring this very closely. Nevertheless, this first meeting was positive and in contrast with the past.

We also ensured positive engagement in a subsequent global townhall and then Geneva townhall, as well as in a private meeting with him in Geneva.

## **2. Retirement age**

Following extensive efforts at the International Civil Service Commission and then at the General Assembly, the General Assembly agreed that staff currently required to retire at 60 or 62 would be able to choose to retire at 65 while conserving their acquired rights. It further decided that the entry in force of this arrangement should be latest 1 January 2018.

In April we argued at the Staff-Management Committee that based on earlier discussions with the Secretary-General, entry in force should be 1 January 2017. For its part, management argued for 1 January 2018 on the basis of the budget cycle. As the SMC did not reach agreement, the Secretary-General was required by the rules to make the final decision on the date.

In December administration officially announced the implementation date of 1 January 2018. It confirmed the application of acquired rights. Under this arrangement, the mandatory age of separation for all staff working after 1 January 2018 will be 65. Those who have the right to retire at 60 or 62 with no reduction in pension will be able to inform administration in writing at any point should they wish to avail themselves of that right, including in case of early retirement.

## **3. Pension Fund**

The year ended well, with the General Assembly taking formal action to address the problems at the UN Pension Fund.

In its resolution, adopted at the end of last year, the General Assembly:

- Rejected new financial rules proposed by the Fund's Board. We had argued that the rules would pave the way for the removal of the Fund from the UN, allow the Fund to choose an alternative auditor to OIOS, and circumvent UN rules on procurement.
- Rejected the CEO's proposals for two P-5 posts, one for communications and one for office administration. We had argued they were a waste of your money.
- Heavily criticized the late payment of newly retiring staff. We had pointed to the extreme hardship of those forced to wait six to eight months to receive their first payment.
- Dismissed the Board's positive evaluation of the CEO. We had argued that to accept the evaluation at a time when retirees weren't being paid would be absurd.

- Expressed concern at the financial underperformance of the Fund and criticizes the number of vacant posts in the Investment Management Division. We had argued that keeping key posts vacant would no doubt contribute to financial underperformance.
- Requested a performance evaluation of the Head of Investments (known as the Representative of the Secretary-General). We had argued that this was timely.
- Requested a full audit of the Fund's internal policies and processes. We had argued that there was much to be clarified in the Fund's operations.
- Endorsed further study of our proposal to pay an advance to new retirees who don't receive a pension in time.
- Called time on the Fund's excessive use of expensive consultancy firms, such as PWC. We argued the fees came at the cost of your pension.

The General Assembly's actions are good for staff but a setback for the Fund's Board and CEO. They follow a staff union campaign, extensive meetings with member states and a petition signed by 14,000 of you.

In reaching its conclusions, the General Assembly also took into account [a leaked OIOS draft report](#) alleging the Pension Fund did not treat the issue of late payments to retirees with sufficient urgency and posted fake news on the UN intranet about the size of the late payment backlog.

Our campaign to protect our Pension Fund received press coverage in:

- Bloomberg: UN's \$54 billion pension fund in power struggle over new rules;
- Tribune de Genève: Inquiétudes autour du fonds de pension de l'ONU;
- Interpress Service: UN staffers protest plan to privatise \$53 billion pension fund;
- 24 heures: Des retraités de l'ONU se retrouvent sans le sou;
- as well as ongoing coverage in the UN pension blog.

It also involved a formal intervention by staff unions at the General Assembly in late October.

While we are very pleased with the General Assembly resolution, we will continue to focus our efforts on:

- improving the timeliness of payments to new retirees, which while down to 8 weeks thanks to the pressure we and management have exerted, is still 6 weeks over target;
- instituting a system of payment advances;
- addressing underperformance of investments;
- reviewing unnecessary and potentially damaging human resources practices at the Fund; and
- refreshing the Fund's leadership team, for which we look to the next Secretary-General for his support.

We thank you for your support throughout this campaign, a campaign that has been the target of threats, personal attacks and the harassment of journalists by the Fund's leadership.

We also take this opportunity to thank the staff of the Fund for their seriously hard work despite the challenges they have faced from their management.

## 4. Protecting whistleblowers

In mid-January, staff and management agreed a new whistleblower policy for the UN. It is a considerable improvement on the 2005 policy, which had come under severe criticism following a number of high profile cases.

Staff unions believe that the new policy brings the UN in line with requirement set by US Congress that if not met would have resulted in 15 percent of American contributions being withheld.

Key improvements on the 2005 policy obtained by staff unions include:

- Decisions not to provide protection from retaliation from staff are now appealable at the UNDT. This is a major turnaround for management and was the principal criticism of the old policy.
- Reporting something as simple as the breaking of the rules, if done in good faith and in accordance with the procedures, is a protected activity. Management had originally wanted only reports in the public interest to be protected.
- The act that is reported by a whistleblower can be an act committed not just by a staff member but by a contractor or UN partner.
- The Ethics Office can take preventive action so that it can act before retaliation occurs. This was a criticism we made of the old policy.
- The Ethics Office review of a request for protection from staff is reduced from 45 days to 30.
- The burden of proof is tightened up to the benefit of staff.
- The staff member who complains of retaliation will now be informed of sanctions taken against the retaliator.

It was agreed that protection for staff who testify at the UN tribunals will be addressed as part of improvements to the system of administration of justice.

We should also acknowledge the support from the Government Accountability Project, whose blog posts in late December were crucial (<https://www.whistleblower.org/blog/091828-ban-ki-moon-should-strengthen-not-weaken-whistleblower-protections-un>), and coverage by Fox News (<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/01/06/new-whistleblower-policy-could-give-move-to-defund-un-boost.html>). Both of these were important in helping management review its position following an earlier deadlock on the matter.

## 5. Sexual abuse

Last year, 99 women, children and men were allegedly sexually exploited or abused by those working under the UN flag. Those who carried out these acts included military personnel, contractors, and shamefully, our own colleagues.

Faced with lives broken and intense media criticism, the leaders of our organizations and member states have rightly condemned this.

A recent General Assembly resolution stated that “one substantiated case of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse is one case too many.”

Former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the Security Council he would name the countries of alleged perpetrators.

But despite these fine words, allegations continue to go un-investigated, high profile cases remain unprosecuted, member states continue to argue how best to prosecute

guilty peacekeepers, and many staff feel too scared to report abuse for fear of retaliation.

That is why the staff unions of the UN common system, grouped under the staff federations decided to speak out and issue a statement as a wake-up call to colleagues, our organizations and member states.

We called for:

- a stop by all to sexual exploitation and abuse;
- a single and fair investigation process for both staff and military personnel, so no-one can claim an opt-out;
- better reporting mechanisms for victims and staff, and more effective protection for whistleblowers;
- zero tolerance not just for those who commit such acts but also for those in positions of responsibility who turn a blind eye or cover up;
- a culture change at headquarters so that military forces with records of abuse aren't contracted to peacekeeping missions; and
- accountability for all, including through national judicial systems.

The staff unions considered that each case of abuse and rape, whether committed by military personnel or our own colleagues, tars all staff with the same brush and damages the trust we have worked so hard to build with the communities we serve.

It is in the interest of all, most importantly those we serve, that this behaviour, including all tacit tolerance, be stopped.

## **6. Downsizing**

Current funding difficulties, especially with departments reliant on extra-budgetary funding, led us to examine what rules were in place to protect staff in case of downsizing, and to ensure that the staff rules on order of retention (based on performance, length of service, integrity and contract type) were respected as well as efforts made to reassign affected staff to suitable positions.

To this end we negotiated new procedures for restructuring and downsizing to apply across the whole UN.

Under these procedures a staff-management group is constituted to:

- receive all information relevant to the restructuring or downsizing;
- identify suitable vacant positions to prevent where possible a situation of more staff than available posts;
- oversee the correct implementation of a comparative review, based on points awarded for contract type, performance, integrity and length of service, in situations where number of staff at the same grade and carrying out the same functions exceeds suitable posts; and
- identify other mitigating measures.

The procedures were approved by the staff-management committee and should be issued shortly.

## 7. OCHA

In late 2016, we were informed by staff at OCHA that 170 posts were to be cut worldwide as a result of a financial shortfall. We therefore sought information from management on the downsizing exercise, including:

- the rationale for the selection of posts to be cut;
- the comparative process that have led or will lead to the decisions made about which staff would be separated;
- the interaction between the budget cuts and the new posts that have been advertized;
- the efforts that are being made to mitigate the impact of the budget cuts through moving staff to vacant or new posts;
- the interaction of this exercise with the functional review; and
- the compliance of the current exercise with the UN's legal framework on downsizing and restructuring.

At the time of writing, and despite meeting with the Under Secretary-General of OCHA, we had not been able to obtain any of this information in any meaningful way.

We then wrote to the Under Secretary-General urging the creation of staff-management working group to:

- examine on a strategic and global basis the posts being cut so that we have a single full picture and understanding;
- propose mitigation measures such as finding suitable posts elsewhere or indeed among the new positions and to make direct recommendations for affected staff to be moved to these; and
- oversee the comparative review process to ensure fairness in line with staff rule 9.6 (e).

This was refused.

In light of this, we organized a townhall on the rights of staff in downsizing and restructuring situations with the Office of Staff Legal Assistance, which was well-attended.

We further sent a letter to the Secretary-General on behalf of all staff unions of the UN system reiterating our concerns and requests.

We reinforced this at the Secretary-General's townhall in Geneva and the same day in a private meeting.

He informed us that had requested and received a briefing from OCHA management about the situation. He said that management's briefing talked about the budget situation but did not disclose our concerns. We pointed out that we could not control the budget envelope but that we were seriously concerned with how the downsizing/restructuring was being conducted within that. We asked for no more nor less than the staff-management structures that have been put in place for peacekeeping missions and the tribunals. We also referred him to an article in IRIN News.

He said he understood our concern and promised to get back shortly to us on this. This was still pending at the time of writing.

## **8. UNISDR**

After a change at the senior management level at UNISDR, a restructuring process was launched in October 2016. The Council has been active in the process since its inception. It held one meeting with staff and several ones with senior management where it brought its input about the whole restructuring exercise, i.e. the way the matching exercise will be done and the importance of giving priority to UN Secretariat contract holders and of accommodating all UNOPS contract holders. The Council will be part of the panel that will review the placement of staff who will choose between the options available within the compendium of posts that will be created once the matching exercise is finalized. The Council contacted the SDLS in order to organize sessions for the benefit of UNISDR at Headquarters as well as in the field about writing PHP and preparing for an interview, as these elements are crucial in any selection process. It also organized a Townhall with OSLA about rights of staff in a context of restructuring.

## **9. UNRISD**

Due to severe financial constraints, UNRISD underwent a downsizing exercise in 2016. The Council attended one meeting with the UNRISD staff and was in permanent contact with the Director of UNRISD to ensure that the downsizing exercise was done in full adherence to Rule 9.6.e of the Staff Rules. Moreover, the Council sent a letter to the Secretary-General asking him to save the Institute and had managed, through discussion with Division of Administration at UNOG, to flag staff of UNRISD as being from a downsizing entity, to give them priority consideration in cases of selection whenever they are rostered. As a result of this downsizing exercise, four staff lost their job, three of them were able to find positions in other departments or international organizations and the fourth is still seeking for employment.

## **10. Strategic Heritage Plan**

The Council recruited an external company specialized in ergonomics “Ergorama” in order to conduct a survey related to open space and flexible workspace. The results of the survey indicated clearly that staff have valid concerns related to the future distribution of space as planned in the SHP. The Council has managed to establish a joint working group with Management, to be used as a forum to deal with important aspects of the SHP for staff. The working group has held to date one meeting. Moreover, the Council insisted in being involved in the desk review that is due to take place beginning of February. It was agreed that the Council would nominate one observer to monitor the whole process. Apart from this involvement, the Council has launched a petition against overcrowding in offices and flexible workspace.

## **11. General Service salary review**

As a result of the salary survey that took place in September 2015 and in which a committee of representatives of Management and staff unions of all UN common system organizations based in Geneva participated, a new salary scale was been introduced for staff in the General Service category in June 2016. The survey yielded a 1.8 point decrease which was applied only to staff joining the Organisation after 1 June 2016. As clarified by the ICSC, current staff will have their salary scale frozen until the salaries of those who were appointed after June 2016 catch up with those of current staff through inflation.

Due to the advocacy of Council representatives during the March 2016 ICSC session in New York, we were able to convince the Commission that it had misread the

General Assembly Resolution and that although the date of recalculation for allowances was during the freeze, the recalculation should happen at the earliest opportunity after the freeze was lifted (1st January). As a result, the allowances have been recalculated and they were increased quite significantly. This increase in the allowances was reflected in November 2016 payslip, with a retroactive effect from September.

## **12. General Service career development**

The Council organized a Townhall on GS career development. Many issues and proposals were put on the table such as the G to P exam, the difficulties of mobility between departments, the lack of career advancement among other issues. Furthermore, the Council has advocated with Management and even at the level of the Secretary-General for a freeze in GS recruitment so that internal staff have better opportunities for career development. Since Central Support Services (CSS) is the service with the highest number of GS staff, a meeting was first organized with CSS staff and then with the Management of CSS in order to discuss many issues, including the staffing table of the service with the aim to push for a better career development for all staff in CSS.

The Council has also proposed to have a mobility scheme within DCM for GS staff. This scheme would allow staff to move voluntarily to other positions that will be open to mobility. If this pilot project will be successful, the Council has the intention to ask for its replication in all departments.

## **13. Global service delivery model**

Since 2015 the Organization has been considering plans to consolidate its administrative services in first six and then two locations globally. Called the Global Service Delivery Model (GSDM), it is based on the assumption that Umoja, with its \$1 billion price tag (audit report A/71/180), works. It would have serious consequences for administrative posts in the duty station and on the quality of administrative services provided to all staff.

For this reason the staff unions urged caution in how the project should proceed, both to management and Member States, including at the General Assembly late last year. We asked that:

- GSDM be given further study;
- any decisions be based on a more thorough study of the actual capabilities of Umoja and other reform initiatives (we highlighted difficulties with a precursor for field operations in Entebbe called the regional service centre); and
- administrative decision-making not be offshored and some administrative presence be kept in every duty station.

We are pleased that the General Assembly passed a resolution on GSDM in which it broadly echoes these concerns and takes appropriate action.

We will use the additional time given for study of GSDM to work with the new Secretary-General to further reinforce our points and push for a more realistic approach to how the UN organizes its administrative services in a way that benefits both staff and the organization. We believe that effective and prompt support in recruitment, finance and procurement is essential to the UN's success, especially for voluntary-funded programmes, and cannot easily be offshored or sent further away from the client without negatively affecting the UN's reputation and performance.

## **14. G1 to G4 Group**

The G1-G4 Group has been active as an interim review body since February 2014. This group reviews appointments at the G1-G4 levels. During the year, the members of the Group have been very active in reviewing and submitting their comments on cases that have been submitted to them. The Group had had to send an official memo to the Director-General challenging the recruitment of a G4 staff who was employed in another duty station. The Group argued that this appointment is against Rule 4.4 of the Staff Rules. As a result of this intervention, the appointment did not take place. This group is unique in the System and we have learnt from Department of Management in New York that the proposal to create similar groups in other duty stations is currently being examined.

## **15. Professional Salaries**

A new compensation system comes into force this January, leading to a number of changes that won't necessarily benefit staff. Hardest hit are likely to be parents benefiting from the education grant, those with working spouses and children and colleagues in hardship locations.

Through our federation, the Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA) and its sister federation, FICSA, we commissioned a study and participated in an expert meeting of lawyers to determine the impact of these changes on acquired rights.

Based on this, we will shortly be inviting staff who have been significantly affected by the changes to fill out an online form, allowing us to organize and support a legal campaign to protect staff compensation, based on the principle of acquired rights.

In a separate development, we worked with delegates at the General Assembly to ensure that a pay rise for US federal civil servants in February and inflation in New York will result in a pay rise of P staff globally.

We also backed a proposal of the International Civil Service Commission that staff with ten years of continuous service, whose fixed term appointments weren't renewed, would receive between 5 and 6 months of separation payments. This was considered at the General Assembly but deferred. Member states hosting downsizing peacekeeping missions had pushed for the threshold to be reduced to five years, triggering concerns about costs.

## **16. Post adjustment**

In October 2016, the ICSC launched the cost-of-living survey for household expenditures for P and D staff. A Local Salary Committee composed of both representatives of staff and Management was put in place prior to the launching of the survey. The Council, through its three representatives in the Committee, ensured that a proper list of retailers was chosen for the purposes of the survey. The Council had also nominated its Assistant as an observer from the staff side in the data collection process that took place the first two weeks of October.

## **17. Mobility**

The new mobility policy has been running for a year with the first network, Polnet.

In order to understand staff concerns we organized a survey and a number of meetings with affected staff in Geneva.

We also took stock of the experience of staff representative observers on the Job Network Board.

We noted that by far the most complex process is the lateral reassignments. The JNB is asked to find new homes for skill sets, posts and expressed interests that rarely match. In order to maximize matches, staff aren't necessarily matched to the most appropriate posts for them or those in which they expressed interest. This creates uncertainty for staff and an unnecessary workload for the JNB. As an example, in December, a JNB considering P-5s in Polnet took most of an afternoon to finally move only four staff.

2016 was a pilot year and only volunteers took part. From 2017, all staff exceeding post incumbency will be included, leading to an exponential increase in workload and leaving the JNB and OHRM less time to work on the more important vacancy exercise.

We have proposed that missions/DFS and departments be responsible for ensuring staff don't go over maximum post incumbency and use their knowledge of the staff and their abilities to match them more effectively and swiftly within their scope. Departments could also be seen in the large sense such as DGACM around the world.

This would leave OHRM and the JNBs to focus on their strengths, which is running the vacancy exercises and ensuring quality and consistency. Freed of the lateral reassignment exercises, they could run four vacancy exercises a year instead of two, minimizing the use of temporary assignments while these posts are filled, providing more frequent promotion opportunities to staff, and running ad hoc recruit from roster exercises to meet surge requirements for field missions. This would significantly reduce selection times.

Further, abolition of the pointless general abilities test for internal staff would reduce selection times by a further 2-3 weeks.

Obtaining General Assembly clearance to make some vacancies internal only could further reduce times as posting periods and candidate numbers would be reduced. Staff unions will work with OHRM on criteria to propose.

## **18. Education grant**

The revised compensation package approved by the General Assembly in December 2015 had a significant impact on the education grant. The system is now based on a global sliding scale of reimbursement of a streamlined list of education-related expenses, which will be implemented as of September 2017. Notably, the sliding scale will lift the ceiling on expenses but will no longer include transport and food.

In view of these changes and as private/international schools have the tendency of determining their fees according to a 75% reimbursement of education fees to international civil servants, the Staff Council carried out a survey, the results of which will be communicated to private/international schools so they take into account the new reality of the abovementioned changes.

At the time of writing, the results were being analysed. A clear result was that parents are increasingly questioning the value of the more expensive schools and signalling their willingness to change schools when moving their children from primary to secondary.

The impact of non-reimbursement of food and transport will also impact staff, particularly those of younger children, when these fixed amounts are more significant relative to tuition.

A meeting is to take place at the end of January with the Geneva Association of Private Schools. The survey results will also be taken into account by UNOG's representative on the board of the International School of Geneva.

## **19. Parental leave**

We have made proposals to review the current parental leave policy, both to modernize it and to enable it to better support working mothers. For some mothers, sharing childcare duties and parental leave with partners working in the common system would enable them to return to work sooner. We have noted that the Global Fund has a policy that allows this and could provide a template. Other mothers wish to spend more time with their children before returning to work. To this end UNICEF and WHO both provide two months of special leave with pay in addition to their maternity leave, and this can be an effective retention tool. We also believe the policy needs to take into account the needs of parents who adopt children or use surrogate mothers.

We have also made a proposal at the Staff-Management Committee so that maternity leave does not automatically kick in if a mother falls sick within six weeks of the due date. Management is examining the impact of this proposal.

## **20. OSLA**

Cooperation with the office of staff legal assistance (OSLA) has continued. A meeting was held with the head of OSLA and it was agreed to launch a survey among staff who were self-represented at the tribunal. The current Council is working on such a survey. Moreover, a townhall on "staff rights in case of restructuring and downsizing" was held during which OSLA lawyer made a presentation that was much appreciated by staff.

## **21. Staff Relations Management Group**

A Staff Relations Management Group (SRMG) has been created in DCM. The Council has been very active in the group through the submission of agenda items and through participation in the discussion that took place within the Group. The Group has already held many meetings during which staff concerns have been raised and discussed.

## **22. Staff welfare group**

The Council has been an active member of the staff welfare group that has been put in place by the Director-General to act as an advisory body on systemic issues. The group met four times and many systemic issues were addressed as flexible working arrangements, downsizing, lack of managerial skills within the organization, etc.

## **23. Security**

The Council conducted a survey about changes in the shift system following a proposal made by the Security and Safety Service (SSS) Management. The Council sent the survey by email and collected the views of all those who participated. The majority of the those who expressed their views were in favour of the new shift system. It was agreed that this system would be assessed in January 2017.

Moreover, the Council was approached by a number of staff from the SSS who had serious concerns about the selection process for recruitment of staff at G4 level. The

Council transmitted those concerns to Management both in New York and in Geneva and supported involved staff in their interaction with OSLA.

The Council was also seized with a matter of serious concern for the health and safety of security staff who had to implement a new system of surveillance of cars at the entrance of the Palais. This new system implies checking car boots, which induces the inhalation of important amount of toxic gases. The Council has raised this concern with Management and identified a company, which would possibly be intervening in order to assess the degree of risks to which security staff are exposed.

## **24. Support to staff**

The Council provided assistance to all staff who approached it, to the extent of its capacity, in areas such as harassment, abuse of authority and ePas. The Council represented staff before Management when necessary. It resorted in a great number of cases to the assistance of the office of the Ombudsman for informal resolutions, which proved to be a useful way out. In extreme cases, it directed staff to the Office of Staff Legal Assistance (OSLA).

## **25. Rights of Tenants**

The Council organized a townhall on the rights of tenants. A lawyer from Asloca (the local Association for tenants' rights) made a presentation, which was followed by a series of questions and answers. The townhall was very well attended and was very beneficial to participating staff.

## **26. Crèche**

Since it was impossible to find a piece of land agreeable for both Administration and Swiss authorities despite all the efforts exerted by the Council in order to execute the project of building a crèche within the premises of the Palais des Nations, the Council negotiated an offer for its own staff with the crèche Babilou in Mies. The offer consisted in assigning a number of places available in the crèche for children of staff members. Many staff have contacted the crèche and got a place for their children.

The Council is currently negotiating an offer to get its own crèche outside the Palais. The crèche in question is already in operation and the Council would become an owner.

## **27. Cyclists**

A townhall was held in order to collect staff views about the challenges faced by cyclists within the premises of the Palais. This townhall was attended by a representative of local cycling association Pro-vélo, as well as representatives of Management who took note of staff concerns. Moreover, the Council organized an electric bike open day the 22 September, enabling staff to try out different bikes on the streets of the Ariana Park and benefit from promotions from two local retailers. This initiative was a huge success and was very welcome by participating staff.

## **28. Impact of the French tax regime on staff**

At the time of writing, the Council organized a townhall on the impact of the French tax regime on international civil servants. The owner of a consulting company MathecSolutions and an international tax lawyer were to make a presentation, which would be followed by a series of questions and answers. Feedback prior to the townhall has been very positive.

## **29. Interns**

In April and November, we brought up the issue of unpaid interns at the UN. We reiterated our call for the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the implications of providing stipends to interns at the UN.

The UN is one of the few international organizations not providing a stipend and therefore not providing a level playing field to those from developing countries. Given concerns about geographical diversity, we noted that the internship programme could be a useful form of outreach to future talent from non-traditional backgrounds.

## **IV. Supporting staff welfare activities**

### **1. Clubs and societies**

The Council provided support (logistical and financial) to UNOG clubs and societies that were able to demonstrate, in line with the Council's guidelines, that their activities would broadly benefit staff. Support included providing funds for proper cycling, badminton and table tennis equipment, subsidizing the participation of the UN Football Club in tournaments, and the printing of the Ex-Tempore poetry magazine (approved upon meeting certain conditions).

The Council also supported the Music Club who was requested by the Administration to relinquish the practice room it had been using for the past ten years, to be relocated in another room. Since the new proposed room was not suitable for the Club's activities, the Council succeeded in convincing the Administration of the need to allow the Music Club to remain in the same room.

### **2. UN Special**

The UN Special is a staff magazine jointly owned by the UNOG and WHO staff councils. A new editor and deputy editor were appointed and worked towards improving the relevance of the content for staff. The Council helped the editorial team in recruiting new writers, articles from staff working in the field, news on what is happening in Geneva that would affect UN staff, op-ed pieces from staff with interesting experiences to tell, and analysis of developments in the organization that staff may be interested in.

### **3. Children's Spring party**

Over 350 children attended the Spring party. Despite the bad weather, the children enjoyed outside games around the party theme "Asterix and Obelix with the Romans". They also enjoyed a clown show and a ball towards the end. The children left the party with the latest issue of Asterix and Obelix book and a small bag of candies.

### **4. Staff party**

The Staff Party took place on Friday 9 December 2016. Headlining the party was the Edwin Sanz Salsa Orchestra, preceeded by blues soul rock band Zilla Project. DJ Reas from Silencio played plenty of upbeat music to finish off the night.

Back by popular acclaim, after last year's success, was the karaoke lounge featuring an expanded selection of French, English and Spanish hits from the 60s to today.

The party was well-attended and lasted until 2.30 a.m.

### **5. Garden party**

In keeping with tradition, the Council organized a summer garden party in the grounds. A band and DJ were organized, and food and beer tents and a wine truck were brought in. Staff brought their picnics too, and many their families, and a pleasant afternoon was had by all.

## **6. Concerts**

The Council supported five concerts this year. The concerts were generally, but not always, held at lunchtime and featured both staff and external musicians, reflecting musical styles from around the world.

## **7. Inter-Agency Games 2016**

This year the Inter-agency games were held in Spain in May 2016. As is traditional, the Council agreed to subsidize 50% of the participation costs of its dues-paying members who participated.

## **8. Fundraising for humanitarian emergencies**

Staff of the Ecuadorian community in the UN organised a collection to raise funds in favour of the victims of the earthquake that hit Ecuador in April 2016, the funds were sent to Caritas Switzerland earmarked for . The Haitian community also organised a collection in favour of victims of the earthquake that hit the country in 2016. In both cases the Council matched the funds collected by staff.

## **9. Staff benevolent fund**

The Council has remained the main contributor to the Staff benevolent fund. Through its two representatives, it has tried to support staff request even though the number of requests that it has received during the last year was very small.

# **v. Communication with staff**

The Council is accountable to you for its actions, and in turn is made all the stronger by the active support and feedback it receives. We have kept you informed of all our positions and of matters affecting or likely to affect you. We have listened and understood your concerns and most definitely benefited from your feedback. We have made extensive use of the communication tools available to us.

## **1. Email broadcasts**

As of 20 January 2017 the 34<sup>th</sup> UNOG Staff Coordinating Council had sent out 105 email broadcasts. Our broadcasts have informed you of developments, inviting your feedback and seeking your support in our campaigns. We are pleased that you appreciate being informed and engaged on such a regular basis, and the Council will continue improving its communications.

## **2. Staff townhalls**

The Council held several townhall meetings on issues of interest to all staff, such as Pension Funds issues, General Service career development, and the compensation review of staff in the Professional category and above, allowing us to have a solid base of knowledge of what you the staff really need and aspire to, and help us make more specific interventions on your behalf with Management.

### **3. [www.staffcoordinatingcouncil.org](http://www.staffcoordinatingcouncil.org)**

The Council's website contains all the news updates on the activities of the Council, important documents, contacts, information on meetings, the services the Council provides and on the clubs and societies, and upcoming events.

We have also continually updated our Facebook page, created in conjunction with the other unions to distribute the information to a wide an audience as possible. [www.facebook.com/unstaffunions](http://www.facebook.com/unstaffunions).

## **VI. Making the Council stronger and more effective**

### **1. Participation**

All staff representatives of the 34<sup>th</sup> Council, without exception, have contributed to its work. Those particularly interested were able to take part in working groups, negotiations and networking events with other staff unions. In addition, almost all votes were taken unanimously, displaying the strong sense of purpose and unity among the members of this Council. A table showing the attendance of each Council member in its meetings is attached as an Annex to this report.

### **2. Financial management**

The Financial Commission has been in contact regularly by virtual means, allowing for the timely processing of all payments etc. They have also ensured implementation of audit observations.

### **3. Representation at the Staff-Management Committee**

The Council has played an active role at SMC, and the position of Vice-President is currently held by Geneva's Executive Secretary.

Unions work together at SMC and support and contribute jointly to papers and positions. They also share the responsibilities of being in various working groups. The report has mentioned where issues have been brought by the Council to SMC.

### **4. Representation through our federation, CCISUA**

The Council attended in June 2016 the 31st Annual General Assembly of the Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA) in Santiago, Chile. During this meeting our Council's Executive Secretary was also re-elected as the President of CCISUA. By now being the lead player in the Federation, we have been better able to contribute to defend your interests in various subjects such as the pension fund, on the retirement age issue, and the Compensation Package, among other things.

### **5. Relations with other staff unions in Geneva**

The Council worked closely with the unions of the specialized agencies on different issues as the review of allowances for GS staff and the cost-of-living survey. Moreover, the Council has been participating in the Geneva Group, which includes Geneva-based staff associations.



## **Annex 1**

### **Work Programme**

*Mindful of these difficult economic times, financial pressures and the many new challenges we face, including with the implementation of Umoja, we have resolved to prioritize the following objectives this year. In doing so, we will use all forms of staff-management fora that are available to us and take this opportunity to affirm our belief in the importance of ensuring a system of staff-management relations in line with international human rights law and ILO fundamental work rights.*

#### **Protecting jobs, promoting careers**

Faced with these difficult economic times the Council will:

- defend Geneva as a duty station with Management and Swiss authorities, highlight its benefits;
- work proactively to pre-empt post abolition and outsourcing, especially as a consequence of Umoja implementation;
- defend family benefits and other entitlements in the upcoming Compensation Review for GS staff;
- work to maintain the GS external hiring freeze and push for its implementation for G1-G4 categories so cuts fall on vacant posts;
- ensure that staff selection rules are applied correctly, including in the context of mobility, and push for greater transparency;
- ensure staff needs are taken into account in the implementation of mobility for P staff;
- work to prevent unnecessary restructurings; and
- work with Management to identify career bottlenecks for GS staff and expand possibilities within the working group established for that purpose;

#### **Support Staff Welfare**

There is a proven strong link between the quality of the work environment and the ability of all staff to be fully productive in the workspace. The Council will therefore:

- work against open plan space and hot-desking to ensure that the Palais des Nations renovations (Strategic Heritage Plan) provide office space that allows colleagues to focus on their work and be efficient, and conduct studies as required;
- push management to urgently address incidents of staff negatively affected by Umoja;
- push for a 2017 implementation of retirement at 65;
- resist attempts to remove the pension fund from the UN and push for pensions to be paid on time;
- conduct a survey on harassment in order to identify best ways to root it out;
- defend the independence of the formal and informal systems of internal justice, and advocate effective protection of whistleblowers;
- support staff by providing advice on legal and ePas issues;
- address new and ongoing issues related to the host country including in relation to Swiss nationality;
- defend staff working shifts, nights and weekends; and
- work to improve facilities for staff.

#### **Keeping staff informed and involved**

Communication is important. The Council will continue to:

- hold department and thematic townhalls and issue broadcasts on subjects of concern; and
- improve the quality of UN Special.



**Annex 2**

**YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE STAFF COORDINATING COUNCIL**

**Registration Form**

**Why become a dues-paying member of the Staff Coordinating Council?**

The UNOG Staff Coordinating Council defends your rights as a staff member of the UN. Your Council makes sure that UN Administration pays attention to the issues that matter to you: mobility, security, salaries, etc.

Thanks to your contribution the Council also finances and makes available to your benefit:

- Staff Gala (free refreshments)
- Children's party (your kids attend for free)
- Interagency Sports Games (your participation is subsidized)
- Legal assistance (in job-related cases)
- For sale / For rent advertisement (free publication of ads)
- SAFI (access to 13% discount the day before the scheduled date)

✓ Plus 10 to 20% discounts, free services, discounted gift cards and more our partners:

**Pharmacie Populaire    5-à-sec    EVO fitness evolved**

**Ardentis** - cliniques dentaires    **MANOR**    **PAYOT** LIBRAIRE

**Europcar**    **MyColorPhone**-Online Smartphone Store    **Léman Pneus** Nyon

**Curves**    **GIDOR** COIFFURE    **AESTHETICS**

More information on the exclusive offers and discounts for our members at

<http://staffcoordinatingcouncil.org/index.php/member-benefits>

Think of paying your monthly subscription of CHF 10 by automatic deduction from your salary.

All you have to do is fill in this form and return it to the Council (room C-527), where it will be forwarded to the payroll office. Thank you.

**Yes, I understand how important it is to contribute to my Staff Council and I wish to become a dues-paying member :**

Last name:	First name:
Index #	Signature :
Monthly contribution : CHF 10	



**34<sup>th</sup> UNOG Staff Coordinating Council**  
**34<sup>ème</sup> Conseil de coordination du personnel de l'ONUG**

**Annex 3**

**Attendance at Council meetings until 23 January 2017**

<i>Members of the Council</i>	<i>Council meetings</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ALMARIO, Francis	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Present
APOSTOLOV, Mario	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present
BALY, Mohamed Chiraz	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused
BENAYED, Slim	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Present
CHANTREL, Dominique	Present						
CHAOUI, Prisca	Present						
DOS SANTOS, José	Absent/excused						
EL GARAH, Samira	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused
FUNCK THOMAZ, Samuel	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present
GAZIYEV, Jamshid	Present						
JAMES, Elizabeth	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present
JORDAN, Sarah	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused	Not a member at this time	Not a member at this time	Not a member at this time
KALOTAY, Kalman	Present						
KELLY, Paul	Present						
MAGNIN, Patrick	Not a member at this time	Present	Present	Present			
MELLET, Johnny	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Absent/excused
NWABUOGU, Gloria	Present						
PECK ARIF, Cathy	Present						
POPA, Gabriela	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused
RICHARDS, Ian	Present						
ROUAI, Slim	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present	Present
SHAMSIE, Syed	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused
STANOVIC, Marko	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present
TOUIHRI, Mohssen	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Absent/excused
VESTERMAN, Claire	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused	Present
VILCHES, Sandrine	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Absent/excused

Present   
 Absent/excused   
 Not a member at this time 



**34<sup>th</sup> UNOG Staff Coordinating Council**  
**34<sup>ème</sup> Conseil de coordination du personnel de l'ONUG**

**Annex 4**

**Attendance at Executive Bureau meetings until 23 January 2017**

<i>Members of the Executive Bureau</i>	<i>Executive Bureau meetings</i>																							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
BALY, Mohamed Chiraz	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused	Present
CHAOU, Prisca	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
GAZIYEV, Jamshid	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused
NWABUOGU, Gloria	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Present
PECK ARIF, Catherine	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused
RICHARDS, Ian	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present	Present
STANOVIC, Marko	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Absent/excused
CHANTREL, Dominique	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Present
KELLY, Paul	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present	Absent/excused	Absent/excused	Present	Present	Present	Present

Present   
 Absent/excused 