

ILO STAFF UNION

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SECOND SESSION

31 October 2002

Report of the Board of the Staff Assistance Fund **of the Staff Union for the period 1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002**

Purpose, contributions and assistance offered

The Staff Union Assistance Fund's purpose is to provide financial assistance in case of need to members of the staff of the ILO and their families. The term *staff member* refers to any person who is, or has been, employed by the ILO in any capacity or at any duty station. The Fund is largely financed by the generosity of serving officials making donations on a regular basis.

By the beginning of 2002, the number of contributors to the Fund had gone down to 62, the majority of them long-serving officials. The need had become urgent that young staff members, recruited recently, join the Fund. So it was that in spring this year, a *ASUAF Day* was organized which enabled the number of contributors to be almost doubled, so that they now number 120 in total. Thanks to the generosity of colleagues, allied to a wise investment policy, the financial situation of the Fund remains healthy.

Our assistance to serving officials normally takes the form of interest-free loans granted to those who find themselves in genuine financial difficulties due to special circumstances, which at times are dramatic. In the case of retired officials, *once-only* grants have been the usual means of assistance; in exceptional cases grants have also been made to serving officials and loans to retirees. Finally, a monthly allowance is made to a *small* number of older retired colleagues who, for one reason or another, receive very low pensions.

Statutory requirements and the Board's policy

All requests to the Fund for assistance are carefully considered by the Board as a whole, which meets regularly to discuss more complicated cases and matters of principle arising from them. In every case, Board members scrupulously apply the central statutory criterion for assistance - that of need (see Appendix I, paragraph 2, of

the Staff Union Rules). Apart from certain exceptional cases where need has been clearly demonstrated, therefore, assistance is not normally given to colleagues wishing to buy a house or car, or pay for private education for their children, or visit family members living abroad. Normally,

evidence of need is required. Where assistance is given, this will almost always take the form of a loan, and care will be taken to ensure that repayment is within the colleague's means and that it will have been completed before expiry of the current contract.

These formalities are the result of the Board's cumulative experience, stemming also from a conviction that the Fund owes it to those who finance it to err on the side of caution. The Board is convinced that the criterion of need, as at present defined, is essential to the effective and fair running of the Fund. This conviction was endorsed by the 1994 Annual General Meeting of the Staff Union.

This being so, the Board wishes to use the present report to emphasize how important it is that colleagues who are able to do so give reasonable notice of their request for assistance. While such notice is obviously not practical where an emergency has arisen, there are cases where need can be anticipated - for example, if an official has made advance arrangements for costly medical treatment outside the duty station.

The Board is therefore unhappy about being presented with a *fait accompli* by colleagues whose plans are already well advanced and who could have made the request in good time. Since the request will always be considered on its merits and in accordance with the established criteria, it is in any case in the applicant's own interest to ensure that the Board receives it as early as possible.

The Board is fully aware of, for example, the practical difficulties caused by unavailability of hard currency in some duty stations, and the obstacles to obtaining credit in others. However, the Fund is not - and its statutes do not permit it to be seen as - a bank. The Board therefore continues to hope that staff outside headquarters will one day at last be able to avail themselves of the loan facilities of the International Civil Servants' Mutual Association (MEC).

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the colleagues who, by making regular contributions or one-off donations, allow the Fund to exist. The number of people who donate fees for lectures or interviews or who request colleagues to make a donation to the Fund instead of a farewell gift is increasing, and we encourage others to do the same.

Thanks are due to our colleagues in the Finance Department and to their counterparts in external offices who process loans to the field - sometimes a complicated task. The Board is convinced that efforts to streamline the current procedures will come to fruition in the near future.

As in previous years, the Board has closely cooperated with the Staff Counsellor, Renata Navarro, and with the Former Officials=Section on a number of cases, and together we have arrived at practical and satisfactory solutions. Alas, the same cannot always be said of some directors of external offices who show an apparent aversion to answering the Board's correspondence.

Membership of the Board

Over the reporting period, membership of the Board was as follows:

Hazel Bennett (Treasurer)
Liliana Canadas
Martine Dehaene
Mike Gautrey
Pierre Sayour

The Staff Union Assistance Fund is run for staff by staff and every little helps the Fund to build up a sizeable enough sum to be a real help to those in need. Contributions are calculated on the basis of parts per thousand of net monthly salary: it is for you to decide how much you wish to pledge each month. As a guide, one part per thousand represents about 6 Swiss francs for a G.3 at headquarters and 9 Swiss francs for a P.3. *Please join the effort - it doesn't cost much.*

FONDS D'ENTRAIDE DU SYNDICAT DU PERSONNEL DU BIT

1. Trésorier du Fonds d'entraide
2. PAIE

Autorisation de déduction sur salaire

Je soussigné(e):

Nom: _____ Prénom: _____ No _ Pers.: _____

Service: _____ Lieu d'affectation: _____

autorise le BIT _ effectuer une retenue de _/oo de mon traitement net (salaire de base plus l'ajustement de poste), au titre de contribution volontaire au Fonds d'entraide du Syndicat du personnel du BIT.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

ILO STAFF UNION ASSISTANCE FUND

1. Treasurer of the Fund
2. PAIE

Authorization for deduction from salary

I, the undersigned:

Surname: _____ Given names: _____ Pers. No _____

Branch: _____ Duty station: _____

authorize the ILO to deduct _____ parts per thousand from my net salary (base salary plus post adjustment), as a voluntary contribution to the ILO Staff Union Assistance Fund.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

FONDO DE AYUDA MUTUA DEL SINDICATO DEL PERSONAL DE LA OIT

1 Tesorero del Fondo

2 PAIE

Autorización de deducción de salario

La / El que suscribe :

Nombre: _____ Apellido(s): _____
—

Departamento: _____ Sitio de destino: _____ No. Pers.: _____
—

autoriza la OIT a retener _____ partes por mil* de mi salario neto (salario de base más ajuste de puesto), como contribución voluntaria al Fondo de Ayuda Mutua del Sindicato del personal de la OIT.

Lugar y Fecha: _____ Firma: _____