



**MEETING OF UN AGENCIES STAFF REPRESENTATIVES WITH THE SG
FUNSA PRESIDENT, NASSIROU BA'S SPEECH/ & SG RESPONSES
ADDIS ABABA HILTON
DECEMBER 1st ,2022**



M. Nassirou Ba, President of ECA Staff Union and President of FUNSA, welcoming the SG Mr. Antonio Guterres with the RC Ms Catherine Sozi at Addis Ababa Hilton

Introductory Speech delivered by Nassirou Ba

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

It is always an honor and a pleasure to have you in our walls and to be able to address you on behalf of ECA Staff and the entire UN staff in Ethiopia. **My name is Nassirou Ba**, Am from Mali and I am the President of **ECA Staff Union**, the President of **FUNSA** (the Federation of United Nations Staff Associations in Ethiopia), and also Vice President for Condition of Service for the **CCISUA** (Coordination Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations).

Sir, we have been interacting with your team on some critical issues: USG Catherine Pollard and her team and Chairman Larbi Djacta and his team. These issues are not easy, and they require a special attention. I am Co-Chair of the SMC Working group on "Delegation of Authority and also member of the SMC Working group on " Staff Selection and Mobility".

We have selected some issues to be discussed with you today and they will be delivered by different Staff representatives.

1. Reclassification of Addis Ababa and several other duty station in Ethiopia:

(This message was delivered by Nassirou Ba, UNECA)

The Staff Union has been talking about this for the last 6 years if I recall right. The reclassification of Addis Ababa from B to C duty station. There is a need to grant an early review to look at this and there might also be needed to further downgrade several other duty stations in Ethiopia. We have been raising this issue with ICSC persistently. The problem here in Ethiopia is that there is no strong collaboration between Staff Union and UNDSS in one hand and Staff Union and the OMT in another hand. So that this issue is not dealt with in a collaborative and inclusive way Sir, we the staff are the core reason of every decision in this duty station, It has been asking for 4 years now, we are still not part of the OMT and all we 've asked is to be included whenever staff issues are discussed?

The SG In his response gave the floor to Atul Kare from his team (USG of DOS) and the RC: They explained that some of the constraints are due to staff's weak participation to the Household survey , especially it was worth noting that the pullback comes from the biggest organizations like ECA where majority of staff still don't fill the surveys either properly or at all. But the SG asked the RC and Mr Kare to see how this can be addressed.

2. G to P: (This message was delivered by Nassirou Ba, ECA)

Sir, we know your firm stand on this and we appreciate but we need to always bring it up. The Staff Management Committee (SMC), has been working hard in the past years to provide compelling reasons including, positive effects on gender parity, equitable geographical representation, ensuring the highest standards of efficiency, competency and integrity, amongst others, to provide strong arguments for the discontinuation of what they feel to be a clearly discriminatory practice against colleagues serving in the General Service (GS) and related categories or as Field Service Staff (FS). Given the importance of the matter in promoting a flexible, dynamic and motivated UN workforce, the staff side calls on both the S-G to consider both the recommendations of the ACABQ and the SMC working group to promptly establish, under the SG direct authority, an internal programme targeted at improving the career opportunities of the GS and related categories as well as those of the FS staff across the Secretariat.

In its response, the SG mentioned that he will not stop asking the GA for this and this has remained in its agenda and he will always push it.

3. Multi-Linguism: This message was delivered by Dr. Ahmed Fahmi from World Health Organization (WHO)

Sir, another topic, where we know you support us, because yourself you speak at least 3 international languages. Sir, we want the multi-linguism to be taken seriously in the UN and particularly at ECA where our flagship meetings are all conducted in English while we have the 4/6 subregional offices which are French speaking: IDEP/ Dakar, SRO/ CA- Cameroon, SRO/WA -Niger, SRO/NA-Rabat. Since French is an official language of the UN, we the staff Union on behalf of the staff request that starting immediately that all the flagship meeting be simultaneously translated from English to French by a touch of a button, to give the sense of belonging to this vast majority who feel excluded. To give you an example, I have toured the ECA subregional offices Sir, this is their demand, and we feel very strongly about it. No more big meeting, in strictly English. It is possible to do the translation for the big flagship meetings such as ARFSD and COM, there must be a way to do it for the rest of the big meetings.

In its response the SG acknowledged the importance of Multi Linguism in the organization. He said that for meetings involving member states it is a must that translation be done. But for local meetings, at duty station level he encouraged the ES a.i. to find budget for translation at least from English to French and vice versa.

4. Staff Union Participation at OMT: (This message was delivered by Nassirou Ba UNECA)

Given that the Operation Management Team (OMT) provides guidance, recommendations and management support to the UNCT on operational matters and importantly nurtures the mandate and purpose of “Delivering as One initiative”, the Federation of the Staff Unions in Ethiopia, namely FUNSA, has asked to be part of the OMT whenever staff issues are discussed. The Staff feel that the lack of representation of staff in the OMT when discussing staff-related matters, forces them to react to decisions instead of participating in them. We want to collaborate; we are not the opposition party. We have repeatedly written to the RC Catherine Sozi, without a response. We respect the RC and commend her for her good job in handling the so-many issues and crises in the country and we interact with her, and she frequently talk to us whenever we need briefing. But when it comes to us sitting at OMT she is irresponsive, and we do not understand. From New York to Geneva, to Bangkok, the Staff Unions reps from SMC (Staff Management Committee) and CCISUA (Coordination Committee for International Staff Union and Associations) are consulted and contribute to critical issues and by the way, I am the Vice President for Condition of Service for CCISUA as such I interact a lot with HQ management and ICSC. We would like the RC to consider FUNSA to sit at the OMT.

In his response the SG asked the RC how this operates. The RC gave an explanation to the fact that OMT is for operation and that is why she thought Staff Union is not really concerned and also that the new Operational Safety and Health Committee (OSHC) is being formed and staff Union is part of that. Mr. Nassirou replied that what FUNSA is asking is that “whenever issues related to staff are discussed, that FUNSA should be invited to the table” and he added OSHC has been created on the insistence and persistence of FUNSA and FUNSA drafted the first TOR with UN Clinic. The SG said he leaves the issue in the hand of the RC to judge when staff should be invited and he encourages staff inclusion in decision making.

5. Harassment, Retaliation and Abuse of Authority:

This message was delivered by Ms. Kalkidan Getahun from UNHCR:

We know very well your stand on this. The Staff Union is aware of cases of harassment, retaliation and abuse of authority, reported by staff members against very senior functionaries in the organization. The staff unions provide support and resources to staff members through the various channels that are available within the organization to seek redressal of their complaints. However. The staff side feels that not all such staff members use the official channels to submit their grievances, due to the fear of further retaliation and possibly loss of job as well. The instances of staff coming to the Staff Union with such grievances has only increased in the past 2 years.

It needs to be understood by Managers, FROs (First reporting officers) and SROs (Second reporting officers) that this will not be tolerated and We the Staff Unions will accompany and support staff in their journey of redressal and will stand by them. It is not Ok because you are Director, Chief of Unit/section, DES and even ES that you can take the liberty to harass the staff. Sir, the increase of such complaints reaching our desks is just phenomenal and honestly it needs to stop not only at ECA but in all UN Funds and Programs too and it needs to stop everywhere.

the response of the Sg was that there is a zero tolerance on the harassment issue and he asked FUNSA to provide him the name of the organization where harassment and abuse of authority is still an issue and it will be dealt with.

6. Locally Recruited ICs with Precarious Contracts:

(This message was delivered by Nassirou Ba UNECA)

Mr Secretary General, I would like to talk about the Individual Contractors who are a good 30% to 40% of our workforce and with precarious contracts. In fact, it is a known fact that we cannot achieve our work without them. These men and women, some with 20 to 25 years of service with the UN have no benefits whatsoever and they have to break the service every 9 months for 3 months and then come back again. **Sir**, when they reach retirement, they have nothing to live on. Many wanted you to hold a townhall so they could interact with you on the floor. Although, this issue is on our plate at the SMC level, we want you to help convince the Management side that something needs to be done for this category of Staff. This is the United Nations! How come the Funds and Programs have successfully dealt with this and the Secretariat can't. **Sir**, please do something about it. This is about **Inclusion and Humanity**. We call on you to support their cause for sustainable jobs.

The response of the SG was that it is not acceptable that the UN continues to hire people on 9 months basis with 3 months break for extended period. Nassirou explained that for instance at ECA the ICs can be there for 20 years on these types of precarious contract and with nothing built for the retirement and no health insurance. Ms Emebet Mesfin, former president of ECA Staff Union and FUNSA who was invited by Mr Nassirou, added more by telling the SG that the secretariat needs to change its policy and give proper employment contracts to this category of UN employees. The SG was really surprised that this is going on and ask Mr Atul Kare to bring this up to HQ so it can be looked at closely. He said the Secretariat needs to improve in this practice.



UN Staff Unions facing the the RC Catherine Sozzi, Mr Atul kare , USG of DOS, the SG Antonio Guterres and the ES a.i. Antonio Pedro

7. Key Performance Indicators (KPI): Geographical representation and Regional Diversity.

(This message was delivered by Nassirou Ba UNECA)

Mr. Secretary General, we are proud as Staff Union to report that ECA is the most diverse among all the Regional Commissions. Sir, in the last year only ECA has recruited the following: During the last year ECA has recruited 15 non-African citizens: 1 (China) , 1 (Rep of Korea) 1 (rep of Venezuela) 1 (Japan), 1 (Indian), 3 (UK), 2 (USA) 1 (Italy) and 4 (Brazil). In another word: 3xD1, 3xP5, 4xP4, 3xP3 and 6xP2

While there are regional Commissions with Zero Africans, not because Africans don't qualify Sir, no!...it is their hidden policy to recruit only from their own regions. Am sorry to be so blunt, when you our Boss, the Secretary General, is fighting racism and discrimination in this organization to its core. Isn't time to establish a quota for each Regional Economic Commission to hire from other regions which is not their own so together we install "Diversity" and "Inclusion" in this organization. It is time to see Africans in ESCAP, ECLAC, EEC, ESCWA, etc..

In his response the SG said he will not institute quota but rather he will emphasize on all other Economic Commission Jobs openings to be advertised in the other Commissions so that staff from ECA and others get more exposed to opportunities elsewhere apply and on top of that he will encourage the other Executive Secretary to recruit outside of their regions.

8. Lifting of Visa request for UNLP Holders: Plea to Ethiopian Government to stop requesting entry Visa for UNLP holders not residing in Ethiopia:

(This message was delivered by Ezgi Meles from FAO)

Sir, we can understand that this measure was put in place as part of the security during the last Ethiopian crisis. But it doesn't make any sense to request entry visa for UNLP holders entering the country who are not Ethiopia residents. Addis Abba is the HQ of UNECA and dozens operations place for several dozens of Funds and Programs. This measure should be lifted now. We call upon you to discuss with UNCT and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The SG response was that can be dealt with the government and he ask Atul Kare to remind him when he will meet with the Ethiopian High Authority . He endorsed Staff Unions' request.

9. Selection of the upcoming New ECA ES: This last point discussed was ECA specific and due to the sensitivity of the topics, most of the details will not appear here in this report

The ECA Staff Union President, Mr. Nassirou Ba, invited his predecessors, namely Mr. Joseph Baricako and Ms. Emebet Mesfin for the discussion about the "Selection of the upcoming New ES for ECA.

The three of them represent more than a decade of ECA life and they highlighted what they think should be considered when that selection will happen. Mr. Nassirou pointed out that at this point in time, Staff Union doesn't think "**Gender**" should play too much in the scale, since in the SG's Senior Management Group (SMG).currently, there are 44 members, among which 27 are women and 17 are male. Mr Nassirou gave more statistics to the SG and just concluded that what is needed is the "**right person for this job**".

The SG responded that he appreciates all the inputs from the Staff Union but he would like to take this decision alone. Nassirou added that it was just the view of the staff and that they remain behind the SG and his leadership.



Ethiopia UN Agencies Staff Union Representatives with the SG

Thank You for Your Attention