



*United Nations
Field Staff Union
Council Meeting
FSC-XXVIII*

UNGSC, Brindisi,
25-29th November
2019



Stronger
together.

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Executive Summary

The United Nations Field Staff Union annual meeting took place in Brindisi from Monday 25th to Friday 29 November 2019. The meeting welcomed in the new Executive, Mr. Mark Polane, Ms. Liliya Galieva and Ms. Leila Manly-Spain. The new Executive provided a forum for all Committee Representatives to share field staff concerns, gather knowledge on workplace issues, build relationships and understand how to innovate staff representation in United Nations field locations.

The meeting followed a 5-day agenda which included, opening remarks from the Director of UNGSC, training on Emotional Intelligence and presentations from the UNISERV President and two UNFCU representatives. On the second day, a VTC was held with USG DOS and ASG DMSPC. This was a chance for UNFSU to raise questions directly with the senior leadership. Following the VTC, there were two breakout sessions in which Representatives put together Council Meeting Resolutions and follow-up questions for USG DOS and ASG DMSPC. Representatives produced a document from the sessions and sent it to HQ.

The impact of the current climate of austerity and downsizing came through in the mission specific discussion. It clarified the main apprehensions among UN field staff, who predominantly expressed concerns around recruitment and mobility. The recent Delegation of Authority has undoubtedly had an impact on staff as Heads of Entity (or their delegate) now have an enhanced level authority and staff feel that there is a lack of transparency in relation to recruitment and selection in the missions. This has given rise to strong staff concerns about the potential for 'local arrangements' that do not fully comply with extant policy, a perceived scarcity of continuous contracts and lack of transparency in rostering and examination processes. This meeting was a chance to discuss these challenges openly and consider possible solutions.

The financial status of UNFSU is currently sound and expected to remain so, as the new Executive continues to work with the Treasurer Mr. Robert Powell, alongside a newly elected Vice Treasurer, Mr. Navdeep Singh. Given the UNFSU's robust financial standing, the new Executive are equipped with the resources required to implement innovative ideas like streamlining the constitution, creating strategic alliances and building UNFSU networks at key meetings. These actions are expected to ensure that the new Executive innovate staff representation and endeavor to deliver improved conditions for staff in the field, working under the principle that staff are stronger together.

Alongside continually providing field staff with a voice, the new Executive have put new emphasis on maintaining and strengthening productive relationships with other unions, federations and senior management in order to create more space for UNFSU intervention. They will focus on adding value to discussions on recruitment policy, entitlements and staff welfare and leverage technology to facilitate UNFSU operations. The meeting concluded positively, and the new Executive are heading into 2020 with enthusiasm about the future of work at the United Nations.

List of attendees

Mr. Mark Polane,	UNFSU Executive
Ms. Leila Manly-Spain	UNFSU Executive
Ms. Lilia Galieva	UNFSU Executive
Ms. Rosa Colucci	UNFSU Executive Office
Mr. Martin Foy	ENTEBBE
Mr. Milan Dawoh	MINUSCA
Ms. Penda Ly	MONUSCO
Mr. Luis Gomez Orodea	UNAMA
Mr. Nenad Cupic	UNAMI
Mr. Abdulai Jalloh	UNAMID
Mr. Fatmir Boshnjaku	UNDOF
Mr. Ivo Pezer	UNGSC
Mr. Stephen Towler	UNIFIL/UNISERV
Ms. Alda De Barros	UNIOGBIS
Mr. Martin Konyango	UNISFA
Mr. Navdeep Singh	UNMIK
Mr. Michael Munywoki	UNMISS
Mr. Abdallah Abdel-Naser	UNMOGIP
Mr. John Symons	UNSMIL
Mr. Curthis Alvin Norman	UNSOS/UNSOM
Mr. Richard Mazula	UNTSO/UNSCO



Opening Statement

President, Mr. Mark Polane welcomed all representatives and introduced Vice Presidents Ms. Liliya Galieva and Ms. Leila Manly-Spain, Administrative Assistant Rosa Colucci and Rapporteur Laura-Jane Nolan. All UNFSU Staff Representatives gave introductions. The President expressed appreciation for the hard work of the Staff Representatives and thanked those that submitted points for the VTC as well as mission specific issues.

The President stated that the purpose of the Council Meeting was to give the Executive direction for their work emphasizing the value of teamwork, cooperation and trust in the union. He also spoke of UNFSU's work being about relationships with constituents, management and each other. There is a need to leverage technology to facilitate our work, using the recently introduced "UNITE Workspace" which incorporates great tools that help facilitate collaboration, such as Microsoft Teams and SharePoint Online, he said. Current challenges include the Delegation of Authority, mobility, contractual arrangements, health and safety, recruitment and placement, and downsizing to name a few. These put an emphasis on the committees to be alert and aware of decisions being made by the management representatives in their respective missions. The President concluded by reiterating his view that unity in our endeavors makes the UNFSU stronger.

Emotional Intelligence Workshop

Leila Manly-Spain, UNFSU Vice President, delivered an engaging workshop on emotional intelligence. The workshop explored how to employ emotional intelligence as UNFSU Staff Representatives and more generally in the workplace.

'An employee with high emotional intelligence can manage his or her own impulses, communicate with others effectively, manage change, solve problems and use humor to build rapport in tense situations. These employees also have empathy, remain optimistic even in the face of adversity, and are gifted at educating and persuading in a sales situation and resolving customer complaints in a customer service role.'

The four pillars of emotional intelligence and its benefits in relation to one's role as Staff Reps:

Self-Awareness: Being 'aware' of one's self is the ability to accurately perceive one's skills and knowledge, value and responsibilities. It is being confident in what you have to offer, whether it is personally or professionally. Self-awareness is not only important for one's self-esteem, but it is also the first step to the process of full acceptance or change. To understand your worth in any setting, you need self-awareness. As staff representatives, it is important that we are conscious of the value we bring to the organization and our staff.

Self-management: Self-Regulation is another term for 'self-control', which is defined as the ability to control one's emotions, desires, and behaviors in order to reach a positive outcome. Self-regulation is sometimes difficult because of the phenomenon that it is important to 'express how you feel'. While this may be partially true, the art to finding the balance between expressing one's feelings and avoiding unnecessary tension is self-regulation. In our roles as staff reps, we often encounter challenging situations. To be successful and fulfil our mandate, our ability to self-manage and maintain our cool, is crucial.

Social awareness: This is about having empathy, which is a prerequisite for being successful as a Staff Rep. When staff approach you, you must be open and friendly to make them feel at ease by putting yourself in their shoes. This is salient at the UN where we work with colleagues from various cultures. The Iceberg concept of culture helps us realize that 90% of someone's culture is below the surface, we have surface culture, shallow culture and deep culture. An awareness of all of these complexities, allows you to relate to a person more effectively.

Social management: This is the ability to read the audience and respond accordingly. You must also be a clear and consistent communicator, remain open to hearing good and bad news and learn how to engage others with enthusiasm while managing one's internal states, impulses and resources. As staff reps we deal with both management and staff. In order to bring those groups together productively, with an aim to resolve issue and create harmony, we need to employ effective social management.

The material covered in the workshop provided an introduction the topic of Emotional Intelligence, and the representatives were encouraged to do further research on the matter and where possible, engage management and staff with these concepts. Recommended reading was Daniel Goleman's book, *Emotional Intelligence* (1995).

Policy Development and staff management machinery

Former UNFSU President and current UNISERV Federation President, Mr. Stephen Towler gave a talk on how a policy change takes place, explained the role of UNISERV within various high level governance entities and bodies such as the ICSC, CEB, HLCM, IASMN etc. He briefed the Council on the mechanisms that govern post adjustment and hardship duty station classification amongst others.

Who are UNISERV and ICSC?

The United Nations International Civil Servants' Federation (UNISERV) is a federation, without a direct access point for individuals, comprised of several unions. It collectively represents over 30,000 United Nations staff, including UNVs. The various unions cooperate with UNISERV, which is made up of several committees. It takes a coordinated approach to matters of common interest among its staff member associations. They promote better understanding between the Administration of the United Nations Secretariat, UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNWOMEN, and the UNFSU, especially in formulating and implementing policies, guidelines, rules and regulations, affecting staff. They also promote cooperation with UN Common System Staff Associations and Unions on matters governing conditions of service with the United Nations and Specialized Agencies.

UNISERV pursue their objectives through discussions, interventions and negotiations with the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the respective administration of the Members. UNISERV also has access to the "Chief Executives Board" (CEB) and its subsidiary organs such as the "High Level committee on Management" (HLCM), the Inter Agency Security Management Network" (IASMN) and the "HR Network" and "Field Group".

The ICSC, established in 1974, is an independent body representing international civil servants. It is composed of fifteen member ambassadors, appointed by the General Assembly for four-year terms. The ICSC takes decisions on things that profoundly affect staff pay and conditions, such as daily subsistence allowance (DSA) and post-adjustment, i.e., cost-of-living element, hardship entitlements.

Post Adjustment and Hardship explained.

Post adjustment was established in 1974, is a system that ensures that the United Nations staff's take-home pay has equivalent purchasing power across different geographical locations; they use New York as the benchmark.

Staff are paid post adjustment in addition to their salary. It accounts for the differences in prices between your location and New York, including local inflation, the exchange rate of local currency

relative to the Dollar and the average expenditure pattern of staff in a given area. Together, the net base salary and the post-adjustment add up to your take-home pay.

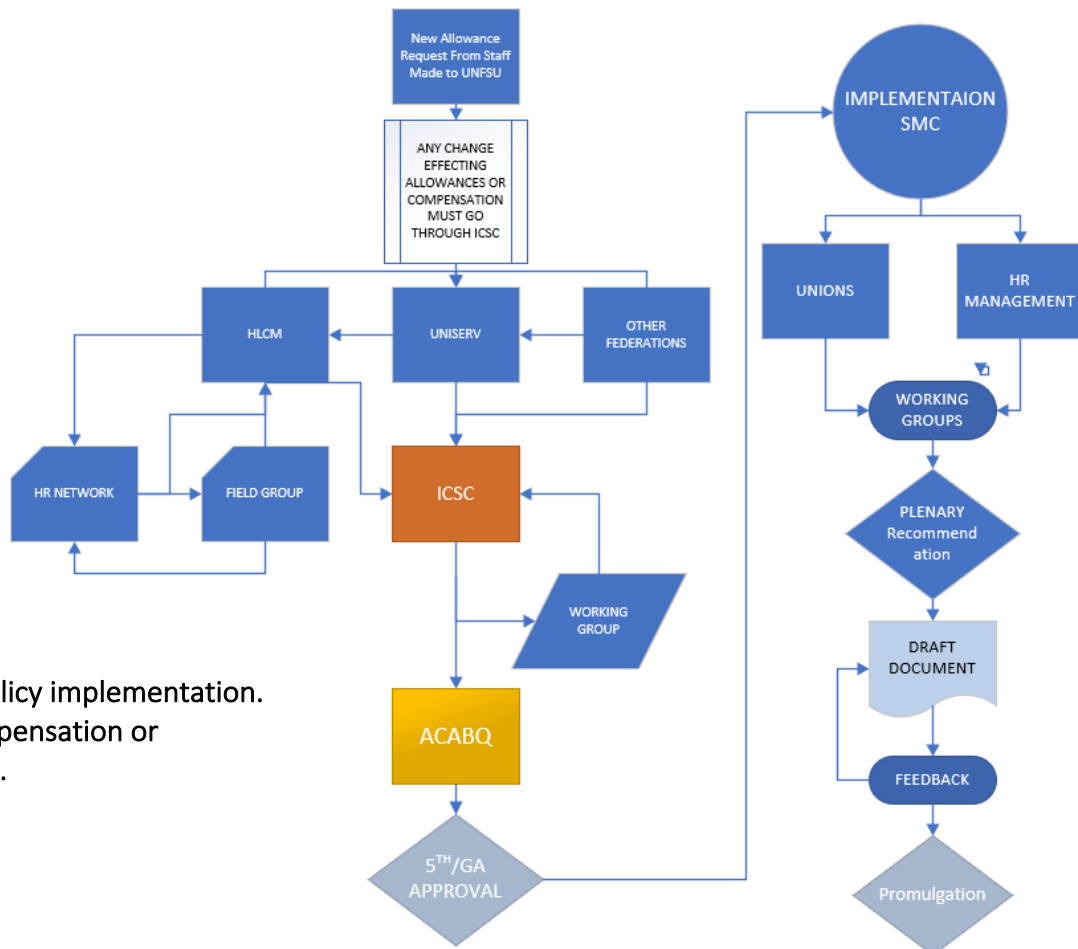
The post adjustment is adjusted every two or three years to reflect changes in the cost of living in a duty station and is adjusted following recommendations from staff surveys on the cost of living in a location.

Hardship Classification is a measure of how difficult an environment is to live in for an international civil servant, based on criteria such as isolation, access to medicine, security, and the environment.

Every duty station is classified on a scale:

H A B C D E **Note:** Missions classified as H & A do not qualify for hardship.

Staff are required to fill out forms about Post Adjustment and Hardship. The surveys obtain information on the cost of everyday goods and services. They allow the ICSC to get a picture of the cost of living in a given location. UNFSU strongly encourage staff to fill them out as honestly as possible when requested, as the Post Adjustment and Hardship Classification are based on the results from the surveys.



Process for new policy implementation. This involves a compensation or allowance element.

SMC is policy only.

VTC with USG DOS and ASG DMSPC

General

The USG DOS and ASG DMSPC unequivocally expressed appreciation for the questions provided by the UNFSU. They have reinforced areas in which they are already working and provided confirmation that they are concentrating on the appropriate areas of concern shared by the UNFSU. Except for MOUs and privileges, the USG DOS and ASG DMSPC are working to resolve all items highlighted in the questions.

Delegation of Authority

Question: How many staff have been laterally reassigned or recruited from Cosmos since the DOA and new structures came into effect, i.e. January 1, 2019? Can we have these figures broken down for the Political and PKO Missions? How many staff are now on the Cosmos list? Would you be willing to create greater transparency towards the list and the resultant actions related to it?

Question: Would it be possible to re-evaluate the Delegation for lateral reassignments back to the Department of Operational support's Human Resources Service Division? The aim being to prioritise the filling of vacant posts from suitable staff on the Cosmos list that have dedicated their lives to the UN and have had large sums of money invested in them by the organization.

Question: Can a dedicated team be created to assist with reassignments of staff who are downsized or lose their jobs due to Mission closure? Carrying this out centrally would help to ensure a global perspective on staffing and placement.

As of October 31, there are 354 staff member profiles on the downsizing list, 6 holding permanent contracts, 182 continuing contracts and 176 fixed-term appointments. There were 19 staff removed from the list between August and September. Maintenance of the Cosmos list was not within the remit of Operational Mission Support; however, they have continued to do so to provide maintenance to alleviate some transitional challenges faced by the organization this year. DMSPC have worked together to solve issues and will reflect upon this at next year's meeting. They have approved several requests for lateral moves, up to three per week and reviews carried out for all fixed-term appointments. However, Staff Reps should be realistic, as there are more staff than vacancies, therefore they are unable to make commitments about every post but supporting the affected staff will be a priority.

Gender

Question 1: Are there any new initiatives to ensure gender balance will be applied appropriately, with no discrimination towards any staff member? Would you consider the possibility to ensure that heads of entities' compacts are not negatively impacted through lateral reassignments for reasons of downsizing or closing down of missions in order to facilitate lateral transfers?

Staff commended for their continued engagement with and support for gender parity within the UN. This agenda will remain as one of the SG's most significant commitments. They are open to including gender as a holistic agenda item at the SMC meeting in April

Nationalization

Question: How does the organization harmonize these actions with principles of impartiality? Doesn't over nationalization contravene the UN Charter by weakening the international character and flavour of the UN and in particular in peacekeeping missions? In peacekeeping or post-conflict scenarios, what measures are

in place to reduce conflict of interest and ensure the security of national staff members against undue political or social pressure?

Politically, member states are very keen on nationalization. They have produced a set of timelines for the nationalization of about 70 posts and in some cases less than 40. However, nationalization does not necessarily come at the cost of international field staff and the USG DOS and ASG DMSPC are investigating a range of intervening factors including the labour market, supply of human resources, conflicts of interest and security. This topic is part of an ongoing discussion in New York between National Staff Union and the UN Staff Union.

Standardized Mission Support Structure

Question: What mechanisms are in place to ensure that Heads of Entities maintain and implement previously promulgated Mission Support Structures in line with guidelines on mission structure, realignment of functions etc. considering that the revised Delegation of Authority now rests with the Heads of Missions? And what oversight is provided to ensure that various functions are classified at the correct levels in the missions? What tools, if any are there to ensure compliance with issued directives and instructions? Are missions required to submit feedback in implementation and compliance to issued instructions?

The Classification Project is complete, and the Standardization Structures broadly followed, so going forward, the classification of posts will occur at the same time as the release of the budget, or at the time of post creation. Management will provide Heads of Missions with support structures, supply chain management, service delivery and operational discourse.

The organization is currently contemplating the Future of Work, to envision the type of workforce the UN will require over the next 25 years. The USG DOS and ASG DMSPC will revisit current structures, which formerly served the organization well, to ensure that both the overarching structure and staff profiles are appropriate for the organization's current and future requirements. The USG DOS and ASG DMSPC will inform the UNFSU on the progress. In the mid to long term future, the UN will require a full review of staff profiles. The structures of offices away from HQ and Regional Commissions require evaluation in the context of the new Delegation of Authority; some duty stations have already temporarily rearranged themselves to support the two structures in New York. This process is under continual review, but the UNFSU should be wary of making hasty requests regarding this process.

Transparency and timeliness of BOIs

Question: Would you support this idea and consider such a collaboration with the aim of enhancing transparency and foster trust in the process, as well as ensuring that recommendations from the BOI are considered for implementation?

The USG DOS and ASG DMSPC took into consideration the poor staff perception of BOIs, due to long delays in appointing and concluding them, the secrecy of the recommendations and the use of para-legal personnel in the process. The USG DOS emphasised that a BOI is not a disciplinary mechanism. He reminded the UNFSU that it is a management tool used to gauge proper adherence to processes, procedures and systems. He added; they function to provide recommendations for the Conduct and Disciplinary Unit, who then begin a disciplinary process, no discipline comes directly from the BOI.

Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and MoU's with host-nation

Question: What measures is the UN undertaking to safeguard the reputation of the organization and ensure that the privileges and immunities of UN officials carrying out their official duties are respected and observed by the various host nations?

This is done through the active and continual engagement between the organization and the Office of Legal Affairs; and furthermore, by taking member states' observation of privileges and immunities of the UN and its personnel seriously. Article 104 and 105 of the charter provide the legal basis for privileges and immunities. Wherever necessary, the organization will submit information on a matter to the permanent missions' government, notwithstanding the obligations of that government and serious cases elevated to the SG. Heads of Missions may or may not prioritize looking into individual cases and the UNFSU should inform USG DOS if there is a pattern of wayward behaviour.

Recruitment/ Downsizing

Question 1: In relation to the many posts advertised on Inspira, who is monitoring the Cosmos list for staff who are suitable to fill these vacancies? If no one, we recommend a small team be allocated to this role.

Question 2: Why do vacant posts get advertised when there are clearly qualified staff in the system who could be moved instead of losing their jobs?

Question 3: Wouldn't a return to the policy of 'rank in person' as opposed to the current 'rank in post' approach provide more scope for career advancement?

Question 4: Where are we now with the rosters and how they are going to be linked to the future mobility scheme? Besides, how are the rosters going to be managed? It is a must for an organization like ours to have a mobility system where staff who have spent years and years in duty stations D or E have the possibility to go to a H one. Family and personal conditions/ restrictions are applicable to everyone. We cannot have it used as a de facto mobility system, one for HQ staff moving floors up or down and a second one for the field workers moving from Somalia, to CAR and then on to Afghanistan.

Poor integration of FS staff into DSS. FS with many years' of service feel they were being passed over in favour of newly recruited junior P's with a university degree and little or no experience. USG DSS is aware and 'is looking into it'. More broadly, the whole FS category is being poorly treated or overlooked entirely.

Question 5: What can be done at USG level to assist in removing the glass ceiling between FS and P categories? The degree as a sole measure of suitability for a post, is now an outdated modality. If a staff member is a good performer, the UN is clearly missing out on encouraging career and staff development by not using a more modern approach.

The USG combined questions about Lateral Reassignment and Delegation to Heads of Missions, admitting that there are challenges regarding arrangements for lateral placement, as posts now belong to the Heads of Entities. Therefore, they are seeking mechanisms to approach this issue. The USG noted that Heads of Entities are not consistently following the procedure in some cases. The USG DOS and ASG DMSPC also acknowledged that the downsizing administrative instruction needs clarification and are late coming. In general, they sought UNFSU cooperation for the downsizing project.

Regarding maintenance of the rosters, USG DOS stated that he remained agnostic about who will carry out the task. He emphasized how the process should be end-to-end, i.e. the staff carrying out the lateral

assignments, should also have full visibility and carry out maintenance on the list. The USG DOS and ASG DMSPC support mechanisms for strengthening outside reassignment and reintegration of staff members, including a more generous termination indemnity for those who decline to participate in a comparative review process and want to leave, stating that this approach would resolve problems for both parties. The process will focus on the maintenance of the list, assistance with staff training including reintegration, indemnity and lateral reassignment.

Rosters are an urgent priority for the ASG; and requested staff keep them up to date as headquarters are indirectly using them. DOS and DPKO recently created P4 and P5 rosters, which now include names from all over the organization, including many staff with a mission background. The ASG highlighted; that varied experience in the field is a valuable asset in meeting the requirements for a Resident Coordinator post.

Regarding the FS category and the glass ceiling, as discussed with UNFSU in NY, there will be effort made to address this topic over the coming year and the new framework may be able to incorporate suggestions. There is lots of support and respect for the FS category, and the local staff members, they represent two-thirds of the workforce. They endeavour to fight to remove the G to P clause from the policy framework before the GA at the end of the year, noting that this would also positively impact FS category staff.

Benefits and Entitlements

Change to HL rules: *"Staff installed in duty stations classified as D and E that fall within the ICSC Rest and Recuperation Framework are entitled to home leave travel [only] once in every 24 months". [Source: [UNDP](#). The frequency is not in the Staff Rules but (UNSMIL) HR department confirmed this new rule]*

Question: Can you please confirm our understanding that R&R does not serve as a replacement for the purpose and intention of family / home leave particularly for staff who are a long way from their place of home leave?

We understand that staff in E duty stations can now choose not to install their families and claim a reduced non-family service allowance.

Question 2: Will the USG and ASG HR support the increasing use of this system for other hardship classifications such as D or even C?

Concerning hardship locations and home leave, there will be a comprehensive review of the compensation package, and UNFSU will be actively involved to ensure clear communication with the ICSC regarding the benefits and challenges of the new compensation package, that is no longer so new. The Compensation Package initially created for everyone, covers all of the field-oriented organizations, not just the Secretariat.

The USG recognized 'Home Leave' as a point of contention, due to the reduction of the 12-month cycle for most locations going forward. However, they reiterated that they want to work with the UNFSU and the three federations, to go solidly together and make a definite statement to ICSC about the challenges faced. We will also look at Non-Family Duty Stations and Family Duty Stations where the staff members cannot install their family members for reasons other than safety. The USG shares UNFSU concerns and is looking forward to working together in 2020, alongside the three federations, before the ICSC. The comprehensive review is unlikely to be finished next year, and unless we act quickly, they will remain unresolved approaching 2021. Therefore, it is crucial to put the issues, accompanied by examples, on the table promptly.

Mobility

Question: Could you provide us with an update about what is happening in relation to the mobility policy and how will this be applied across the UN Secretariat particularly considering the recently implemented management reforms?

Concerning mobility, the Mobility Framework is in progress but faces delays in further development and presentation to the GA due to two recent judgements. They will shortly hold a comprehensive discussion with the SG on the way forward and recommence the SMC working group on Mobility and The Staff Selection System. Mobility will be a crucial topic in 2020, and they look forward to working with the UNFSU on the issue within the UN Secretariat and between agencies. Furthermore, the Development Pillar has provided a different dimension within which to think about the mobility policy. The USG DOS requested respect towards all staff, discouraging differentiation between field staff and those in HQ; stating that, in his eyes, all staff are equal. The USG highlighted the importance of staff moving between multiple posts in the field and HQ in their career.

HRC Future of Work and Young UN

Question: Regarding Young UN's access to the CEB at a recent conference, it was asked whether the UNFSU could also have the same opportunity.

The USG clarified that Young UN's access to the CEB was a one-off, granted because YUN is the future of the organization and the SG is planning both for today and in 25 years. The three federations also attended and contributed to the one-day event which covered three main streams; 1) contractual arrangements 2) conditions of Service, engagement and staff development and 3) IT. However, they emphasized that this was a one-off session specifically looking at the Future of Work. The UNFSU will attend the spring session, and the USG looks forward to receiving input on the agenda going forward. The three co-leads require the information on field issues, to address the problems from the UNFSU, as they always consider those serving around the world.

After the VTC there was discussion where representatives gave their opinions on the response received and the Council agreed to formulate further questions that would be sent to USGDOS for further elaboration. See annex for this document.

Innovating Staff Representation

Representatives spoke of the need to innovate staff representation and ourselves as chairpersons and staff reps. A brainstorming session was held to explore ways in which we can get our constituents engaged, including organizing events to increase the profile of the UNFSU.

When asked what the Executive can do to support them on the ground, it was suggested to have the Executive;

- Send a reminder to the Mission/Entity management to support issues related to the staff and the staff representatives and the staff/management consultative mechanisms.
- Attend town hall meetings via VTC.
- Provide more support and guidance to the local committees and enhance engagement.
- Send out global broadcasts to highlight UNFSU accomplishments and encourage staff to take an interest in their representation.
- undertake field visits as and when deemed beneficial and practical.
- send a link to the UNFSU webpage to the staff and other public information outlets.

The Executive emphasized how crucial it is to have a good relationship with mission management as staff representatives. Management needs to see that staff reps are bringing added value. Representatives should employ emotional intelligence, integrity and accountability in their role.

It was highlighted that Staff reps are entitled to a reasonable amount of time to conduct staff management activities. Furthermore, they should pursue having dedicated office space, including modern communication technologies, to facilitate their work (if required). The Executive also agreed to bring up the issue of provision of office space and access to ICT facilities with the DMSs at their meetings with the Contact Group.

The need to create a communication strategy was tabled, referring to the previous council meeting in which it was agreed to form a working group on the topic. The representatives discussed the need for an intranet site using the new SharePoint Online available through “unite workspace” in addition to the public website already in existence and dedicating resources to public relations and communication through Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, etc. A proposal for bringing an additional staff member into the Executive to lead on communications strategies was also raised and would be pursued. The utilization of staff resources in the field was also discussed but deemed limited because staff also have their daily duties. It was proposed that the intranet/SharePoint internal communications site would be created with the aim to provide a resource of information for staff to all relevant elements related to the work of the UNFSU, staff rules & regulations, relevant jurisprudence, links to legal assistance etc. The Executive are aware that this may prove to be a challenge for a few Council members, but commit to providing support to ensure that everyone is able to make full use of the technology available.

Welfare

There was a discussion on the options for generating awareness around welfare-related issues. The need to participate in welfare activities was discussed. It was pointed out that staff union reps do not have a mandate for welfare activities; however, they are free to join, support or promote welfare committees and activities while maintaining a clear distinction between welfare activities and staff representation. Union reps are also free to serve in other mission activities and committees or make requests for welfare funds for events aimed at staff engagement. At this juncture, it was noted that if there are funds available or accounts in missions that are holding unions funds, that these funds should be held in the UNFSU central fund, as had been agreed many years ago when the UNFSU Council agreed to a centralized funding strategy.

The need to share committee meeting reports and use the “Unite Workspace” MS Teams channels for each respective mission for publication to the council and executive in order to create more visibility and share issues and solutions between the various committees in the missions was stressed. Reps should also consider holding social awareness events like tree planting, hospital visits, and other activities to enhance the visibility of the UNFSU and to be seen to be giving back and going beyond our routine duties. For example, in New York a Staff Day is organized annually and this is used to recognize staff and come together through various activities.

It was proposed and agreed to adopt 21 September as the annual UNFSU – Staff Day, to coincide with the International Day of Peace.

External Legal advice

In line with the USGs focus on the Future of Work, the UNFSU is also looking into innovative ways to represent staff most effectively. The Executive has identified some specific areas, which include changes to the constitution, engaging a law firm in redrafting it, in particular, issues related to the electoral process.

Representatives agreed that the UNFSU needs to have a clear, unambiguous constitution, so it may be prudent to use outside help. Monard Law, a legal firm based in Brussels, has been identified through LinkedIn networks, as they deal with international civil service and public administrative law, and they can provide expertise on a wide range of topics. They have EU and NATO among their clients. The firm have offered to carry out a constitutional review and a policy audit.

A 10 hour per month contract was suggested, at the cost of 2,500 euros to begin with. The agreement will be on a rolling basis, used as and when UNFSU requires legal services. A ceiling of 20,000 euros over the year was agreed upon and will be reviewed again at the next Council Meeting. A discussion regarding the use of in-house legal teams and the Office of Staff Legal Assistance instead of an external firm was tabled.

Representatives put to a motion hiring Monard following a vote; 16 were in favor, 2 not in favor and 1 representative abstained.

Promotional UNFSU materials

Representatives discussed the idea of giving out promotional UNFSU items to members in a welcome pack when they sign up as due paying members, to provide some visibility to UNFSU. Representatives discussed the spending limit for this activity. This idea included presenting members who have contributed for over 10/15/20 years with a minted coin.

Representatives unanimously agreed to grant \$10,000 to this project to be utilized at the discretion of the Executive for promotional purposes.

Collaboration with National Staff Associations/Strategic Partnerships

An extensive discussion was held on the ways to broaden the cooperation with other unions and federations; the National Staff Associations in particular. The aim being to empower them to organize themselves in a structured way. This would entail collaboration between the UNFSU chairs and their local Staff Association/Union counterparts. In missions where there is no National Staff representation, UNFSU representatives were encouraged to facilitate the creation of National Staff Associations.

Representatives raised concerns regarding the extent of the affiliation, however the Executive gave assurances that National Staff would not become a part of the UNFSU, nor be given voting rights within the UNFSU. Recognizing that many of the issues that staff face in the field affect both national and international staff alike, the affiliation would serve to strengthen staff representation in the field, closer collaboration could therefore be of benefit for all staff, the Chair said.

Representatives agreed to the UNFSU Executive pursuing closer cooperation and collaboration with National Staff unions in the field, starting with securing the names of the National Staff reps in their respective missions.

Mission Specific

Recruitment and Downsizing

Since 1 Jan 2019, the Heads of Entity received full recruitment delegation and the delegation for lateral reassignment of staff who are affected by downsizing or mission closures was removed from the USG DOS. However, Heads of Entity are only encouraged to recruit from Cosmos with the USG DMSPC providing oversight and compliance. Furthermore, lateral reassignments are now open across the various Secretariat entities, following the recent reforms, possibly including the Resident Coordinators' structures. The impact of this is especially significant, considering the current climate of downsizing and mission closure. Representatives were strongly concerned about compliance with recruitment policies and fairness/transparency in the use of JO's/TJO's/PJSO's and the potential for existing staff facing down-sizing to be overlooked.

UNFSU explained that staff on the Cosmos list should be given priority in recruitment. Should the list not feature suitable candidates then Heads of Entities can consult the roster and recruit from there. However, **UNIOGBIS** stated that staff are worried about the time it is taking to put everyone into Cosmos. Furthermore, **UNAMID** and **UNMOGIP** raised concerns around discrepancies in the recruitment process including, but not limited to, tweaking of job titles for PSJOs, informal agreements, rule-bending, loopholes etc. Staff Representatives should monitor the recruitment process and provide evidence of non-compliance where possible to enhance accountability, although this is not currently possible due to the confidential and opaque nature of the system. Furthermore, representatives should encourage all staff to help themselves and apply to all relevant vacancies when faced with downsizing, which is in fact a prerequisite if they are to be considered from the Cosmos list for placement against vacant posts.

The Council agreed to request that delegation of authority for Lateral Assignments for staff affected by downsizing be returned to the USG DOS with adequate resources to manage this. The Council drafted and transmitted a resolution to the USG DMSPC and USG DOS to that effect. The resolution is attached to this report as Annex A.

UNFSU mentioned that the GSDM proposal incorporated text stating that resources should be set aside for termination indemnity, which suggests a shift in the organizational approach to downsizing. UNFSU briefed the Council on the status of development of a policy on downsizing following an SMC agreement back in 2016. It was highlighted that finalization of the policy is still pending 3 years after the SMC agreement was reached. Recent developments related to a new draft of the ST/AI has disillusioned many Union Members of the SMC because the latest draft significantly departs from a previous draft in which the language was clear and unambiguous on various aspects of policy implementation. UNFSU criticized the new document for failing to incorporate staff concerns sufficiently; consequently, negotiations related to the establishment of a policy on downsizing will continue. UNFSU highlighted that for the time being it will be important for mission UNFSU committees to ensure that, when a downsizing of mission closure is to take

place, Department of Field Services (DFS) guidelines related to downsizing are followed and that UNFSU staff representatives review and agree with management on the application of the guidelines including tie-breakers etc. Ensuring that Comparative Review Panels (CRPs) are established and that the reviews are carried out transparently and fairly, with FSU committee involvement. UNFSU encourages committees to seek agreement with mission leadership on proposing agreed termination packages with enhancements when downsizing is to take place in the mission as a measure to allow those staff that wish to exit the system to do so with enhanced benefits. UNFSU indicated that it will pursue such approaches as part of other negotiations on the policy on downsizing.

Delegation of Authority

Many representatives highlighted a perceived lack of transparency in recruitment practices in particular in relation to the new Delegation of Authority, as evidenced by increased usage of PSJO's and TJO's rather than recruitment from existing rosters. The representatives agreed that the Delegation of Authority is affecting missions. Currently, some missions are taking austerity measures because of reduced budgets, cuts to funding and the nationalization of posts, reducing the number of international staff. Representatives highlighted the substantial utilization of national staff wherever possible and identified the excessive time taken in the recruitment process as a root cause for a lack of accountability and transparency. Representatives concurred that there is currently little definitive evidence on whether delegated authority plays out positively or negatively on the ground. UNFSU President requested that representatives put specific cases of non-compliance with recruitment and placement policies forward, so they can be highlighted in order to ensure accountability is exercised.

UNMOGIP stated the new Delegation of Authority is still not clear and raised concerns regarding sole responsibility lying with the Heads of Entities. There were specific concerns regarding the lack of delegation to Subject Matter Experts and the significant power held by the DMS/CMS rather than the Heads of Entity as instructed by HQ. **UNGSC** concurred with these concerns, suggesting there should be more oversight from HQ to monitor processes or they risk hindering recruitment. **UNGSC** stated that recruitment KPIs were issued, but have not necessarily been followed, making it challenging to monitor non-compliance and obscuring HRs role. Compliance, monitoring of exceptions and conflict of interest should be documented, as stipulated in the SG Delegation of Authority guidelines. Furthermore, concerns were raised regarding national staff taking recruitment into their own hands, against protocol. These concerns were shared among other representatives, who were concerned that handing over all power to missions was problematic and sometimes resulted in a lack of benchmarks and possible nepotism or even corruption. **UNAMA** summed up the widely held opinion of the Delegation of Authority, stating that staff agree on the overarching principles of it however need to ensure that it is not abused.

Rosters

Representatives reported a poor perception of the rostering process for a variety of reasons. One of the most prominent was the perceived lack of transparency about rosters and recruitment in general. **UNIOGBIS**, **UNMISS** and **MONUSCO** stated that staff had reported the process as unclear and many long-serving staff members are failing to get onto some rosters after failing the examinations. Staff are unclear why they are failing despite having held posts for substantial periods of time. Furthermore, **UNAMID** had concerns regarding the fairness of the roster exams and about the number of staff failing to get onto rosters, having received many complaints from staff, claiming the exams contained targeted exam questions to favor particular individuals.

UNAMID and **MONUSCO** also stated that there are rumors that they will cut posts and then reinstate them, with alternative personnel. Furthermore, staff are having problems accessing the Cosmos list. However, **UNDOF**, along with other representatives, admitted that there are cases of people not

performing their job functions, which may provide another explanation for the failure to get onto rosters. **UNAMA** added that the roster exams do not reflect job level accurately, sometimes people can get onto a higher-level roster and fail the lower assessments. If a staff has been rostered at a higher-level position, they should be considered cleared for a lower level position of the same function e.g. a staff rostered for Political Affairs Officer P5, should be considered cleared for Political Affairs Officer P-4. **UNAMA** also raised the issue of the multiple-choice sections of the roster exams, for which staff sometimes are required to prepare for from stipulated manuals; however, the examinations did not contain material from the manual resulting in many candidates failing. Furthermore, the methodology and correction criteria/answer schemes are many times not clear. The use of psychometric tests was also discussed. For example, the general administrative test for GS level should be about reading and writing, but now the test has become overly complicated. Representatives agreed that staff should receive prior information on the exact type of test they will receive so that they can prepare for it. There were concerns from **UNMIK** regarding cheating on roster examinations and that HR failed to provide comprehensive rules for examination procedure.

UNMISS and **UNISFA** conveyed staff concerns regarding mobility for staff who failed to get onto rosters, staff subsequently requested more rostering opportunities. **UNGSC** suggested that mission recruitment is not using rosters as intended. Management is engaging HR to identify bottlenecks as recruitment times are sometimes taking over a year. Furthermore, the use, and misuse, of TJOs in the context of downsizing was mentioned. **UNSMIL** added that some long-serving UNVs and contract staff are possibly being used as a cheap labor force. Finally, **UNFSU** stated their support for exploring avenues to innovate recruitment practices to make it more objective, remove biases by for instance removing all information related to gender, age, nationality etc., there remains a requirement to address bottlenecks which could be achieved through innovative technologies. To conclude, **UNFSU** affirmed they would investigate the rostering and recruitment process, to try and ascertain some more transparency for staff.

Continuous Contracts

UNSMIL stated that there are delays of more than four years in awarding the continuous contracts and staff find this unacceptable. **UNMIK** asked how many permanent contracts are available and at what level? **UNIFIL** responded, notifying that there are fewer contracts than eligible personnel, so continuous contracts are undoubtedly competitive. **UNFSU** reiterated that continuous contracts are very few and, over the past few years, most of the Continuous Contracts have gone to staff in the field. In conclusion, management is working on this topic, and as soon as there is an update, **UNFSU** members will be informed.

FS to P mobility

UNFSU stated that the efforts to lift the G to P requirements has broad support from both management as well as all unions, lifting of these requirements would also positively affect staff in the FS category. Meanwhile senior leadership had openly stated that they support the notion of FS-5 levels to be equated to P2 levels. **UNFSU** noted that of recent there are more P2 posts being created in the field; while traditionally, the P2 level positions have mainly been reserved for YPP, a possible movement of FS-5 to P2 level functions could further provide opportunities for FS staff. Having said that it was highlighted that a reform of the Field Service Category while mandated by the GA is yet to materialize. **UNFSU** stated that the requirement for the FS category of staff who's premise is that it is a highly mobile and rapidly deployable civilian capacity that can move fast and help set up missions, close down mission and support with emergency operations, is still in line with the current needs of the organization. **UNSMIL** reported concerns that existing staff in DSS are facing career growth challenges as new positions are being created at higher categories and many of them with numerous years of experience are being overlooked for the posts in favour of younger more educated officers.

Entitlements

UNAMA requested shortening the current 6-week R&R cycle to four weeks in light of the serious deterioration of the security environment. The issue of the long service awards was also discussed, in terms of the delay in establishing who were due the certificates and for what periods of service. **UNMOGIP** explained that the mission was recently reassigned as a family mission, therefore staff are curious about their entitlement to installation grants for their dependents; stating that there is confusion between ICSC and New York position on this issue. **UNIFIL** added that some UN compensation packages had indeed been miscalculated, and the method for calculating post adjustment is currently being reviewed, with various inputs. **UNSOS/UNSOM** mentioned issues regarding flights out of Mogadishu, and the inconvenience staff are facing due to the frequent breakdown of the aircraft, resulting in staff having to fund costs related to overnighing in Nairobi. An administrative instruction was Staff are reportedly filing a case about this via the ombudsman. **MONUSCO** added that staff have problems which vary region to region, so R&R varies between Kinshasa and Goma based on the levels of danger. The staff have complained that travel times are very long, and that they require adjustment to their travel day to accommodate this. **UNMIK** asked how Umoja will handle local staff entitlements for those working internationally, relating to concerns from **UNSMIL** regarding the use of UNVs and contract staff throughout the UN, who are working internationally without entitlements.

In the case of **UNSOS/UNSOM UNFSU** stated that staff should be compensated. With respect to R&R, UNFSU reiterated that it is currently not on the table for review as the policy was recently updated. Regarding MONUSCO, it was stated that if there is a rapid change in mission circumstances, the hardship methodology will be removed, and an emergency classification will occur. The only foreseen changes to entitlements are to stabilize post adjustment.

Gender

Representatives discussed the gender parity policy in relation to the recruitment process. Issues were raised from **UNGSC** and **UNAMID** regarding the fair use of this policy. **UNMIK** suggested that the UNFSU could campaign to not disclose candidate's nationality, gender, sex and age up until interview stage.

Sexual exploitation and abuse

UNAMA expressed concerns surrounding the new Sexual Exploitation Policy, specifically 'the assumption of guilt'. Staff have requested clarification on the Clear Check Database, which is a list of confirmed sexual predators and is maintained by the CEB. **UNAMA** questioned the fairness of the list, which also includes *alleged* offenders, therefore contradicting the notion of *innocent until proven guilty*. **UNFSU** asked to be given specific details offline, to follow up.

Welfare and medical

UNMOGIP and **UNIFIL** raised general concerns regarding the state of staff health on missions. Ongoing physical and psychological health conditions, such as PTSD were discussed among the representatives. **UNAMI** raised a request for provisions to get staff out of a mission, to a more relaxing environment, following a severe medical incident, such as a heart attack or stroke. **UNFSU** explained that most issues are managed on a case by case basis and efforts have been made by the Medical Service Division to address more general concerns. Projects such as e-health modalities and mental health support are in the pipeline to provide help for issues such as PTSD. **UNFSU** promised to monitor these developments and to follow up with the director of Health-Care Management and Occupational Safety & Health Division.

Pensions and retirement

UNSMIL informed representatives that there is a presentation on retirement available in the UNFSU SharePoint folder. UNFSU recently met with the CEO of the pension fund and was informed that, over the last six months, the performance of the fund has improved and staff who separated on retirement received their pension benefits within the timeframe set by current benchmarks.

UNAMI had concerns regarding retirement age for Close Protection Security Officers; a particularly physically demanding line of work, where people lose capacity with age. In 2014, the CPOC was introduced, a certification in which security personnel attend an expensive and extremely tough “boot camp” which is often beyond the capacity of older staff members. Indeed, military/special forces-style physical tests are largely irrelevant to close-protection officers who are expected to use their experience to avoid armed or physical confrontations. Staff have reported threats of contract termination upon failing the course. UNFSU requested the matter be put forward in writing to the Executive for further examination and follow up.

MONUSCO asked about early termination due to downsizing, for example would staff members be eligible to get their contributions back if they served for under five years? UNFSU stated that this issue would be re-raised with the pension board.

Investigations

Representatives discussed staff concerns about Boards of Inquiry and investigations in general which are conducted confidentially (secretly) and therefore lack transparency and so are poorly received by staff. The perceived lack of transparency and the reports not being made public raised issues around accountability. Concerns regarding BOIs and investigation procedures were highlighted by **UNMOGIP**, suggesting that some missions have appointed staff to act as investigators that occasionally make dubious recommendations or proposals. FSU representatives requested that this role be given only to authorized staff with appropriate skills to conduct investigations. **UNSMIL** added that only DSS Special Investigation Unit (SIU) officers were authorized to carry out investigations (flying into missions that don’t have an SIU officer if necessary) and conduct training for appointed staff to ensure legal compliance and transparency. **UNFSU** stated that, while it is beyond the Staff Union’s remit to challenge the choice of staff appointed to a Bol, they agreed that investigations ahead of Bols *must* adhere to extant rules and regulations. To overcome the near-universal perceptions that Bols were opaque and justice was rarely seen to be done, **UNSMIL** proposed that, UNFSU committees could play an important role in sighting the terms of reference for inquiries, observing their conduct and receiving the overarching recommendations flowing from boards of inquiry.

Security

UNIFIL stated that, despite the mission being classified as a family mission, there are current risks to staff and their families and schools have been closed for the past 5 to 6 weeks due to major unrest in Lebanon. Staff requests for an education grant to send children to schools outside of Beirut were raised. **UNAMID** expressed concerns that UN compounds were increasingly becoming targets for violence. **UNAMI** explained that each region has a security risk assessment, and the results of this determine the level of danger in each area.

Conclusion

The climate in the UN is currently characterized by downsizing and austerity and representatives brought forward staff concerns regarding job security and recruitment. The recent Delegation of Authority has granted head of entities an enhanced level of oversight on recruitment, resulting in staff concerns about compliance with recruitment policies, the scarce number of continuous contracts and transparency in rostering and examinations.

- Representatives put together a resolution to address these issues, which was submitted to the office of the USG DOS and ASG DMSPC (see annex).
- UNFSU promised an ongoing commitment to monitor the rostering and recruitment process, to ensure transparency for staff. UNFSU will update representatives on the status of continuous contracts.
- Regarding entitlements, UNFSU can confirm that R&R was recently updated and is therefore not up for review by management. The only foreseen changes to entitlements relate to the stabilization of the post adjustment.
- The pension fund is healthy and stable, and the UNFSU will raise the idea of early pension termination due to downsizing with the pension board.
- UNFSU agreed that investigations must properly adhere to rules and regulations regarding investigations and BOIs and should be more transparent. The UNFSU will look to improve staff perceptions by seeking access to recommendations and Terms of Reference as well as monitoring inquiries.
- UNFSU stated that the Health-Care Management and Occupational Safety & Health Division has made efforts to address general medical concerns in the field and e-health modalities are in the pipeline to provide help for issues such as PTSD. UNFSU promise to monitor developments and to follow up with the Director.
- UNFSU stated that other issues relating to gender, sexual exploitation and security will be managed on a case by case basis alongside mission representatives.

Financial report

The budget for the next financial year was presented to the representatives. The projections did not factor in hiring legal aid, as was discussed during the innovation of staff representation session. Most expenditure is travel-related as the Executive plan to attend several meetings in the coming year to raise the UNFSU's profile. The budget was put together based on the meetings hypothetically being held in New York, as a worst-financial-case scenario. The Executive confirmed that their travel plans always adhere to the standard UN rules and regulations regarding flights and allowances. Refer to paragraph 17, note 4 of the Annex to the UNFSU constitution.

The Executive will attend the following meetings; the SMC, where two executives are paid for and the UNFSU will pay for the other member of the Executive. Three additional days in New York was also factored into this trip, in order to hold some bilateral meetings. In total, the trip is projected to cost around \$7,800. The Executive will also attend the UNISERV meeting, an ICSC meeting in July with UNISERV, and a high-level HRCM meeting to be held somewhere in the EU. They will also participate in the tripartite hardship and post-adjustment meetings. The interagency management network will be attended, along with another UNISERV meeting and a parental leave UNISERV meeting. UNFSU emphasized the crucial importance of having UNFSU representation at these meetings; at which management will decide upon funds and entitlements.

The budget also includes UNISERV membership, which is \$2000 per year, explaining that individual unions pay for travel. UNISERV is currently representing the entire cluster of unions who each pay for a representative to attend UNISERV meetings.

The existing annual budget totaled \$133,781, and so far, less than half has been spent. The representatives queried the necessity of all three members of the Executive attending meetings. Following the discussion, it was concluded that the benefits of having all three Executive representatives attending the meetings would outweigh the financial costs.

Representatives gave their support to the Executive regarding the budget for 2020 going forward and the financial report for 2019 was also approved.

VTC with Mr. Robert Powell, UNFSU Treasurer

The current Treasurer congratulated the new team, confirming that the financial status of the Union is healthy and has been continuously improving over the past decade. UNFSU saw a net increase in income due to a reduction in travel. Total revenue for the past year was \$230,000. However, the Treasurer also mentioned that a significant proportion of UNFSU members are not paying voluntary contributions.

Representatives discussed the idea to raise the minimum amount for contributions, ultimately deciding to focus on encouraging staff to sign up instead. Representatives discussed bringing members of the Executive to the missions, to introduce themselves, take onboard staff concerns and generate support for UNFSU. Representatives concurred to that proposal.

The election of the new treasurer was discussed, and it was agreed among the Council members to keep the current Treasurer, Robert Powell and there was a unanimous vote to elect Navdeep Singh as the new Vice Treasurer.

Contact Group membership

The SMC Contact group, is made up of Union representatives, elected by the SMC members. Despite no longer being an elected Staff representative, the outgoing UNFSU Vice President, Mr. Mohammed Helal, continues to serve on the group. It was therefore expected that he would step down from this position, however he maintains that he was elected to the group on his own merit and not as a result of being a staff representative and consequently believes he is not required to step down.

After seeking legal opinions regarding the policies related to this issue (ST/AI/2014/3 and ST/SGB/2011/6/rev1). The logical application holds that if Mr. Helal had not been an UNFSU staff rep, he would not have been eligible to be part of the Contact Group. The Executive explained that they had requested Mr. Helal to step down from the contact group in person and by email but never received a response. The Executive also approached the President of the SMC for his opinion, but he advised the unions to handle the matter internally between the SMC Members from the staff side.

The UNFSU deems it inappropriate for Mr. Helal to participate in this forum, because he is operating out of mandate and without the UNFSU's support. Representatives discussed Mr. Helal's forceful self-representation on the Contact Group and could not ascertain whose interest he is representing in his existing capacity. There were also concerns that this situation could damage on the overall credibility of the UNFSU.

The Executive proposed formulating a clear statement by the Council, unequivocally expressing their lack of support for Mr. Helal's presence on the group. Following further Council deliberation, a motion was put forward to grant support to the Executive to seek his removal from the contact group.

A motion was put forward to support to the Executive in writing to the Contact Group to confirm that UNFSU representatives agreed upon Mr. Helal's removal from all SMC and Contact Group bodies. All representatives voted unanimously in favor of this motion.

Closing Statement

The UNFSU Executive thanked all representatives for their involvement and cooperation in the meeting throughout the week. Representatives were praised for their collaboration with staff and encouraged to continue their good work in the field. Representatives were encouraged to build upon the networks created at the meeting to help address their challenges and noting that the Executive Team would also stand by to provide assistance as needed.

Date and Venue for next Council meeting

Representatives put forward Kosovo, Entebbe and Brindisi as possible locations. The Executive agreed to do a cost-benefit analysis regarding travel costs to ascertain which location would be most convenient and cost effective. The next meeting will be held October 5-9th 2020.

The meeting was closed on Friday 29 November 2019 at 16:00hrs.



United Nations Field Staff Union Council

Resolution of the UNFSU FSC-XXVIII November 2019

Mobility

1. The United Nations' role is *"to maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international (and increasingly national) disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace"*. We do this in large part by serving in fragile, war-torn or post-conflict locations. This is reflected by the high proportion of the UN serving in hardship settings.
2. The UNFSU expresses its concerns that service in hardship duty locations is not shared equally across the UN Secretariat. There is a clear lack of mobility as reflected by the prolonged periods of time spent by some staff in hardship duty stations. This is detrimental to the Organisation, the wellbeing and overall health of staff in hardship locations and their dependents.
3. In support of the Secretary General's aim for full mobility and a fully adaptable workforce and on behalf of international field staff, the UNFSU calls for:
 - a. the implementation of the Secretary General's aims on full mobility for all United Nations international staff, by 1 January 2021;
 - b. the equitable rotation of staff across the organisation through both hardship and non-hardship locations.

Mark Polane, UNFSU President;

On behalf of the United Nations Field Staff Union Council.





United Nations Field Staff Union Council

Resolution of the UNFSU FSC-XXVIII November 2019

Delegation of Authority for Lateral Reassignment

1. Noting the impact of downsizing and Mission closures and the resultant loss of jobs, talent and experience across the United Nations. The UNFSU expresses concerns for the recent removal of the authority of the Under-Secretary General, Department of Operational Support's (DOS) in regard to the authority to laterally reassign staff affected by downsizing and Mission closures.
2. The UNFSU calls for:
 - a. The reinstatement of the USG DOS' authority for placement and lateral reassignment of staff affected by mission closures and downsizing;
 - b. The mandatory prioritization of internal candidates affected by mission closures and downsizing for all vacant or new posts in the UN, with immediate effect.
 - c. Sufficient resources to be allocated to allow for effective implementation of these responsibilities.

Mark Polane, UNFSU President;

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Polane', is written over a horizontal line.

On behalf of the United Nations Field Staff Union Council.



- Questions on UNFSU Issues of Concern –

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Delegation of Authority

Since delegating authority to Heads of Entities (HoE) vide ST SGB/2019/2:

1. What mechanisms are in place to ensure compliance with extant UN policies in particular on recruitment ([ST/AI/2006/3/REV.1](#) and [ST/AI/2010/3.](#)), gender (ST/AI/1999/9) and transparency in the use of JOs, TJOs and PJSOs rather than GJOs or lateral reassignment of staff affected by downsizing and mission closure and what are the corresponding reporting mechanisms?.
2. In cases where regular policy on recruitment has not been strictly followed, what mechanisms are in place to ensure that the justifications provided are valid/sustainable?
3. When do your Offices expect to see measures related to audit and oversight/control mechanism under the aforementioned ST/GB in place to mitigate the misuse of the Delegation of Authority, in instances like the extended use of TJOs?

Standardized Mission Support Structure

Several developments have taken place in the field missions since the implementation of Umoja, the delegation of authority policy and other related factors. These include the introduction of a new and standardized field support structure without any changes in newly introduced functions. These changes have created significant confusion and anxiety among staff members without any indication from DOS on reclassifying staff members in existing posts to match the revised job descriptions. Some of the latter may also require entirely new job codes.

4. What mechanisms are in place to ensure that Heads of Entities maintain and implement previously promulgated Mission Support Structures in line with guidelines on mission structure, realignment of functions etc. considering that the revised Delegation of Authority now rests with the Heads of Entities (HoE)?

5. What oversight is provided to ensure that various functions are classified at the correct levels in the missions?

COSMOS/ Horizon List

6. What potential is there for reevaluating the decision to delegate authority for lateral reassignments? We recommend a dedicated team be created to assist with prioritizing the lateral reassignments of staff affected who are downsized or lose their jobs due to by Mission downsizing or closure. This team can be tasked to ensure that staff are recruited off the COSMOS/ Horizon list to fill vacant posts.

The aim being to make it even more effective to ensure vacant posts can be filled from suitable staff from the COSMOS/Horizon list that have dedicated their lives to the UN and have had large sums of money invested in them by the organization.

Recruitment/ Downsizing

Increasing budgetary pressures will result in the loss of jobs for serving UN staff members:

7. What can be done to increase the selection of internal candidates from COSMOS/RfR rather than using PSJOs, TJOs for long periods or the hiring of external candidates? We request that specific measures be put in place to ensure that Heads of Entities prioritize the selection of internal candidates affected by mission closures and downsizing, for example by including in this requirement in the compacts of HoE.
8. Vacant posts get advertised when there are clearly qualified staff in the system who could be moved instead of losing their jobs. To minimize increasing job insecurity, what is HQ doing to encourage the retention of skilled staff members rather than recruiting external candidates?
9. Where are we now with the rosters and how they are going to be linked to the future mobility scheme? Will rosters continue to play a role in filling vacancies and, if so, how are they going to be managed? What measures are or can be put into place to ensure transparency in the 'Recruit from Roster' process and mitigate having it watered down?
10. The rostering exercise is very time consuming for the organization and causes anxiety among staff. What measures are being undertaken to ensure the validity and appropriate life span of rosters? Furthermore, will staff rostered at a higher level be able to be considered for lower level posts with the same function e.g. P-5 level be able to be considered for P-4 posts of the same function?
11. Noting the recruitment of academically qualified staff to professional grade positions at the expense of long serving and highly experienced Field Service grade staff, what is being done to remove the 'glass ceiling' between FS and P categories?
12. What is the plan for GJOs exercises be held for some functions from FS-3 and above such as: Aviation, MovCon, Transport, Admin, etc. to help staff to be rostered?

Gender

13. Gender parity is important, which is why the organization has been enforcing the principle of positive discrimination to achieve it. However, in the view of the UNFSU, the principle has been and continues to be imbalanced. What mechanisms therefore are in place to mitigate this and ensure that gender parity is fairly and realistically enforced without undermining the Organization's Charter as it pertains to Article 1 point 3 and glass ceilings are not concomitantly set for male staff as a result?

Benefits and Entitlements

14. Staff in E duty stations classified as "Family Duty stations" can now choose not to install their families and claim a reduced non-family service allowance. Can this arrangement be extended to other hardship classifications such as D or even C and how soon can guidance to this effect be disseminated to the applicable entities?

Termination Packages ("golden handshakes")

15. Noting the current budgetary pressures on the organization, what are your thoughts on redundancy packages for:
 - a. staff close to retirement age and willing to leave the organization?
 - b. selected categories of staff for which there is an oversupply?

Mobility

16. Could you provide us with an update about what is happening in relation to the mobility policy and how will this be applied to all UN staff, particularly considering the recently implemented management reforms?
17. When can we expect to have a mobility scheme in place across all Secretariat entities based on harmonized conditions of service?

Staff / FSU and management relations; transparency

18. Many Missions do not consult with staff representatives or do not do so 'in good faith' on issues such as post reclassification, creation of new posts, mission restructuring, nationalization of posts, boards of inquiry, work conditions, etc. This is not only contrary

to established rules and precedents¹ but also increases the opacity of management decisions while decreasing the trust in the Organization and weakening its ability to maximize its effectiveness, particularly in times of budget austerity. How do your Offices intend to work with the staff unions in the coming future?

19. We request that concrete action is taken to reinforce the intent and spirit of the USG DFS (as he was then) code cable of 24 January 2018 on the subject of staff-management engagement, in particular to increase the ability to resolve issues in a timely manner at the local level rather than through formal complaint mechanisms and to share information leading to more satisfied and more dedicated staff. What do your Office intend to do in this regard?

Continuing Appointments

20. Some staff who qualify for continuing appoints are missing the opportunity due to review²s. We request that missions are advised of the qualifying criteria and that PAs are reviewed annually.

¹ General Assembly Resolution 590-VI (1952) Article VIII; Staff Regulation 8.1 (f); Article 2.2.b. of the 2017 International Field Staff Unison FSU Constitution; the USG's own code cable of 24 Jan 2018 on the subject of Staff-Management Engagement in Field Missions; international norms on freedom of information