

STAFF UNION BULLETIN
BULLETIN DU SYNDICAT
BOLETIN DEL SINDICATO



9 February 2005

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
FIRST SESSION

27 January 2005

Record of decisions

The Chairperson of the Union Committee opened the discussions at the First Session of the Annual General Meeting. He requested members to observe one minute's silence in memory of Robert Defour and Ditiro Saleshando, two colleagues who had died in recent weeks. He recalled that Mr Defour had for very many years been the Editor in Chief of our magazine "UNION". He left us last December. He added that Ditiro Saleshando had been a member of the Committee for four years. In that capacity and as an eminent member of the Bureau for Workers' Activities, having represented his Organization at the highest level, he had rendered immense services to the trade union movement.

Election of a Chairperson of the AGM

1. Following this mark of respect in commemoration of our two colleagues, and in accordance with the draft Agenda, the Chairperson of the Union Committee proceeded to agenda item 1: Election of a Chairperson of the AGM. At the proposal of a member of the Union, supported by several others, Marleen Rueda-Catry was elected Chairperson of the AGM by acclamation.

Adoption of the Agenda

2. The Chairperson thanked the AGM for her election and proceeded to item 2 of the Agenda, namely its adoption (doc. SU/AGM/2005/1/D.1). The Agenda was adopted without modification.

Discussion of the draft programme and strategy of the Staff Union for 2005

3. The Chairperson of the Union Committee introduced item 3 of the Agenda: Discussion of the draft programme and strategy of the Staff Union for 2005 (doc. SU/AGM/2005/1/D.2).

Following this presentation, the members of the Committee representing the field informed the AGM of the main concerns of their colleagues.

4. The representative for Africa emphasized security of employment, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire, and the need to train new colleagues in the methodology for the calculation of salaries so that they could defend their interests more effectively.

5. The representative for the Americas reaffirmed that it was important not to sign collective agreements that resulted in a loss of rights for colleagues in the field. She also expressed concern with regard to the introduction of the "IRIS" project and the risks of staff reductions inherent in the application of the programme.

6. The representative for Europe and the Arab States emphasized the need to adopt a pragmatic approach to the signature of collective agreements. He drew attention to the importance of appointing, among the facilitators at headquarters, one familiar with the field structure in Europe and the Arab States. He also called for special attention to be paid to the issue of the financing of the Staff Health Insurance Fund (SHIF). Furthermore, he considered that in the region that he represented there was a certain discrimination in appointments to high-level posts within the Organization, thereby demonstrating one of the weaknesses of the representation of the Middle East.

7. The representative for Asia and the Pacific drew attention to the lack of transparency in the application of collective agreements in the region, particularly with regard to dispute settlement. In practice, the lack of communication with the Human Resources Department at Headquarters meant that colleagues in the region were not made aware of the introduction of new provisions.

8. Other colleagues in the Meeting supported these interventions and emphasized the issue of the potential repercussions of the introduction of the "IRIS" system. Several members called upon the Union Committee to pay particular attention to matters relating to the SHIF and to keep them informed.

9. In response, the Chairperson of the Union Committee told the members present at the AGM that all the concerns mentioned were being taken into account by the members of the Union Committee and that, with regard to IRIS, a consultation structure had been established to enable staff representatives to express specific concerns. Each Union representative, in her or his duty station, should ensure that there was no loss of employment as a result of the introduction of "IRIS". He added that the Union Committee was following the situation with regard to the SHIF very closely and would do everything in its power to ensure that the staff was fully informed of developments. He added that he had raised the matter with the Management Committee of the SHIF.

Revision of the Collective Agreement on the procedures for Recruitment and Selection

10. The General Secretary introduced document SU/AGM/2005/1/D.2/Add.1, entitled "Revision of the Collective Agreement on the procedures for Recruitment and Selection". He explained that if there continued to be a lack of progress in negotiating the revision of the

collective agreement, it would probably be necessary to convene an Extraordinary General Meeting on the matter.

11. Several members supported the position of the Union Committee on the revision of the agreement. The field representatives emphasized that the benefit of the existence of decentralized joint bodies with competence for local recruitment should not be undermined by the mechanisms negotiated at the central level. They reaffirmed the call for the establishment of a joint committee for human resources management. They also called for the abolition of the Assessment Centre for the transition from “G” to “P”. Several members expressed the view to the General Secretary that the arguments put forward by the Administration concerning the direct selection of the Deputy Directors of Sub regional Offices were not necessarily acceptable and that the reasons given were not the true ones.

12. The General Secretary confirmed that this was a transitional provision, which would have to be confirmed in the context of the revised agreement. The Chairperson of the AGM noted that **the Meeting supported the positions of the staff representatives in the current negotiations, as set out in the reference document.**

United Nations and the Common System: The risk of silent implosion

13. The member of the Committee responsible for communication presented document SU/AGM/2005/1/D.2/Add.2, entitled “United Nations and the Common System: The risk of silent implosion”. The members expressed their grave concern at the situation described in the document and **gave the Union Committee the mandate to instigate, launch and promote action for the preservation of the international public service as the spearhead of United Nations action, together with all the associations, unions and federations of the Common System which wished to join this struggle.**

Staff Union Gender Audit: Programme implications

14. The Chairperson of the AGM then called upon the member of the Union Committee who was the focal point for issues relating to gender equality to present document SU/AGM/2005/1/D.2/Add. 3, entitled “Staff Union Gender Audit: Programme implications”. She explained the audit’s recommendations and the data, projected on a screen, detailing the distribution of men and women members of the Union by duty station. The members present at the AGM thanked the Secretariat for the statistics provided. They encouraged the Union Committee to follow the guidance provided by the document and supported its approach in combating discrimination between men and women.

International affiliation

15. The AGM then turned to item 4 of the Agenda: International affiliation (SU/AGM/2005/1/D.3). After the presentation of the document by the Chairperson of the Union Committee, the AGM discussed the issue. It adopted the following conclusions:

1. To inform the CCISUA of the intention of the ILO Staff Union to seek membership of this organization, and to request that this item be considered at the next CCISUA Council to be held in March 2005.
2. To inform all the staff Associations and Unions across the UN system of the intention of the ILO Staff Union to organize a symposium in Geneva, in principle in September 2005, gathering together as many staff representatives as possible to discuss the topics mentioned in paragraph 16 iii of document SU/AGM/2005/1/D.3; and
3. To actively pursue its efforts for system wide unity in action, at HQ as well as at field levels, and to actively contribute to effective mobilization in response to ICSC threats and actions.

Draft budget for the financial year 1 January to 31 December 2005

16. The Chairperson of the AGM requested the Chairperson of the Union to present the draft budget for the financial year 1 January to 31 December 2005 (SU/AGM/2005/1/D.4). The budget was adopted.

Report of the Board of the Staff Union Assistance Fund for the period 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004

17. Under item 6 of the Agenda, the General Secretary, as a member of the Board of the Staff Union Assistance Fund, presented the report of the Staff Union Assistance Fund for the period 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004 (SU/AGM/2005/1/D.5). He emphasized the importance of convincing new members to contribute to this solidarity fund and also indicated that a membership campaign would be launched in the near future. The report was adopted by the AGM.

18. In the absence of any other business, and following the usual exchange of courtesies, the Chairperson closed the First Session of the Annual General Meeting 2005.

The sitting rose at 4.30 p.m.