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Staff Council

UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN WOMEN
Staff Council

2022 Annual Report

Date: 8 February 2023

A Message from the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

As the chair of the 47th Staff Council, which took office on 1 November 2022, it is my great pleasure – on behalf of 47 - to thank all the members of the 46th Staff Council for their dedication and all the progress they achieved in 2022, and previous years, during the most challenging period globally in modern times.

I also want to pay tribute to all the staff and personnel of our four organizations who in 2022 continued to show flexibility, dedication, and commitment to supporting the Sustainable Development Goals.

As you will read in this Annual Report the 46th Staff Council in 2022 emphasized outreach to staff and was actively engaged in policy developments in all four organizations. The Council also had regular interactions with management and participated in working groups as well as undertaking the responsibilities in our Federation UNISERV including serving as Vice President. A major lasting achievement of the 46th Staff Council was the revision of our Staff Association Constitution.

I am pleased to present this Report on behalf of the Staff Council. On behalf of both the 46th and the 47th Staff Council we wish to express our appreciation to our colleagues across the globe and the UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner; UNFPA Executive Director, Natalia Kanem; UNOPS Acting Executive Director, Jens Wandel; and UN Women Executive Director, Sima Sami Bahous and their Human Resource management teams for their continued support in our mission to represent our colleagues across UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UN Women.

It is an honor serving you as you serve the people of the world.

With warm regards,

Michael H. Lund,

Chair, UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN Women Staff Council

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I. Introduction

This report is prepared in accordance with Article 8 of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN Women Staff Association/ Staff Council Constitution. It covers work of the Council as the principal body of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN Women Staff Association from 1st of January to 31st December 2022.

The 2022 Constitution of the UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UN Women Staff Association identified the following goals:

- promote and safeguard the rights, interests and welfare of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN Women staff;
- develop and improve effective staff participation in the decision-making process by maintaining active and open channels of communication with the Administration;
- promote better understanding between the Administration and the Staff of UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UN Women;
- promote cooperation and unity among Staff Associations and Unions in the United Nations and UN Specialized Agencies within one Common System on matters governing conditions of service;
- defend staff and work to improve terms and conditions of employment.

(Chapter I, Article 2 of the Constitution)

II. Staff Council Constitution Revision

The Staff Association functions through the Staff Council at HQ and through Local Staff Associations (LSA) in the field. While the Constitution refers to staff in line with the UN Regulations and Rules, the 46th Staff Council aimed to support personnel irrespective of contractual modality given the reality that two thirds of the workforce is on “non-staff” contracts.

The 46th Staff Council worked with a consultant to revise the 2013 Constitution and address some of its inconsistencies. The initial proposal for changes to the 2013 Constitution intended to accommodate the request of the majority of colleagues and LSAs to include all personnel as members of the Association. However, management endorsement on the text as required by the Staff Rules and Regulations (8.1 and 8.2) could not be obtained. However, there is a provision that non-staff can be associate members. Yet, representation of all personnel regardless of contract modality will be a matter that is brought to the level of the SMS and the Federations.

The [revised Constitution](#) was adopted in the referendum held on June 20- 22, 2022. This revised Constitution replaced the Constitution of the UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UNWOMEN Staff Association/ Staff Council from 2013.

New elements include:

- membership in the Association is no longer linked to dues payment; and includes all contractual types
- new governance structure, including a Global Forum with staff representatives from HQ and the field
- introduction of an electoral committee to adjudicate election-related complaints
- Reduction of positions on the Staff Council (from 13 to 11)
- Regularization of the tenure of office for elected staff representatives to 2 terms of 2 years each with a mandatory one term (2 years) break after 4 years of serving as a personnel representative. This is to conform with Article 8 of the UN Staff Rules and Regulations (Article 6.1a and Article 28.1)

III. Staff Council Structure

The 46th Staff Council was constituted on 9 April 2019. According to the Constitution, 13 seats were assigned as follows: 5 seats to UNDP, 2 seats to UNFPA, 2 seats to UNOPS, and 2 seats to UN Women, plus 2 seats that can be assigned to any agency.

The 46th Staff Association (Council) takes this opportunity to honor the current Polling Officers for their dedication to the work of the council and to thank them for their hard work and commitment to support the Association during their time in office. We hope they will choose to serve the staff in another capacity while supporting the work of the council.

Only one of the two UNOPS seats was filled. Since UN Women was the only agency with more candidates than seats, elections were only held in UN Women. As a result, two regular seats and two floating seats were filled by UN Women.

The members of the 46th Staff Council:

Abolade Sobola, UNFPA Representative

Amsale Admassu, UNDP Representative

Audrey Hyatt, UNDP Representative

Devika Parbhu, UNDP Representative (retired in July 2022)

Fikerte Assefa, UNDP Representative (resigned in December 2021)

Gulzada Bafina, UN Women Representative

Michele Parasmò, UNFPA Representative (left to another organization in June 2022)

Rohan Jones, UNOPS Representative

Sonya Thimmaiah, UN Women Representative

Sylvia Hordosch, UN Women Representative

Urjasi Rudra, UN Women Representative (left to another organization in January 2022)

Vesna Markovic Dasovic, UNDP Representative (retired in August 2022)

The Staff Council elected the following members of the Executive Committee:

Chair: Vesna Markovic Dasovic

First Vice-Chair: Sonya Thimmaiah

Second Vice-Chair: Abolade Sobola

General-Secretary: Amsale Admassu

Treasurer: Sylvia Hordosch

Secretariat: Baholy Andrianaivo and Tenagne Getahun (both UNDP)

UNDP funded three full-time positions - the Chair and the two Secretariat posts.

As of 2020, UNFPA provided full time release for the 2nd Vice-Chair and part-time release for the second representative and UNOPS also provided part-time release of its representative.

The Council met on a weekly basis on Tuesdays at 1.00 p.m. Written minutes are available from the Secretariat. Meetings were held in person until the onset of COVID-19 and continued then via Zoom.

Standing Committees

As per the 2013 Constitution, the following standing committees to support the Council should be in place: Polling Officers, Audit and Legal Committees.

In June 2021, the following Polling Officers were nominated who conducted the referendum for the revised Constitution before their resignation:

- Dan Malinovich – UNDP
- Michael Stewart-Evans – UN Women – resigned later on
- Momodou Baldeh – UNDP
- Oksana Leshchenko – UNDP
- Sandra Hood – UNFPA

The call for nominations for the 47th Council was advertised on 9 March 2022. Only 3 candidates applied, which prevented the establishment of the new Council. The sitting SC members agreed to raise awareness with an aim to inform the constituency with all organizations about the challenges, share the information on the upcoming processes and increase interest in nominations. The Council organized a number of global and NY centered meetings to update the staff on the staff Council, the UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UN Women Staff Association referendum and the elections for the Staff Council.

In June 2022, the current Polling Officers started their two-year term:

- Claudia Josephs – UNDP
- Donaldo Lopez – UNDP
- Janine St. Julian – UNDP
- Muthoni Muriu – UN Women

The 47th Staff Council

The 47th Staff Council was constituted on 1 November 2022. According to the Constitution, 11 seats were to be assigned as follows: 5 seats to UNDP, 2 seats to UNFPA, 2 seats to UNOPS, and 2 seats to UN Women. However only 6 of the seats have been filled: 1 UNDP, 2 UNFPA, 2 UN WOMEN and 1 UNOPS. By elections will be conducted to fill in the remaining 5 seats.

The members of the 47th Staff Council:

Patricia Cortes, UN Women Representative

Athena R Cortez, UN Women Representative

Henia Dakkak UNFPA Representative
Michael Lund, UNDP Representative
Danielle Okoro UNFPA Representative
Rohan Jones, UNOPS Representative

Legal and Audit Committees

Despite multiple attempts to invite colleagues to serve on the Audit and Legal committees, both committees remained vacant. The Council engaged an external auditor to audit the finances of the Staff Association on an annual basis. Reports are on file.

Annual General Meeting:

As guided by the 2013 Constitution, the Staff Council presented an annual work programme and 1st quarter budget to the constituency which was approved by the Annual General Meeting held on 4 February 2022. The 2021 Annual Report along with the financial report were also approved at the General Meeting.

The budget was approved for the first quarter only on the expectation of the election of the next Council to happen soon after the meeting.

IV. 2022 Annual Work Plan Implementation

OBJECTIVE 1: Fostering a healthy working environment in which personnel are engaged in decision-making

a. LOCAL STAFF ASSOCIATIONS (LSA) AND JOINT STAFF ASSOCIATIONS (JSA)

There are currently around 90 Local Staff Associations (LSA) as of December 2022. The Council provided support to colleagues in countries in which there is still no LSA. The Council also established a Regional Network of the LSAs in the Arab States Region, which is operational and active.

The Council was approached by colleagues and LSAs in the regions regarding support in organizing themselves, dealing with staff concerns and in bringing the country level associations together to discuss regional and country specific issues. Most often, the LSAs require support with elections, local salaries and change management processes. Thus, the SC will continue regular engagement with LSAs.

A survey conducted with the Local Staff Associations in 2021 clearly identified that an ongoing dialogue with the management was highly needed. It also showed a picture of such dialogues taking place in a low number of countries. The Staff Council planned to develop a training program to meet the expectations of LSAs but was not able to do so. Thus, a future goal should be to develop training

packages for staff representatives to support them in strengthening their capacities to perform their tasks and such training options will be discussed with UNISERV.

The Council organized an Annual Regional Meeting of Local Staff Associations of Country Offices in the Arab States in January 2020 in Cairo. There were also virtual meetings for Europe and Africa in 2021. The meetings provided the Local Staff Associations and Staff Council with an opportunity to exchange experiences. Nevertheless, with the new governance structure, the Global Forum should improve interactions.

b. OUTREACH TO PERSONNEL

The combined workforce of UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UN Women is about 36,000 personnel, of which only a third, about 12,000 colleagues, are staff as per the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) regulations. There are concerns about the potential further decrease in numbers of staff and the vulnerabilities related to existing and new contractual modalities.

The Council worked to increase **outreach to personnel**, organized and supported a significant number of in person and virtual events within each agency as well as sessions for personnel from all four agencies globally and in NYC. This included regular information sharing in NYC (in collaboration with the Secretariat Staff Union during the COVID-19 pandemic), global thematic sessions, town halls, and virtual breakfast meetings for personnel with the Staff Council. In addition, several surveys on various topics were conducted – during COVID, for LSAs.

- **Breakfast meetings with the Staff Council** were introduced in July 2020 for personnel in NYC and grew into a global meeting in which personnel shared and exchanged views on various topics. The questions, suggestions and ideas expressed in breakfast sessions were collated and communicated with the agencies' senior management for response and further action planning. The SC continues to document individual cases and identify trends across agencies.
- The Staff Council monitored **Policy development** in the member agencies. The Council has taken actions to improve collaboration and coordination with LSAs for future policy development work, which is still a work in progress as it is directly affected by the corporate priorities and short timelines for consultations. The experiences in UNDP, for example, where multiple policies have been developed and adopted in 2021 in a short period of time and in the middle of the pandemic emphasized the gaps in consultations with the staff across the board and a need for better processes to be put in place.

In **UNDP**, the practice of OHR sharing and briefing the Council on policies in the pipeline gives the Staff Council and the LSA an opportunity and time to provide inputs on the direction any of those policies should take as well as to provide suggested edits to the final draft.

The Staff Council was actively involved in various policy documents, such as: Individual Performance Management and Development (PMD) and Occupational safety in UNDP, a new

Internship policy; Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination & Abuse of Authority Policy; and Consultant/Individual Contractor Policy in UN Women.

The policy development process is still to be regulated and the roles and responsibilities clarified across the agencies. Once in place, Global Forum should be used to further develop those practices

OBJECTIVE 2: Maintain an ongoing dialogue on shared accountability with personnel and management.

Key areas of intervention

The following is a short overview of interaction with different stakeholders.

- **Regular interaction with management:** The Staff Council is mandated to liaise between the Administration/Management and the Staff Council (Article 2c of the Constitution) to promote better understanding between the management and the personnel of the four agencies. Regular meetings were held with the Administrator of UNDP and Executive Directors of agencies, with the presence of the Chair and agency representatives. Regular monthly meetings with the HR directors are a common practice in all agencies.
 - In **UNDP**, Staff and Management Consultative Group meetings (SMCG) provide the space for discussing processes, policies and ongoing personnel concerns regularly.
 - In **UNFPA**, there is a standing practice of quarterly meetings with the 2 Deputy Executive Directors and the Chief of Staff.
 - At **UN Women**, staff representatives met regularly with the HR director (on a monthly basis in the first two years), met monthly with one of the Deputy Executive Directors and met once or twice with the Executive Director every year.
- **Participation in working groups**
 - **UNFPA:** Staff representatives participated in the Anti-Racism working group, back to office working group and Diversity Equity & Inclusivity advocates group.
 - **UN Women:** Staff representatives regularly participated in a Covid working group, reintegration working group (to discuss future of work issues) and anti-racism working group
- **Diversity – anti-racism and anti-discrimination** within the UN system: Council members were actively involved in the SG's Task Force Working Groups on Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All. Staff Council Representatives actively participated in the four agencies' anti-racism response working groups. The Council initiated a process and UNOPS recognized Dr. Martin Luther King Day as a floating holiday in NY in 2021.

The Staff Council received a number of cases from active and former staff who pointed out the lack of equal opportunity and potentially discriminatory practice and policies – based on

gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age. However, even when feeling discriminated against, personnel often are reluctant to act due to the fear of retaliation. This again highlights a need for better policies and the practice to protect, which the Council is repetitively bringing to the senior management's attention.

- **Change management processes and the role of the Staff Representatives** remain challenging as they are often perceived by staff as lacking transparency. The Council was involved in several processes in four agencies, both in the HQ and in the field where the Council provided support to the LSAs and personnel. There is a concern that the Staff Council is co-opted by management in these processes which limits its ability to represent colleagues in cases of complaints. The importance of reinforcing the role of the Staff Council and the Local Staff Associations in representing staff interests and channeling staff concerns to ensure that their voices are communicated and heard in a structured way remains and should be regulated by a corporate policy. The agency regulation, practice and management openness for changes varies and requires additional efforts to bring those elements closer in the best interest of staff.
- **Contractual modalities:** The Staff Council continuously advocated for harmonization of contract modalities in the UN and in our agencies and a unified approach in respect to the ICSC modalities. Specific issues include: inequalities between staff and non-staff, national and international personnel, interagency mobility, length of FTA (the 46th Council asked for 5-year FTAs to start being issued).
- **Talent management:** The lack of opportunities for career development for General Service staff remains an issue that requires follow up and regarding performance management, there is a need to link the performance management to personal development and career progression.
- **Future work.** This is one of the most important areas of future work for the Staff Council. This includes discussions on traditional, hybrid and virtual work arrangements; developing rules for virtual work (issues of boundaries, online presence, etc.); concerns about relocation of posts to other duty stations. A number of surveys were conducted in NY since the beginning of the pandemic, some with the UN Staff Union and some at the level of the agencies. The results were shared and discussed with the management for the ongoing responses as well as for the future work planning.
- **Safety and security:** The Staff Council through the Inter-agency Security Management Network (IASMN), UNISERV and agency specific security management groups, provided staff perspectives to security and workplace safety related discussions and policies. There is a need to better involve staff serving in field locations in decision making on security related issues in the field locations.

- **Executive Boards:** This is a once-a-year opportunity to speak to Member Staff and highlight key priorities of the Staff Council. The Chair of the Staff Council speaks at the First Annual Session of the UNDP/UNOPS/UNFPA and at the UN Women Executive Board meetings. The timing of the presentation of the Staff Council's statement was moved to the beginning of the first annual Board Session (previously it was in September on the last day of the session).

OBJECTIVE 3: Engagement with the UN common system and staff associations and federations

- **UN COMMON SYSTEM, STAFF FEDERATIONS AND OTHER ENTITIES**
The Council engagement with the UN Common System is significant to support the rights and well-being of personnel. This includes work with the UN Staff Management Committee (SMC), Occupation and Health Committee (OSH) and Staff Federations.
- **The SMC** meets regularly to discuss relevant UN policies and initiatives. UNDP is an associated member of the Committee and the Council benefits from this engagement which provides insight into the general direction of UN policies related to conditions of service. The chair and two vice-chairs attended SMC meetings. The SMC also provides a platform for the Funds and Programmes' perspective on the topics to be shared in a larger UN staff association setting, including gender parity, competency framework, mobility, administration of justice, anti-racism, and discrimination and others. Staff Regulations and Rules limit right to association and representation to staff only. The status of all personnel has to be further discussed at the SMC for further action.
- **OSH Committee** (Occupational Safety and Health) The Staff Council participated and contributed to the New York OSHW committee which makes recommendations to the SG and UN senior management and which plays a key role in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The meetings which are chaired by the USG UNDSS take place on an ad hoc basis to come up with guidance to New York based staff and UN SG on practical occupational safety, health and wellness measures.
- **Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN)** meetings address policy and operational matters related to safety and security of UN personnel globally.
- **UN Secretariat Staff Union** There was a close collaboration during the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, including information sharing and joint events. It included coordinated daily information sharing for NY personnel as well as the organization of the global and NY events and sessions that covered a large spectrum of issues of relevance to the personnel such as the sessions on anti-racism, gender parity, mental health, G4 visa in NY and others.
- **Staff Federations:** The Staff Council is a member of the United Nations International Civil Servants Federation - **UNISERV** (<http://uniserv-federation.com>). It is an international Federation composed of the UN Field staff Union, UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN Women Staff

Association, UN Staff Union and UNESCO union. Only Staff Federations have access to inter-agency bodies. The Chair of the Staff Council is a member of the Executive Committee of UNISERV.

UNISERV represents member interests in inter-agency bodies that make decisions and recommendations on conditions of service, such as the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), Chief Executives Board (CEB), Human Resources Network (HRN), High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMIN), Fifth Committee and others. The other federations are FICSA and CCISUA. In 2020 the leadership of the three Federations (CCISUA, FICSA and UNISERV) signed a MoU and have been cooperating and coordinating since. They jointly addressed the Secretary-General several times in 2021 aiming to bring to his attention some of the relevant staff wellbeing related issues.

- The Staff Council participated in the **ICSC Commission's** working group to review the implementation of the current contractual framework by the organizations and any possible improvements within the current framework. (UN General Assembly Resolution 75/245).

OBJECTIVE 4: Strengthening the Staff Council

Team and capacity building: The Staff Council held one retreat with the support of trained facilitators on 14 and 15 January 2021 (two half days). A short training took place online with trainers from Clingendael Institute on the topic "Training on negotiations and mediations".

Communication: The Staff Council predominantly communicated via email and weekly virtual meetings during the COVID pandemic. The Council has maintained a website (<https://www.staffcouncil.org/>).

Support to personnel in addressing their concerns and grievances: The Council is actively involved in supporting personnel in addressing their concerns and grievances with management which includes a variety of concerns and issues that sometimes require simple interventions with Human Resource Offices and/or senior management, but often they require representation of an individual, group or larger office interests and protection of rights in negotiation with the management and the larger UN system decision-making bodies. Individual and group requests for support received from all four agencies have been recorded in the Council's Case Management System.

The Council is fully cognizant of the informal and formal justice mechanisms available and is fully committed to advocating for the improvement and shortening of the timelines for the justice mechanism to deliver solutions. Unfortunately, with processes such as investigations and tribunal cases taking years, the workplace dynamics are negatively affected. This requires hands-on and intensive support from staff representatives. In 2021 Council has been approached for support by several staff that have already initiated formal processes, simply because they feel stuck in their work and life due

to complexity of various channels of communication and duration of the processes. The Council 's ability to support such colleagues in the interim are limited.

V. 2021 Financial Statement

In 2022, UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UN Women provided financial support to the Council. In addition to providing general operating expenses, UNDP funded the position of the Chair and of two members of the Council secretariat. Significant additional support was provided to the Council's work through one full-time and one part-time release of the two UNFPA representatives and the part-time release of the UNOPS representative. The number of individual dues-paying members remains low and requires further action in 2023.

The Council manages funds through Atlas and a UNFCU account. A better system must be put in place to align the two processes. The 2022 annual budget was presented to and adopted by the Annual General Meeting.

Funds were also used to conduct an external finance audit and the referendum conducted to inform the revised constitution for which simple voting was engaged.

UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN WOMEN Financial Report	
1 January - 31 December 2022	
Opening balance on 1 January 2022	\$730,339.69
Income	
UNDP (General operating expenses (GOE))	\$50,000.57
UNFPA (Annual contribution)	\$20,000.00
UNOPS (Annual contribution)	\$60,000.00
UN Women (Annual contribution)	\$20,000.00
UNFCU interest	\$3,611.40
Membership dues	\$18,336.37
Subtotal	\$171,948.34
Expenditures	
UNISERV membership fee 2022	\$2,000.00

Travel (3 missions)	\$15,117.45
Audit report for both Staff Council and Paul Hoffman Fund (PHF)	\$4,000.00
Office supplies (4 phones, internet services & 3 new laptops)	\$10,261.59
Referendum (Simply voting Inc.) fee	\$2,164.00
Retreat 14-15 Dec 2022 (Consultant, catering)	\$3,188.25
Subtotal	\$36,731.29
Closing balance as of 31 December 2022	\$865,556.74

VI. PAUL HOFFMAN ASSISTANCE FUND

The Paul Hoffman Staff Assistance Fund is an independent fund established in 1975 to provide financial support to UNDP and UNFPA staff in need. The term of the Committee of the Fund was established in 2020 and has been extended for an additional term.

The members of the Committee are:

1. Mr. Riad Meddeb (UNDP) – Chairperson
2. Ms. Rose Sarr (UNFPA) – Vice Chairperson
3. Mr. Emmanuel Hatangimana (UNDP) – Treasurer
4. Mr. Jayesh Guilrajani (UNFPA) – First Secretary
5. Ms. Ana Maria Luey (UNDP) – Second Secretary

The final report from the Committee is pending after which a new committee will be established.