

24 October 2001

Report

First Global Meeting for Field Staff Representatives

(Geneva, 13-17 August 2001)

**FIRST GLOBAL MEETING FOR FIELD STAFF
REPRESENTATIVES
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Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the meeting

1. The meeting unanimously elected Jean-Yves Legouas as Chairperson. Amorn Kumar (Bangkok) and Alexandra Simaga (Dakar) were unanimously elected Vice-Chairpersons.

Opening session

2. Assane Diop (Executive Director, Social Protection Sector), representing the Director-General, underlined the Director-General's attentiveness to Staff Union activities in the context of the ILO's strategic objectives. Social equilibrium had to be linked to tripartism and social justice. With urgent need for reform of human resources (HR) policy within the whole United Nations (UN) system, the ILO was at the forefront with its innovative approaches, and the considerable progress made by the Office and the Staff Union in formulating collective agreements. The Director-General attached particular importance to Field staff within the context of social dialogue. He had decided to implement a policy of non-discrimination for staff members infected with HIV/AIDS. Basic elements included: neither direct nor indirect discrimination would be exercised against a staff member or one of his/her dependants on account of being, or suspected of being, HIV positive; no practice or policy would be applied, directly or indirectly, resulting in discrimination against a staff member or an external candidate for a post in the ILO who is infected or affected by HIV/AIDS; any staff member who believes he/she has been discriminated against or subjected to an unfair practice linked to HIV/AIDS would be encouraged to take action in conformity with ILO procedures; the ILO would in no circumstances attempt to obtain information on the HIV/AIDS status of a staff member or an external candidate in relation to recruitment, employment or advancement in the ILO. Awareness would be developed, with Staff Union representatives, in order to prevent discrimination, and provide training and information on risks. The Director-General was absent from Geneva and would address the participants on his return on the final day of the meeting.

3. Bernardo Bello (Titular Member for the Americas) underlined the importance of this historic meeting for the development of Union strategy. It would offer the opportunity to work towards the implementation of the new personnel policies in the American region. He called for better information and consultation in Union decision-making, as well as greater use of Spanish as an official language of the ILO and of the region.

4. Charles Kameni (Titular Member for Africa) declared that the meeting would help define problems of common interest to ILO staff. While noting the partnership agreements between the Administration and the Staff Union, he underlined the differing working and living conditions in Field duty stations, and especially the concerns of the African region: personal security, educational expenses, lack of arrangements for medical evacuation, and loss of purchasing power due to currency fluctuations and inflation. He recommended the

appointment of a social welfare officer for each region. Better policies on mobility, career development and training were needed. There were still delays from Headquarters in response to staff problems and personal cases.

5. Basharat Ahmad (Titular Member for Asia and the Pacific) noted that the meeting simultaneously offered the opportunity for four regional meetings. He welcomed Mr. Diop's interest in the Field staff and the tremendous progress made by the Staff Union Committee (SUC), and especially the dynamism of the Chairperson, in formulating collective agreements and procedures. With their knowledge of local conditions, Field staff were in the front line in member States, and ensured continuity of the ILO's work there. It was therefore up to the ILO to take good care of them.

6. Walid Hamdan (Titular Member for Europe and the Middle East) expressed his appreciation for the unprecedented attempt to promote Union solidarity and internal democracy, and to enhance the participation of Field staff in decision-making. He welcomed the ILO's new partnership culture and the SUC's achievements over the past 18 months. He hoped that progress in Headquarters would filter down to management in the Field. There remained obstacles to change. Openness, accountability and cohesion were necessary, in a climate free of abuse of power, harassment or anti-union practices. Feudal conditions still existed in some regions, and reprisals had been taken against those who had fought corruption. There was a need for the inclusion of Field staff in change within the context of "decent work for all" throughout the regions.

7. David Dror (Chairperson of the Staff Union) recalled the goals of the meeting: to allow staff representatives worldwide to meet face to face, take stock of recent events and consider future Union action. He asked how the Union's cohesion, course and commitment could be measured. None of us alone could bargain with our employer; our main power was as a group. For that reason, membership in Headquarters and the Field should be increased, and every member should be given a voice in the positions that the Staff Union defends collectively. Because of their isolation and small numbers in each duty station, Field staff needed to be linked in one union. In turn, the Union should support Field staff in negotiations with the Administration, particularly with regard to gender, grade and geographical consideration. A single union for all staff at all duty stations was the right structure in the face of one employer.

8. The Staff Union was not only intended for those with problems, but was a community committed to solidarity, shared responsibility and reciprocity. Managers must learn to respect employees' collective needs and individual concerns. To obtain its objectives, the Union wished to reduce conflicts and increase trust, and for this reason it had negotiated collective agreements and embraced partnership with management, the first among UN agencies to do so. But partnership was a means, not an objective. Achievements included the signature of seven collective agreements, and the joint decision to devise a new performance appraisal system, create new rewards, negotiate a reform of contracts policy, overhaul the ILO Administrative Tribunal and recommend a unified grading system for all categories. All agreements, which included provisions to adapt solutions and processes to the Field, would require more active participation of Field staff representatives. Tangible results so far included equal partnership in the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC), a new internal system of justice, titularization of many colleagues, the introduction of the National Professional Officer (NPO) category, the establishment of the Joint Training Council (JTC), and the regularization of most

officials under precarious contracts. The Union had a reinforced role and a stronger voice; the meeting should now consider ways of strengthening the role of Field staff.

Overview of human resources procedures

9. Alan Wild (Director, Human Resources Development Department) introduced the topic of change in the ILO. New procedures should involve better management of people, career development and fairness at work. How to change was also important; the ILO should demonstrate partnership in action to its constituents and become the “best in class” in the UN system. Initiatives to change behaviour included coaching for improved managerial performance. The introduction of the JNC had heralded a new approach. The action plan reported to the March 2000 Governing Body, with a deadline of April 2001, was 95 per cent complete. Achievements so far included the setting up of assessment and development centres for recruitment and selection, the curtailment of long-term precarious contracts, training of facilitators in grievance procedures, the joint appointment of an Ombudsperson and the Chair of the Joint Panel, a new job classification system, the introduction of the NPO category in the Field, and of the Young Professional Career Entrance Programme, and the launching of reviews of Field security, as well as a contribution to the debate on this topic within the UN. It was still necessary to implement procedures now in place, and catch up on the grading exercise in the Field. Major improvements in training (including in the Field) were still to be made with a view to succession and career planning. HRD’s three major priorities were reform of the contract system, a new approach to rewards and entitlements, and the question of disciplinary procedures related to poor conduct and poor performance.

10. The Chairperson of the Staff Union advocated transparency and fair personnel procedures above all. It was necessary to work within certain parameters such as the Governing Body and the UN Common System. The Director-General could sign collective agreements and the parties had agreed to propose a unified grading system within the UN. Dialogue with senior management was essential in order to create a new culture. Although the agenda set by the Union in 2000 was well advanced, three items were to be completed before the end of 2001: an appraisal system, with a 360° approach¹; rewards arrangements; and, under the grievance procedures, the reform of the Administrative Tribunal.

General discussion

11. Various issues were raised by Field staff. The Chairperson of the Staff Union and the Director of HRD provided responses.

- *General:* concerns were expressed about the implementation of the new HR procedures and how and when they would work in the Field. Agreements were always formulated and tested in Headquarters; could some procedures be tested in the Field? *Answer:* the agreement provided for all structures to be implemented in the Field exactly as in Headquarters.
- *Management of change in the Field:* what mechanisms would ensure that managers would implement the changes, and what training would they be given? Field directors were sometimes unsuited for the job, and there was often a lack of consultation with

¹ The appraisal is carried out from the top down, bottom up and sideways.

staff. *Answer (HRD)*: structures were being put in place to help managers, including training, a simplified guide to the new procedures, and ongoing contact with HRD and regional personnel officers. Every effort was being made to appoint directors with the right profile.

- *Grading/classification*: when and how would the new procedures be applied in the Field? Would salary increases be backdated to 1 January 2000, as in Headquarters? Had funds been put aside? What about outstanding cases? *Answer*: the process involved replacing individual job descriptions with 125 Generic Job Descriptions (GJDs), which would be posted on the Intranet. Field GJDs might be slightly different as some jobs, especially in small offices, could span two or more. All initial matching had to be completed by November 2001. The regrading review process included (a) the initial matching/grading by the responsible chief; (b) the request to the chief for an informal review; (c) a formal review through the Independent Review Group (IRG); and (d) appeal to the Joint Panel if a procedural flaw or unfair treatment was claimed. Managers were responsible for grading decisions, and all GJDs would be cleared by Regional Directors to ensure consistency. Grading training would be carried out in the regions in September/October. The procedures were exactly the same for Headquarters and the Field, and all upgradings would be implemented in the same way.
- *Grievance procedures*: how would these operate in the Field? In harassment cases, could a Staff Union representative always be present in a meeting with management? Would making a complaint jeopardize the official's career? *Answer*: a simplified guide to procedures was being prepared. Facilitators would be trained in the Field. Although the Ombudsperson would be at Headquarters, contact could be made through electronic means, telephone, etc. Staff Union representatives could always be present at meetings, and claims under the grievance procedure would in no way affect an official's career.
- *Assessment and development centres for recruitment*: where would assessments be carried out for Field staff? Recruitment and selection for Field staff had sometimes been carried out by managers without Staff Union consultation, leading to bias against internal candidates. *Answer*: consistent treatment for all was already assured at entry level. Guidelines for implementation of the procedures in the Field would be developed. The assessment centres were already in place for all P vacancies and for GS vacancies at Headquarters, and would shortly be set up for Field GS vacancies.
- *National Professional Officers (NPOs)*: how would matching of the new categories be determined, since the grades were different from those in the UN? *Answer*: the grades would be the same as those applied by UNDP. Both HRD and the Union agreed that the distinction between P and GS staff was artificial; a distinction based on international and national staff rather than grade would be more meaningful.
- *Mobility policy*: what was the current policy? *Answer*: the previous policy was inappropriate and too rigid. Criteria would have to be applied depending on the type of work carried out by the official.
- *Staff training*: the limited nature of current training (language classes, computer training) did not equip GS staff to move to P positions. When selection was made, no credit was given for internal training or university-level equivalence. *Answer*: it was hoped that additional training would be financed on the basis of savings from the budget, on approval from the November Governing Body.
- *Titularization*: there was a backlog in the process of titularization in some Field offices. Officials not holding without limit of time (WLT) contracts had difficulties in obtaining loans or mortgages. *Answer*: The 1999 exercise had been completed and the

2000 exercise was about to start. The possibility of reviewing present contracts arrangements would be discussed within the JNC.

- *Precarious contracts:* the problem of precarious contracts had been recognized but in many cases, officials had been employed for years and the impact on retirement benefits had not been taken into account. *Answer:* all cases of precarious contracts had been taken into account for the last titularization exercise, but the question of retirement benefits was more complicated and representatives of staff at the level of the Pension Fund had been informed about these cases. HRD was committed to regularizing, as far as possible, those on precarious contracts.
- *Compensation:* merit increases were not applied in such a way as to stimulate excellence. Benefits for Field staff were not always equitable, especially in Africa where the Common System methodology was not applicable in some locations. *Answer:* there were shortcomings in the Common System, and the parties would discuss these and other issues pertaining to the Common System to see if a joint position could be reached. The mechanisms for personal promotion and merit increases would be reviewed by the JNC.
- *Security of Field staff:* the current arrangements were inequitable in certain Field offices. Staff should be given the means to protect themselves, perhaps through a bonus system. *Answer:* the UN had proposed to double expenditure on security in the Field. The ILO was carrying out its own local surveys, in consultation with regional and local offices.
- *Local salaries and allowances:* (a) HRD was requested to take action to protect purchasing power by paying salaries in US\$. Could SHIF reimbursement be made in US\$? *Answer:* these were Common System issues over which the ILO had no control; (b) with regard to family allowances, could parents be automatically be included as dependants of unmarried officials? *Answer:* a better operation of entitlements would be considered, with the possibility of paying lump sums where appropriate; (c) there was a lack of local salary surveys at certain duty stations, and training was needed in conducting them. *Answer:* UNDP was already conducting training at some duty stations. The question would be taken up with the Joint Training Council.
- *Accidents at the workplace:* reimbursement was very slow; there were also problems with reimbursement of small expenses incurred at duty stations. *Answer:* SHIF would attempt to speed up procedures, but time had to be allowed for medical review; the question of local expenses should be taken up with Field directors.

Structure and functioning of the Staff Union (panel discussion)

12. The panel was composed of Fernando Peral (Convenor of the Staff Union Working Group on Union Rules), Abdoulaye Diallo and Mary Hamouda (Committee members) and the four regional Titular Members.

13. The Convenor outlined the process that would lead to a set of proposed amendments to the Staff Union Rules. The objectives were to reflect the new collective bargaining arrangements, review SUC functions, improve representation and voting rights of all members (especially from the Field), and promote effective communication with members, both in the Field and at Headquarters. Following a first set of amendments last year, aspects still in need of improvement included limited participation and voting rights for Field staff at general meetings, the lack of an institutional role for regional and local staff representatives

within the definition of Union policies in the Field, and the undefined responsibilities of Union stewards. Following wider consultation both at Headquarters and in the Field, the SUC would submit proposed amendments to a general meeting in October 2001.

14. Abdoulaye Diallo invited the Field staff to make contributions. The working group would reflect on issues such as union facilities, training, management of funds, and audit and control. Principles of transparency, unity and multiculturalism were essential, and no room should be left for a Headquarters/Field divide.

15. The Titular Member for Africa referred to several shortcomings in the existing Rules such as the absence of provisions on training and support to the Field structure, and guidelines for the implementation of the Rules at local level. Many Union representatives in Africa had no office space, means of communication or office equipment. Censorship was exerted and confidentiality could not be ensured. There was a need for an implementation manual on the Union Rules, training for Union representatives, help in organizing elections, and guidance on financial operations and managing a budget. Regional directors should allocate funds for training Staff Union representatives.

16. The Titular Member for the Americas stated that problems in his region were similar to those already described by the previous speaker; in many offices, Union work had to be conducted outside working hours. Union representatives did not even have a budget for telephone calls. At present, there were no uniform procedures, and a handbook would be most helpful. The Americas considered it appropriate to have a substitute representative in the region in addition to the one at Headquarters. A specific budget item should be allocated for training staff representatives in the Field, to which the Office should also contribute. Although there were recognized differences between the Americas and Headquarters, the Americas had always regarded themselves as part of a unified structure. Periodic regional Staff Union meetings were essential to ensure transparency and take account of members' views. He asked for funds to be set aside to ensure that all documents were translated into Spanish.

17. The Titular Member for Asia and the Pacific expressed the view that Union representatives in the Field were not always consulted on staff matters and asked how collective bargaining could be enforced. An unsuitable director could adversely affect all staff in a Field office. Union representatives in Field offices had no facilities for performing their functions, there was no budget for travel and staff representatives could be threatened by victimization. Insufficient funds (75 per cent of local staff's Union dues) were allocated to local union representatives. The SUC tended to be out of touch with the needs of the Field; it was essential to ensure that Field staff were not excluded. He proposed that a position of officer be created for a Field representative.

18. The Titular Member for Europe and the Middle East highlighted the importance of improving the capacity of Field staff representation in the regions; he welcomed continued cooperation with the Staff Union in Geneva to solve problems that could not be dealt with locally. More information and training on the new structures and agreements were required. The Staff Union at Headquarters should urge the Administration to find ways of implementing all agreements in Field offices. He saw no point in having an extra Field representative in the Committee, and in no case should this be an issue of divergence. It was essential to avoid artificial divisiveness between the Staff Union at Headquarters and in the Field; rather, everyone should work towards consolidating unity and solidarity.

19. Fernando Peral provided figures showing that in past years the Union spent in the field twice as much as it collected. This year, half of the Union budget went on the Global Meeting, i.e. five times what it collected from the field.

20. The Chairperson of the Staff Union underlined unity. The budget from members' contributions was heavily in favour of the Field and every staff representative had to be strictly accountable for the use of Union funds; the needs of the Union were many and resources scarce. All documents issued by the Committee had previously been submitted for comments to the Titular Members, who could then consult the representatives in their regions. All regional structures should also recognize the role of regional substitutes at Headquarters and should ensure that candidates for election were identified.

General discussion

21. A number of issues were raised, including:

- the definition of the role of the regional Titular Members;
- provision for training of Staff Union Field representatives;
- the question of whether senior management should be eligible for Staff Union membership; and
- the circulation of information within regions, and the need to channel comments through regional Titular Members.

22. In response to requests for the Staff Union to provide all documents in French and Spanish, Mary Hamouda (General Secretary) asked for volunteers from the Field to help translate documents into French and Spanish, since the Committee was predominantly anglophone.

23. The Chairperson of the Global Meeting summed up by reaffirming the mission, solidarity and structural unity of the ILO Staff Union. He enunciated certain principles to guide members in their work:

- trade union work was official;
- training for Staff Union representatives was of utmost importance;
- a budget should be set aside for the provision of translation services to the Union;
- various forms of communications between the regions and Headquarters, and between Field offices and the regions, should be examined; and
- the necessary facilities (office space, etc.) should be provided to Staff Union representatives in the Field.

Union finances

24. Colleen McGarry (Treasurer) made a presentation on Staff Union financing for the Field, giving a summary of record-keeping and reporting issues. Copies of slides and templates of model financial statements were made available.

25. A discussion followed. Field offices used the funds for various purposes, including social activities and even small loans. Signatory and accounting procedures differed. Transparency was considered essential to avoid improper use of funds and ensure

communication to members. Although expenditure was decided by individual offices, all expenses should be accounted for.

26. It was suggested that guidelines on the use of Union funds by Field offices could be prepared, with standard statements to be completed on a quarterly or annual basis. It was advisable to have two signatories for a bank account and to train a second person in keeping the accounts. Staff Union members were advised to set up a plan/budget on the use of the funds.

27. The Chairperson of the Staff Union explained how Staff Union funds were organized at Headquarters. Extreme prudence was employed, with funds set aside for eventual legal or industrial action. Although the status quo in the Field was not contested, the SUC urged Staff Union representatives to ensure transparency, accountability and regular reporting. The Staff Union at Headquarters was usually willing to match funds allocated to training by the local structures of the Union.

Collective agreements and their implementation in the Field

The general framework: Recognition and Procedural Agreement

28. The Chairperson of the Staff Union explained the significance of the Agreement, which was unique in the UN system, whereby the ILO Staff Union and the International Labour Office recognized each other as bargaining agents. The Agreement allowed for bargaining over ILO terms and conditions of employment not covered by the UN Common System, and could also interpret Common System provisions (e.g. as had been done with the Generic Job Descriptions). It had been endorsed by the Governing Body, which devolved authority to the Director-General to sign binding agreements. The Staff Regulations now stated that he was authorized to implement agreements within these general parameters. Not surprisingly, there was opposition to the Agreement within the Common System and in other quarters outside the ILO. However, the ILO Staff Union and Administration together should now be in a stronger position vis-à-vis the Common System.

Agreements on recruitment and selection, grading, Personal Development Plan

Recruitment and selection

29. Fernando Peral (Union representative on the Joint Working Group on Resourcing) made a presentation on the new Collective Agreement on a Procedure for Recruitment and Selection. He explained the workings of the Assessment Centres and of selection procedures at Headquarters and indicated that, although some adaptations would be needed for Field offices, these would be negotiated and would follow the same principles and objectives of the Agreement.

30. David Macdonald (Chief, Human Resources Policy and Information Systems Branch) referred to the Agreement as an important step towards modernization of the system. It introduced a career-development approach and modern assessment techniques, which would result in a fair and transparent process through which the needs of the Office would be met and fair treatment of individuals assured.

Grading

31. The Chairperson of the Staff Union made a presentation on the results of the baseline matching and grading exercise at Headquarters. The process was now at the appeals stage, with appeals concentrated in certain units. The regrading process was to be completed at Headquarters, and the initial matching/grading carried out in the Field, before the November Session of the Governing Body.

Personal Development Plan (PDP)

32. Colleen McGarry (Union representative on the Joint Working Group on PDP) reported on the PDP, a new function jointly supported by the Staff Union and HRD to enhance career development through training. Basic principles included clearly defined responsibilities, equality of treatment, fairness checks and confidentiality. The PDP would not be linked to performance appraisal (for which a new process would be developed), but would be closely related to selection. Its success would depend heavily on training, which had long been a concern of the Union, and the allocation of a sufficient budget for this purpose. The PDP would be owned by the staff member and launched at his/her initiative, the purpose being to identify short- and long-term career and training goals, which could include formal and informal training, both in-house and outside, and secondments to other UN agencies, NGOs and private companies. The PDP would be an annual exercise involving the official and the chief, and consolidated by HRD for planning purposes including the development of Office-wide training plans and review by the Joint Training Council. An annual report would be made to the future Human Resources Committee and the Governing Body. In case of disagreement with the manager, HRD would provide advice, and recourse would be available through the Grievance Procedure. An easy-to-use PDP manual would be issued shortly in the three working languages. Officials were individually or collectively encouraged to propose creative solutions for their own training.

General discussion

33. Several participants raised the general problem of the slow implementation of the new mechanisms in the Field as compared with Headquarters. There was also much greater scope for circumvention of the agreed human resources procedures by Field directors, and even irregularities, especially in small offices where less control was exercised.

34. Questions were raised by participants under the different headings, and responses were provided by David Macdonald and Keiko Niimi (HRDEV) and by David Dror and Fernando Peral.

Recruitment and selection

35. Concern was expressed about the operation of Assessment Centres in the Field, especially concerning the selection and training of assessors. Would appointments made under the old procedures be accepted? Would extra resources be provided to help managers cope with the increased workload? A question was asked about irregularities in short-term transfers, giving certain staff an advantage in competitions. What provisions were in place to prevent procedures being circumvented?

36. HRD replied that the Assessment Centres were being fine-tuned at Headquarters before being introduced in the Field. The procedures were as follows: (a) short-listed candidates for all P posts and for GS posts at Headquarters would be assessed in Geneva; (b) for GS posts above a certain level, Assessment Centres would be set up in Regional Offices; (c) for other GS posts, candidates would be interviewed in local offices. The assessors would be independent and jointly nominated by HRD and the Staff Union and would receive proper training. Some GS posts at Headquarters and some Professional posts were still in process under the old system, but once the new mechanisms would be in place all competitions, both at Headquarters and in the Field, would be governed by the Collective Agreement. Directors could request supplementary staff resources to cope with the increased workload due to the implementation of the new procedures.

37. The Staff Union said that managers were expected to be able to deal with the new procedures. With regard to irregularities, rules for redress already existed within the Collective Agreement on a Procedure for the Resolution of Grievances, to which HRD concurred.

Grading

38. A comment was made about the excessively tight deadlines for the regrading exercise in the Field. What was the process for establishing the Independent Review Group (IRG) at Field level? Could the process result in the downgrading of a post?

39. HRD replied that the baseline grading agreement would start soon in the Field, although the modalities would be exactly the same. As the IRGs in the Field, covering local GS staff and NPO grades A and B, had not yet been set up, the initial grading/matching would be carried before the November Session of the Governing Body, and the review and appeals at a later stage.

40. Concerning downgrading, the Staff Union explained that duties might change, resulting in a post being downgraded, but never the incumbent. However, the GJDs could only be changed by collective agreement. HRD added that in general the changing of job requirements and the regrading process would be quicker under the new procedures, offering more flexibility to managers.

PDP/Training

41. Many participants were disenchanted with the existing training provisions in the Field, where funds were not always allocated equitably, and were pessimistic about the possibility of change. Expectations might be raised through the PDP which could not be met financially (given the very small training budgets in the Field). Questions were posed about managers' capability to administer the new system, the possibilities for distance learning, evening classes and study leave, the deadlines for the PDP and whether they were compulsory. Concerns were expressed about the willingness of directors to release staff for training.

42. HRD would examine any ideas from staff on training issues. The role of the Joint Training Council (JTC) would be to define priorities in funding. Any training and study leave would be considered, provided that the content was relevant to the work of the Office. The PDP agreement had been signed, a manual was being prepared, and a timetable would be

set up by the end of October. Staff should be encouraged to complete their PDP on an annual basis, both in the Field and at Headquarters.

43. The Staff Union urged staff to voice their career and training aspirations. For the Union, it was not a matter of availability of funds but of political will. The figures provided by the Union (between 2 and 5 per cent of the total ILO budget) had been based on the amount spent on training by modern civil services, but also bearing in mind the delay incurred by the Office in training in the last 20 years.

Collective agreements on grievances and harassment-related grievances

44. The Chairperson of the Staff Union presented the new agreements.

45. David Macdonald pointed out that the new procedures were a positive step for the Administration, encouraging informal resolution of grievances as early as possible, and as close as possible to where they arose, and providing checks and balances. The final step in the introduction of the procedures had been the appointment of the Ombudsperson (who would start on 3 October 2001). A joint newsletter and a circular would soon be issued and an easy-to-use guide on the procedures was being finalized and would be distributed to all staff members.

46. Bill Salter (Titular member of the Joint Panel), Shauna Olney and Patricia Isimat-Mirin (Substitute members), Jean-Bernard Ballion and Anna Torriente (facilitators) answered questions, along with David Dror and Fernando Peral.

Facilitation process

47. Participants asked about plans for training facilitators in the Field, and what could be done if unsuitable facilitators were chosen. Other points concerned the steps for presenting grievances, whether it was necessary to pass through all stages, and whether it was possible for several officials to present a grievance collectively. A flowchart would be useful. Had any cases been treated under the new procedures?

48. In reply, they were told that of 104 candidates for facilitator (60 at Headquarters, 44 in the Field), 24 had already been trained in Geneva (one group in English and one in French). The response from the Field had been mixed, with a low number of candidates in all regions except Africa. Training at Headquarters was carried out over nine days, spread over several weeks (which had limited participation in some cases); it covered communication and dialogue skills, with simulation and role play. In the grievance procedure, a meeting with the line manager was mandatory, but recourse to the Ombudsperson was optional; in a harassment-related grievance, the meeting with the line manager was optional, but with the Ombudsperson it was mandatory. Facilitators could also work in teams. Staff could be accompanied by a Union representative at all stages of the procedure. The Ombudsperson was an ILO official recruited for a mandate of two years, renewable once. The present Chair of the Joint Panel was not an ILO official. At the end of the mandates, there was a period of five years during which neither or them, nor a member of their family, could be employed by the ILO. Class action was admitted before the Ombudsperson and the Joint Panel and any decision on class action would have binding effect in all similar cases. Two or three cases were ongoing under the new procedures.

49. The Joint Panel members explained that the Panel, which was the last stage of the process before the ILO Administration, had a judicial role. It was hoped that most cases would be resolved at an earlier stage. The Joint Panel would normally conduct a hearing, examine documents and could hear witnesses. The proceedings could be conducted in any of the three official languages and, exceptionally, in other languages. Rules of procedure had been adopted by the JP and Panel members had been chosen at Headquarters and in the Field with gender and regional balance in mind.

50. Questions were raised as to the definition of a line manager, the role of the Joint Human Resources Committee (JHRC), and the role of the Staff Union if the complainant was a non-Union member. It was asked whom the official should contact first in the case of harassment-related grievances, and how the facts would be substantiated in such cases.

51. It was explained that a line manager was a direct supervisor or any superior of that supervisor. The JHRC had not yet been set up; until the Ombudsperson took up her duties, facilitation training was under the auspices of the JNC. The Staff Union would provide assistance to any staff member in any case of harassment. Natural justice, due process and fairness were the key principles of the procedure.

The future: Collective agreements in the pipeline

52. The Director of HRD said that there had been major changes to almost every HR policy in the ILO. The current agenda was to be completed by implementing the agreements already signed. For HRD, priority issues included: the reform of the Administrative Tribunal, policy on rewards, operation of entitlements, review of contractual arrangements, and conduct and performance (discipline).

53. The Chairperson of the Staff Union summed up the Union's agenda for the future: agreement on dealing with rewards policy, a new performance appraisal delinked from titularization, merit increments and personal promotion. By the beginning of 2002, it was expected to finalize all pending issues relating to signed agreements such as the reform of the ILOAT, the definition of the functions and appointment of the JHRC and appointments to the Joint Training Council and negotiations on Article 4.2 of the Staff Regulations (direct selection). Discussions would also be initiated on the possibility of a unified salary scale to provide the same career path for both GS and P staff.

Inter-organization affiliation

54. Abdoulaye Diallo gave a brief history on the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) which had been founded in 1952 by six staff associations and one staff union (the ILO's) of the United Nations system. The objectives of FICSA were, among others, to enhance the development of the international civil service in accordance with the principles outlined in the United Nations Charter and in the constitutions of the respective specialized agencies. It undertook to: ensure that conditions of employment were the same for all UN staff and that these conditions were maintained at a level which permitted the recruitment and retention of "best in class"; to defend the rights of staff; and to contribute to creating a positive image of the international civil service. He then went on to describe the internal functioning of FICSA. According to the report presented to the 54th Session of the FICSA Council, the Federation had 26 associations/unions coming from 21 organizations and

six regional offices, two associate members, 24 members with consultative status and 14 members with observer status (FUNSAs). During the time the ILO Staff Union was a member of FICSA it had always participated actively and paid its contributions (about 110,000 Swiss francs per year). He pointed out that in the 1980s there had been a split in FICSA which led to the creation of the Coordinating Committee for Independent Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA) which mainly represents the staff of the United Nations secretariat.

55. In December 1994, an extraordinary General Meeting of the ILO Staff Union decided to withdraw from FICSA. The main reasons were:

- non-respect by the Executive Committee of FICSA of decisions of the Council, particularly concerning the boycott of the ICSC;
- lack of and refusal to consult with the member unions/associations concerning the application of decisions of the Council;
- refusal to review the method of calculating the rate of contributions of the member unions/associations.

56. The ILO Staff Union had made suggestions for improvements in the functioning of FICSA and an item on amendment of the statute and structure of FICSA was at last included on the agenda of the 53rd Session of the Council held in 2000.

57. The speaker went on to describe relations with FICSA since 1994. The ILO Staff Union had observer status with both FICSA and CCISUA. However, at its Council meeting in January 1998, FICSA gave an ultimatum to the ILO Staff Union - rejoin or lose consultative status. Since then relations between the ILO Staff Union and FICSA had been frozen. FICSA itself had serious problems with its membership in 1998-99. The ILO Staff Union had maintained informal contacts with FICSA and regular contacts with the other staff unions/associations of the other UN organizations in Geneva through the "IO Group". The Secretary-General of FICSA, as well as representatives of the other UN staff unions/associations, were invited to the ceremony when the Recognition and Procedural Agreement was signed. The Turin Staff Union remained a member of FICSA, and the Former Officials' Section (which is part of the ILO Staff Union) has consultative status.

58. Finally, the speaker reported on his informal meeting with André Heitz, Secretary-General of FICSA, on 7 August 2001. He had reminded Mr. Heitz of the reasons the ILO Staff Union had withdrawn from FICSA. Mr. Heitz reported on what he considered to be improvements in the functioning of FICSA (respect of decisions, end of the boycott of the ICSC, amendments of the rules, calculation of contributions). He estimated that if the ILO Staff Union were to rejoin FICSA this year, its contribution would amount to some 85,000 Swiss francs. He also pointed to the revision of the security manual which improved the facilities provided to local staff.

59. The Chairperson of the Staff Union pointed out that 15 issues affecting conditions of service were dealt with under the common system, of which seven were not dealt with by FICSA. There was no mechanism to deal with fundamental staff rights to negotiate or to voice positions. In fact, the Fifth Committee took decisions - the ICSC being its secretariat - and the staff had no representation or consultation rights with the Fifth Committee. What then could staff do to promote the best and fairest conditions of work under the common system? The Noblemaire and Fleming principles were being eroded in all UN organizations by the

organs of the common system who were behaving like union busters and FICSA was playing their game. For example, FICSA had analyzed the ILO collective bargaining arrangements and came to the conclusion that the FAO model of consultation was better. If the ILO Staff Union could not negotiate in the common system, it should negotiate where this was possible - the Union should not be isolated, but it did not want to erode its bargaining rights. He reminded the meeting that FICSA had boycotted the ICSC for seven years. He expressed concern about the tactics used by FICSA to woo the Union sections in ILO Field offices to join FICSA and cited the examples of Antananarivo and Beirut. Since the decision to leave FICSA had been taken by a General Meeting of the Union, only a General Meeting could reverse this decision. He had met the President of FICSA and reminded him of the three reasons why the ILO had left FICSA, but had received no feedback from him. The painful decision to request the Titular Member for Asia and the Pacific to resign from a FICSA position had been taken after a long discussion in the Staff Union Committee.

60. The Titular Member for Asia and the Pacific reiterated his earlier position. He insisted that, since the administrations of the Common System acted jointly in organs such as CCAQ, ACC and ICSC and presented common positions to the Fifth Committee, the staff representatives should get their acts together in a similar way, whether through FICSA, through CCISUA or in any other suitable way. The Common System dealt with salaries and entitlements, and the effects of these dealings had an important effect on staff, specially in the Field. His long experience with FICSA enabled him to say that this Federation was conducting effective work in areas such as salary surveys, post adjustments and other Common System issues whether through its action before CCAQ, ICSC or the Fifth Committee, or through its intensive lobbying with UN General Assembly delegates. In his opinion, and although he remained fully positive about the decisions taken by the General Meeting of the Union and by the Staff Union Committee, good sense indicated that the Union should rejoin the Federation as soon as possible for representational reasons and on grounds of solidarity at the Common System level and due to the leading political and technical role the ILO Staff Union had played within FICSA until 1994, and could continue to play.

61. The Titular Member for Europe and the Middle East reminded everyone that there were specific reasons that had led the Union to leave FICSA, not least the lack of democracy in the conduct of Federation affairs, and that, at this stage, a discussion on whether these issues had been resolved or not would only make sense in the framework of a General Meeting, since a General Meeting had taken the decision to leave. In his view, and due to the scepticism expressed by FICSA leadership with respect to the collective bargaining process in the ILO, the Staff Union Committee should be left to decide when the evolution of the situation allowed to bring this issue to the attention of a General Meeting. The Committee should reiterate as many times as needed that only a decision of the General Meeting could lead the ILO Staff Union to rejoin FICSA.

62. The Titular Member for the Americas said that collective bargaining was an essential principle not only for the ILO as an organization, but also for its staff. He would strongly oppose joining any structure representing staff that would disqualify a process of collective bargaining. In his view, a relationship with FICSA should be maintained, if only on grounds of solidarity. But, as the previous speaker had said, the General Meeting had decided to leave the Federation and therefore only a General Meeting could bring the Union back. It was for the Committee to lead the Union on this subject, and the final decision had to be left to a General Meeting, after proper information.

63. The Titular Member for Africa joined the two previous speakers in pointing out that the General Meeting took a decision in 1994 and that this decision had to be respected and enforced by any Staff Union Committee until such time as a decision to reverse it had been taken by the same organ. Maybe, in many Field duty stations solidarity among UN staff was stronger for very specific reasons. But in any case the issue was to determine whether it was the right moment to deal with the issue of FICSA membership and, if so, to help the Committee define what the position of the ILO Staff Union ought to be. The regional meeting of the African region would discuss the issue and would come back to it in its conclusions.

64. Fernando Peral (member of the Staff Union Committee) indicated that, in his opinion, the decision of the last FICSA Council to review its approach to calculating the rate of contributions, to democratizing its procedures and to reviewing its statutes, would not have been taken had the ILO Staff Union not left the Federation. In the long term, he considered that the ILO Staff Union would probably rejoin FICSA because solidarity was an essential value in our Union and FICSA needed the technical and political leadership of the ILO. Notwithstanding, he considered that the appropriate conditions for rejoining did not yet exist and that, to review properly the Staff Union position, time and resources would be needed, and collective bargaining was the priority at the moment.

65. The Chairperson of the Staff Union summed up the debate and indicated that the Titular Members for the Americas, Africa and Europe/Middle East were of the opinion that this issue was to be left to the Committee to deal with and that General Meeting decisions were to be upheld by all Staff Union representatives. The Titular Member for Asia and the Pacific had clearly indicated that in his opinion the Union should immediately rejoin FICSA or another body representing UN staff worldwide, unless the Staff Union was able to deal with common system issues directly. The speaker encouraged all participants wishing to do so to deal with this issue in their regional meetings and to come up with proposals.

Regional Meetings

66. The reporters of each regional meeting submitted the respective reports (see Annexes). The Chairperson of the Staff Union thanked the reporters and all participants for their significant contributions to this Global Meeting, that had created for our Union a “one-world” situation and had brought views of half the Union membership. Indeed this had been a most useful exercise, that would help the Committee address specific issues of policy and would remind all Union members of the importance of Field-Headquarters solidarity.

Interventions on pensions, security, working hours, public holidays, medical service, the Staff Union Assistance Fund and SHIF

Pensions

67. The Pensions Secretary made a short introduction on the Pension Fund, and participants voiced their queries on this and other related issues. These included questions on Group Life Insurance, “Golden handshakes”, access to the MEC (*International Civil Servants Mutual Association*). The representative of the Beijing Office requested support from the Staff Union to have previous service in this Office as government employees validated for ILO pension purposes.

68. The Chairperson of the Staff Union summarized the debate and indicated some issues for reflection, namely the possibility of a reduction in contributions, payment of salaries in US dollars for US dollar-based salary scales, the rigidity of the pension scheme for late entrance and early departure, as well as for transfer of pension rights, recognition of domestic partnership. He suggested that, since the ILO was the only agency in the UN Common System with Social Security specialists, it should take the lead in proposing changes, and the Union should encourage members to stand for election to the Pension Board bodies.

Security, working hours and public holidays

69. David Macdonald made a brief summary of the situation in terms of security in the Field. The UN General Assembly was in the process of reviewing security arrangements at the UN Common System level; it had decided that more funds should be used to engage security officers in the Field and at Headquarters in New York. The ILO was undertaking an internal review and a questionnaire would be sent shortly to all Field offices; he asked staff representatives to encourage staff to respond; the replies should be received by the end of September, since a report would be submitted to the March 2002 session of the Governing Body. On the issue of working hours and public holidays, he responded to several questions and confirmed that all arrangements were taken by agreement between the agencies at each duty station, and that he did not expect any major change in a near future.

70. Fernando Peral reaffirmed the position of the Staff Union Committee on issues such as security, safety and health, education grant, i.e., the Union did not and would never recognize any difference of treatment between GS or P, local or international staff, since these were issues related to the most basic human rights that had to be fully recognized for all ILO officials and for anyone in a paid relationship with the Office.

Medical service

71. Dr. Wabitsch made a short presentation on developments in his area of competence. He described a plan of action for health-related Field activities (hygiene and ergonomic and safety standards). He also confirmed that the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS was being finalized. Issues raised included medical evacuation for local staff, medical travel, information and training, periodic examinations, costs involved in medical examination in the Field, medical clearance for new staff, psychological support for staff. Finally, he reported on plans to establish a health-database on ILO staff for preventive purposes.

Staff Union Assistance Fund

72. Liliana Cañadas and Pierre Sayour (members of the Board of the Staff Union Assistance Fund) made a brief summary of the activities of the Fund and responded to queries from the participants. Among other issues, participants raised the difficulties of access to the Fund due to currency fluctuations. The SUAF limited the loans granted to avoid problems in reimbursement due to these fluctuations, but everyone had to understand that the Fund was not a bank.

73. In the name of the Staff Union Committee, Fernando Peral thanked the members of the Board of the Fund for their devoted and selfless work that was one of the banners of solidarity within our Union.

SHIF

74. Patrice Doy (SHIF) answered various questions from participants on issues such as reimbursement of home-based health care, the speed of reimbursements, calculation of premiums for voluntarily insured dependents, thresholds for supplementary coverage and other special allowances. Participants noted with satisfaction an improvement in the speed of medical reimbursement, but indicated that procedures for work-related injuries/accidents were too lengthy. They also reaffirmed the urgent need to provide for exceptional payments in US dollars. The speaker indicated that most of these issues were policy issues and had to be taken up by the Management Committee, and not by the SHIF Secretariat.

75. The Chairperson of the Staff Union expressed, in the name of all participants to the Global Meeting, appreciation for the work done by the SHIF Secretariat. He indicated that the Union did not recognize any difference in health matters between local and international staff, and that medical evacuation should be based on need rather than on category of staff. Health care for domestic partners should be recognized. He stated that the method of calculating premiums could be discussed (i.e. flat-rate or percentage of salary). The threshold for supplementary benefits should be calculated taking into account salaries rather than applying a flat-rate to all Field offices. Finally, he reiterated the positions of the Committee on the urgent need to establish adequate representation in the Management Committee (titulars representing staff should always include retirees, Field staff and active staff at Headquarters).

Adoption of the Report of the meeting

76. Fernando Peral (Reporter) said that as there had been very little time to read the report of the Global Meeting, the substantive debate should rather be on the conclusions. He added that the training session was not part of the report, but that a summary would be provided later; the regional reports would be annexed to the final report. The report would be published as a Staff Union Bulletin and distributed to all staff.

Discussion and adoption of the Conclusions of the meeting

77. The Officers of the meeting submitted to the participants a set of draft conclusions that were discussed and amended. The participants unanimously adopted the Conclusions of the First Global Meeting for Field Staff Representatives which are attached to this report.

Closing session

78. Juan Somavia (Director-General of the ILO) congratulated the Staff Union for organizing the Global Meeting, which had generated a spirit of teamwork. He welcomed the Field staff representatives present, many of whom were GS staff. He believed that GS staff in the Field offices ensured the institutional memory of the Organization. It was essential to develop a personal dimension, because the ILO had a tendency towards a top-down perspective. He commented on his vision for the ILO. First, its strength – as a knowledge-based organization – was its people, but because changes were so rapid, the knowledge base should constantly be updated and questioned. Second, far-reaching changes in human resources management had taken place in the ILO, in which the Staff Union had taken a proactive approach through partnership and dialogue. Gender mainstreaming was particularly important, involving complex

cultural issues. The ILO was being closely watched by the rest of the UN system. Third, although the ILO's founding values were still relevant today, the Organization must continue to change so as to remain relevant for working people worldwide. The Decent Work Agenda had provided a focus for unity throughout the ILO, and for cohesive tripartism. The four strategic objectives, and the interaction between them, had placed a new development policy agenda on the table. He concluded by stressing the importance of teamwork and internal communication as the greatest challenges faced by the ILO.

79. The Chairperson of the Staff Union thanked the Director-General for his inspiration and for the trust he had placed in the staff. While change was far from completed, the most important change so far had been the ILO's improved image as an employer. The Staff Union was the greatest supporter of the ILO value base.

Closing speeches

80. The Titular Member for Europe and the Middle East asked to take the floor before the closing speeches to make a statement on behalf of the staff in the Regional Office for Arab States. The situation in Beirut was of great concern to the staff who feared for the future. This was having a negative effect on the morale and well-being of the staff as well as of their families. The speaker hoped that Staff Union would play a full role in finding a solution in the prevailing spirit of partnership.

81. The Titular Member for Africa referred to a rich and varied week of work. Staff concerns common to all regions – health care, security, education grant, and salaries and remuneration – had been brought to the attention of Headquarters. The regrading exercise was welcomed. Training in union issues was especially important for staff representatives in the Field. The African region counted on good sense and good will in resolving grievances.

82. The Titular Member for the Americas considered that the Global Meeting had been excellent, and the cost justified. The regional debate, as well as the chance to show solidarity with other regions, had been extremely valuable.

83. The Titular Member for Asia and the Pacific congratulated the Staff Union on a highly successful meeting and assured the full support and cooperation of the region.

84. The Titular Member for Europe and the Middle East echoed the sentiments of previous speakers. The Global Meeting had proved most valuable in promoting internal democracy and improving Field-Headquarters communication.

85. The Chairperson of the Global Meeting compared the meeting to the life of a human being. He believed that it should ensure its descendance through certain key ideas enabling the participants to move forward, ideas that would strongly influence the future life of the ILO staff, whether Union members or not. He thanked all those who had ensured the success of the Global Meeting, both those who were visible, such as the participants, and those who were not, such as the interpreters. Particular thanks were due to the staff of HRD for their exemplary collaboration. He thanked the Director-General for honouring the meeting with his presence. Finally, he referred to the forthcoming retirement of Abdoulaye Diallo, who had devoted his life to the defence of workers in Africa and elsewhere, and offered the sincere and grateful thanks of all present.

86. The Chairperson of the Staff Union stated that the cost of the Global Meeting had amounted to half the Union's annual budget; the decision now appeared to have been fully justified. He praised participants for their faith in a united and coherent union, the high level of debate and the friendly atmosphere that had prevailed, declaring that no one should feel excluded from this unity and nobody should be excluded from the Union. He felt humbled by expressions that the value base of the ILO was not only a source of rights, but also a guideline for individual and collective conduct. Above all, the Global Meeting had opened up channels of communication. He expressed gratitude to all participants for their respect and support, and thanked all those concerned in organizing the meeting.

Fernando Peral
Reporter

Jean-Yves Legouas
Chairperson of the Global Meeting

Geneva, 17 August 2001

Conclusions of the Staff Union Global Meeting

The First Global Meeting for Field Staff Representatives, held in Geneva from 13 to 17 August 2001, was attended by staff representatives from ILO offices worldwide, as well as by the Regional Titular Members for Africa, Asia & Pacific, the Americas and Europe & Middle East;

22. The Global Meeting commends the Staff Union Committee and its representatives on the Joint Negotiating Committee for having achieved significant progress in conditions and terms of employment and for its determinant role in shaping the new human resources strategy based on collective agreements. The Global Meeting expresses its trust in, and support for, the Committee;
23. The Global Meeting emphasises that the collective agreements should be implemented in the Field in the same manner as at Headquarters. Field staff and their Union representatives should be involved in this process, with the active guidance and support of the Staff Union Committee;

24. The Global Meeting supports the Staff Union Committee's priorities for further agreements on reform of the Statutes of the ILO Administrative Tribunal, on new rewards, on reform of performance appraisal, as well as on reform of the GS/NO/P/D grades into a unified grading system;
25. The Global Meeting reiterates that the structure and functioning of the Union should reflect the general and firm conviction that we are, and shall remain, one union for all ILO staff, regardless of duty station, grade or contract type;
26. The Global Meeting invites the Staff Union Committee to examine ways to provide staff representatives, as well as the Regional Titular Members, with appropriate training for this role;
27. The Global Meeting suggests that the Working Group on Reform of the Rules should examine the issue of conflict of interest between staff representation and other roles, both within and outside the Office;
28. The Global Meeting emphasises the importance of good communications between all members of the Union, and particularly between members of the Committee and representatives in the Field; for this purpose, meetings should be organized from time to time, resources permitting;
29. The Global Meeting fully endorses the positions of the Staff Union Committee publicly stated on the issue of FICSA membership. The Global Meeting invites the Staff Union Committee to continue its contacts with other staff unions/associations/federations of UN agencies; however, affiliation of FICSA should wait until FICSA supports collective bargaining agreements fully and publicly, in the ILO, in other UN organizations and at the level of the Common System and ICSC, and the issues that led the Union to withdraw are satisfactorily resolved;
30. The Global Meeting requests the Staff Union Committee to ensure that all staff representatives in the Field keep proper accounts, under the guidance of the Staff Union Treasurer, in order to ensure accountability to the members and transparency of how Union money is used. The Treasurer of the Staff Union Committee will receive written reports on a regular basis with the support of, and preferably the coordination of, the regional Titular Member.
31. The Global Meeting expresses its sincere thanks to the Chairperson and members of the Staff Union Committee, the Officers of the First Global Meeting, and to all those who contributed to the successful and friendly unfolding of the First Global Meeting of Staff Union Representatives.

**Report of the Regional Meeting of
ILO Staff Union Representatives in Africa
(Geneva, 16 August 2001)**

ANNEX I

After an examination of the main problems in the region, the recommendations of the previous African Regional Meeting of June 2000 are reproduced below:

CONCLUSIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Collective agreements signed between the Office and the Staff Union	Ensure the application to the field of the Collective Agreements signed between the Office and the Staff Union
Personal security	Reinforce the security arrangements for all staff, and particularly for local staff
Training	Participation of Union representatives in the elaboration of training programmes (human resources, management). Increase in resources and involvement of Union representatives in the management of these resources
Role of Union representative	Put at the disposal of the Union the means to allow representatives to carry out their functions (office, equipment, means of communication)
Training of Union representatives	In view of the new responsibilities of Union representatives, the Staff Union Committee is requested to prepare a training manual to permit representatives to carry out their duties
Classification	Speed up the process of classification in the field. Application and respect of the agreed calendar.
Education grant for children	Extend the entitlement to education grant to GS staff
Relations with management	Systematic participation of the Union in personnel decisions (selection, recruitment, management)
Mobility	Generalize vertical and horizontal mobility in the framework of the new human resources policies

Global Meeting for Field Staff Representatives	Maintain the cycle of regional meetings; taking into account the positive experience of the Global Meeting the African region mandates the Committee to study the possibility of institutionalizing this kind of meeting
African Regional Meeting	Ensure the effective participation of all Union representatives and Committee members and draw up a plan of action and information on the implementation of the recommendations
Regional Directors Meetings	Take the necessary action with a view to an effective participation of Union representatives
Salary demands	Take the necessary action to pay local salaries in US dollars when the economic or monetary situation deteriorates
Finances	Submission of a periodic financial report to the Staff Union Committee with copy to the Regional Titular. If necessary, request assistance from the Committee in carrying out regional activities. Examine the possibility of retaining in the field 25% of the contributions of Professional staff with a view to harmonizing Union activities
FICSA	Mandate the Committee to examine the conditions of an eventual reaffiliation to FICSA in consultation with Union representatives in the field

**Report of the Regional Meeting of
ILO Staff Union Representatives in the Americas
(Geneva, 16 August 2001)**

ANNEX II

Summary assessment of the Global Meeting

The ILO Staff Union Global Meeting has proved fruitful from several points of view:

32. It has reaffirmed the unity of the Staff Union. It has allowed the Union to appear before the administration and management, as well as before other agencies of the UN system, as a crowd-puller, consistent and united, with real bargaining capacity.
33. It has provided training and information to those whose responsibility it is to defend the legitimate interests of the ILO and without which this task would be difficult and sometimes even impossible to conclude.
34. It has allowed people performing union work in all ILO offices around the world to meet for the first time.

It is our view that the Global Meeting was well organized and that its agenda covered most of the items suggested by fellow staff representatives. Training provided was most useful, and the region suggests that the next meeting consider the possibility of group techniques, role play, case studies and PowerPoint presentations. The region believes that it would be most useful to hold global meetings every four years, as well as regional meetings at the beginning of the mandate of the Regional Titular Member of the Committee (even if this is a re-election).

FICSA

We urge the Staff Union Committee to examine the possibility of rejoining FICSA once the main issues that caused the ILO Staff Union to withdraw are satisfactorily resolved and when FICSA publicly recognizes the benefits of the collective bargaining process in the ILO for both ILO staff and for all staff of the Common System.

Union finances

Transparency in Union finances is essential to create a climate of trust which would encourage affiliations and participation of members in Union activities. The delegates from the Americas reaffirm that Union funds managed locally are funds belonging to the Union as a whole.

The region proposes that staff representatives of each office send regularly (for instance every 6 months) their accounts to the Titular Member for the region who would consolidate the data and would send them to the Union Treasurer in Geneva. Accounts may be held in local currency or in US dollars, but in all cases the balance should be provided in US dollars at the

UN exchange rate. It is suggested that the Staff Union Treasurer design a format for rendering accounts according to the Staff Union Committee's needs.

Health coverage

A review is needed of the procedure for dealing with work injuries in the Office. The current procedures are too slow. A practical solution would be to authorize local offices to effect payments charging a provisional account until the administrative procedure is over, so as to avoid the official having to bear the burden of unexpected costs.

It would be most desirable to review the group life insurance contract in order to assess the possibility of withdrawing amounts after a certain number of years (savings + life insurance scheme).

Voluntary affiliation of an official's parents to SHIF is much too expensive for staff on low salaries. The level of contribution should be reviewed to see if a scheme could be introduced whereby contributions would be calculated as a percentage of the official's income, and not as fixed amount in US dollars.

Regional work plan

Staff representatives of the Americas met with the human resources officer responsible for the region, Ms. Causanillas, and agreed on the need to work in a spirit of partnership based on trust. It was highlighted that successful implementation of the new human resources policies would depend entirely on such a partnership, and that it was an issue of mutual interest.

It was also agreed that training should be provided both to office directors and to Union representatives. Ms. Causanillas indicated that a Workshop on Programming, Administration, Personnel and Finances would take place from 8-13 October and that office directors would be invited to attend the last two days; she informed the representatives that Mr. Wild would participate in this meeting. Finally, she indicated that the Regional Titular Member and the Union representative of the Lima Office would be invited, and that the agenda of the workshop would be sent to the Union representatives for them to comment or make proposals.

The titular member for the Americas, Bernardo Bello, proposed sending her a proposal on a joint working agenda, an officer that Ms. Causanillas gladly accepted. In this context, it was proposed to set up a **Regional Joint Committee on the Implementation of Collective Agreements** that would be composed of Union and Administration representatives. Local committees could also be created. The Office would meet all reasonable costs involved with in the functioning of these committees. The Committee would discuss in detail the implementation of collective agreements in the Americas region, notable:

- establishment and functioning of assessment centres in the region;
- access for all staff members to facilitation, the ombudsperson and the joint panel for the resolution of grievances;
- implementation of the appeals procedure in the context of the grading exercise, and establishment of the Independent Review Group;

- functioning of the Joint Training Council.

**Report of the Regional Meeting of
ILO Staff Union Representatives in Asia and the Pacific
(Geneva, 16 August 2001)**

ANNEX III

The Meeting was attended by all the Staff Union representatives of the Asia/Pacific region:

22. Amorn Kumar (Bangkok)
23. He Mingming (Beijing)
24. Joyce Perera (Colombo)
25. T.I.M. Nurunanabi Khan (Dhaka)
26. Basharat Ahmad (Islamabad)
27. Ine Indiravitri (Jakarta)
28. Marina Rai (Kathmandu)
29. Julita Yap (Manila)
30. Shashi Goverdhan (New Delhi)
31. Abdul Hafiz Ali (Suva)
32. Naoko Okumura (Tokyo)
33. Yoko Tamura (Tokyo)

The Meeting elected Basharat Ahmad as Chairperson, Nurunnabi Khan as Vice-Chairperson and Amorn Kumar as Rapporteur.

The recommendations of the Meeting are:

22. Considering the fluctuations in the currency of many countries in the region, the Meeting felt that the salaries of local staff should be paid in US dollars instead of in local currencies.
23. On SHIF, it was recommended that parents of unmarried staff members should be recognized as direct dependents and be subject to normal reimbursement from SHIF.
24. The Meeting took note of different time periods between the award of WLT contracts between Headquarters and the field. It recommended that these discrepancies be eliminated. Also, the Meeting took note of the particular situation with regard to staff of the Beijing Office. Periods of service in the ILO, irrespective of the type of contract, should be taken into account.
25. Staff mobility should be implemented in the field. In this respect, the Meeting recommended that such mobility should be both within the office (between various sections) and among area offices, regional offices and Headquarters. It was stressed that the process should be fair and transparent.
26. The Union and management have signed collective agreements on new human resources policies. This has been recognized by colleagues as a step that will benefit both staff members and the ILO. The meeting recommended that these agreements should be implemented in the regional and field offices. The Meeting insisted that Union

members should be involved in the implementation of these new policies at all levels and stages. More specifically, the Union representatives must be involved in: (a) reviewing job descriptions of vacant posts; and (b) taking part in the interview and selection process of the candidates.

27. On training and career development, the Meeting fully supported the initiative taken by the Staff Union to revise the training policy and allocation of resources for training. Training should include detachment of staff between offices, training on information technology and training of Union representatives on issues such as salary survey methodology.
28. Currently, some of the designations/job titles of GS staff members in the field are not appropriate to the local culture. The Meeting recommended that colleagues concerned by this should be given acceptable functional titles without changing the official job titles.
29. The Meeting also reviewed the current situation with regard to certain benefits and welfare facilities granted to staff members. It was recommended by the Meeting that improvements were needed in the following areas:
 1. education grant for local staff;
 2. loan facilities for local staff on concessional terms, particularly housing loans;
 3. eligibility for paternity leave side by side with maternity leave.
9. The Meeting endorsed the current practice of holding regional and global meetings of the Staff Union. It was specifically recommended that regional meetings should be held every two years and that a global meeting should be held every four years, during which there would also be regional meetings.
10. The Meeting discussed the need to elect a substitute member of the Staff Union Committee for the Asia/Pacific region. The Meeting was informed that candidates had been identified. The Meeting recommended that the election process should be launched.

**Report of the Regional Meeting of
ILO Staff Union Representatives in Europe/Middle East
(16 August 2001)**

ANNEX IV

Staff Union representation in the two regions

The Meeting agreed that, as from the next election of Staff Union regional representatives, when the Titular Member is based in one region, his/her substitute should represent the other region, so as to ensure a balance of representation, in a spirit of equity and fairness.

Financial issues

The Meeting endorsed the practice of transparency, accountability, regular book-keeping related to all financial transactions and matters involving membership dues and would ensure that the financial regulations included in the Staff Union Rules are respected and applied.

Communications/professional code of ethics/deontology issues

The Meeting recommended that the Staff Union Committee discuss and adopt a clear policy that would guarantee freedom of expression based on reliability, transparency, responsibility and democratic process.

Situations and needs in individual duty stations in the region

1. The Meeting discussed at length the situation prevailing in the various area, branch and liaison offices as regards working conditions and pressing needs. It stressed the urgency of finding suitable solutions to precarious contracts, titularizations, reclassification, personal development plans (PDP), appraisal reports, training and all issues that could be interpreted as harassment or intimidation.
2. They strongly argued that all agreements signed at Headquarters be implemented effectively in the field **without delay**.
3. They hoped that appropriate action would be taken to ensure that officials in managerial positions respect these agreements. For this purpose, a joint letter, signed by HRD and the Staff Union, should be sent to them **without delay**.
4. Whilst the Meeting applauded the good practices of management in some of the offices represented, it hoped that managers who so far have failed to promote a climate of cooperation, partnership, respect, human dignity, team and decent work should do so **without delay**.

5. The Meeting expressed its great concern about the situation prevailing in the Regional Office for Arab States and the deep fear expressed by the ROAS staff. In a spirit of solidarity, the Meeting proclaimed its support and sympathy and endorsed the legitimate request made by the ROAS staff. It was hoped that the Global Meeting would adopt a similar stand.

FICSA

The Meeting recommended giving the Staff Union Committee the full mandate to handle this issue.

Finally, the Meeting expressed its profound appreciation to the Staff Union Committee for convening this First Global Meeting, which is an expression of its steadfast commitment to promoting internal democracy, consolidating unity and solidarity between HQ and field staff and strengthening the decision-making process of the Staff Union as an equal bargaining agent with the ILO administration. This first meeting was timely and the Regional Meeting would welcome other similar occasions, every three or four years, depending on the availability of funds, to discuss matters of global concern. In the meantime, each representative agreed that the visit of the Titular Member to their duty station would be desirable whenever the staff faced a particular problem.