



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa
Nations Unies
Commission économique pour l'Afrique

STAFF UNION



SYNDICAT DU PERSONNEL

MISSION REPORT

Official Visit of ECA Staff Union to IDEP
Institute for Development and Economic Planning,

Dakar/Senegal

Mahamadou Nassirou Ba, President, ECA Staff Union

Mission report: Nassirou Ba and Mbatiao Samb

24-28 October, 2022

Background

The President of ECA Staff Union visited IDEP from October 24-28 with the purpose of (i)



(ii) meeting the staff physically, listen to their issues and together design solutions, (ii) sensitising the staff members in the benefit of joining the ECA Staff Union and (iii) meet with management to also get it issues and views on the advancement of the office.

Senegal had a very strict Covid 19 prevention measures, and the office was closed and operated on telecommuting mode. Staff Union has always been in contact with the IDEP staff on personal and general issues. This follows the decision of the staff Union General Assembly decision for Staff Union to visit all SROs and discuss issues closely.

About IDEP: The African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) is a pan-African institution established in 1962 by the United Nations General Assembly. It started its activities on November 1963 with the main objective of accompanying and assisting newly independent African countries in building their human resource capacities as a prerequisite for maintaining independence and promoting socio-economic development. Its core activities, derived from its mandate, revolve around a portfolio of capacity development and training programs, as well as a range of policy research and dialogue initiatives. It also provides on-demand advisory services to governments and public institutions and serves as a forum for the exploration of alternative thinking on Africa's development.

The Institute is a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and fully integrated to ECA now. It is headquartered in Dakar, Senegal, and includes all 54 African member states. IDEP is the pioneering pan-African institution established on the African continent for the development, upgrading and/or updating of the technical skills and competencies of mid-career and senior officials in economic management and development planning.

In the years since its inception, IDEP has worked primarily within its mandate to support African governments in their training and capacity development efforts in the areas of economic management and planning. To this end, IDEP works closely with the ministries of finance, economic development and planning of its African member states to assess their needs and develop general, specialized and customized courses for their mid-career and senior officials. It also works with various ministries concerned with Africa's socio-economic development. In addition to its core mandate of training and capacity development, the Institute also conducts related policy research on various themes of economic management and development planning. In addition, it provides policy advisory services at the request

of member states, tailored to the specific needs of the requesting governments. Finally, the Institute also organizes a regular series of policy dialogues, public seminars and policy conferences.

Content of the Program: The program will consist of :

1. Meeting with the Director
2. Meeting all the staff together
3. Meeting staff on individual basis
4. Presentation of the Staff Union roles and activities
5. Presentation of the Staff Management Committee (SMC)
6. Presentation of the CCSIUA (Coordination Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations)
7. Presentation of FUNSA (Federation of the United Nations Staff Association in Ethiopia) and hoping to meet on the ground any such Federation of Staff Association in Dakar
8. Presentation of UN Staff Rules: Focused on Article 8
9. Presentation of UN values and Behaviours
10. Presentation of UN Next Normal
11. Presentation on ECA Integrated Chain Management
12. Courtesy visit to the UN resident Coordinator in Dakar

PROCEEDINGS

The majority of staff members already knew and met the President, during his previous nonstaff union related trips. This made the meetings easier and very friendlier.

1. Background

As mentioned earlier this visit falls into the decision of the last General Assembly of the Staff Council which stipulated that the union should visit all the SROs and IDEP. Thus, the Executive Committee organized these visits. IDEP was the 4th office to be visited after Lusaka, Rabat and Kigali. Niamey and Yaoundé will follow. Usually, the president is accompanied by a member or two but for this visit to Dakar, for budgetary reasons, he went alone.

2. Meeting with Staff

Discussion with the Staff:

- a. At first glance, the IDEP staff still seems to be left behind. Although IDEP integration to ECA through UMOJA was completed 2 years ago, some loose-ends remain, and staff are not enjoying all the privileges of that integration yet.
- b. Exploration/Necessity of post reclassification: Harmonization of positions: it was mentioned during the meeting with Staff Union, that there are discrepancies in posts attribution in SROs and IDEP, meaning all the SROs don't have the same structure, and this can be source of problems. And also, SROs and IDEP don't have the same staff structure. An harmonization of posts of some sort is more than necessary and urgent to avoid speculation: This will be discussed with HR and ES a.i.
- c. The posts of NOA and NOB exist only at IDEP. At the other SROs and Addis the NO posts are mostly NOC and NODs. This needs to be discussed with the top leadership in Addis Ababa.
- d. List of ECA staff: IDEP Staff said they are still not on the ECA master Staff list except for P and D staff. The IDEP national Staff are not registered on ECA master staff list. Staff Union promised to look into that.

- e. IDs/Badges and Passes are still not given to IDEP staff: Visiting ECA, they are recognized as mere guests/visitors by security, with all the consequences that this produces. Issue will be discussed with Addis and swift action will be taken.
- f. They have no UNLP and even when asked ahead of official missions, the process is so long that they never get it. To be discussed with HR.
- g. Transition from G/NO to P. Staff need to know what is in their reach and what is not. Staff Union will discuss with HR
- h. The distribution of roles in UMOJA needs to be reviewed because some are overloaded. This issue will be discussed with HR
- i. Salary increase: Local Staff Salary Survey (this was discussed with the Senegal UN Resident Coordinator Office). Local salary increment
- j. Multi-linguism: IDEP is in Senegal and almost all its staff are francophone. ECA should make an effort for multi-linguism to be reinforced at ECA as for now everything is just done in English (preference for English). The proposal is that, for meetings involving all staff, translation should be provided, and meeting should be held in both English and French. Furthermore, interventions should be allowed to be made in French for those who want to speak in French. This was brought to the ES a.i. attention and also discussed with New York.
- k. Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA): The staff have argued and expressed their desire to be allowed FWA for 2-3 days per week (work from home) given the circumstances in which they deliver results (stress, fatigue, heavy traffic in Dakar, etc.) . This was extensively discussed with the staff and with the Management and Staff Union is encouraging Management to find a way to implement at least the 2 days project of telecommuting from home to refer to the “Next Normal” initiative. This goes with staff commitment, engagement and professionalism. The Staff Union President encourage and support the 2 days telecommuting from home in the condition that it is neither abused nor does it hamper the swift delivery of outputs. This can be monitored by Chief of Sections and the Director.
- l. Recruitment of non-national staff at IDEP: How is that a GS position be occupied by a non-national staff? The staff want Staff Union to verify the ST/AI for employment of non-national staff for GS position. The Staff Union will discuss this with HR .
- m. Elections of IDEP representatives: Election will be done soon and IDEP will elect a member of the Council and the alternate member like every other ECA divisions and SROs. This is different from the Local Staff Union election.

3. Presentation of the Staff Union Council

The President made a presentation on the Staff Council structure and how it is elected

4. Presentation of the Executive Committee

The President made a presentation on the Staff Union Executive Committee structure and how it is elected.

5. Presentation of FUNSA

The President made a presentation of FUNSA (Federation of United Staff Associations) in Ethiopia, its structure and how it functions. The Presidency of FUNSA always given to the ECA/Staff Union as the largest organization. This is a tacit agreement among the staff Unions. This is so because ECA staff Union President sits at the Staff Management Committee (SMC) in New York and also at CCISUA in Geneva (Coordination Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations), and as such has a

chance to bring on the table, cross cutting issues among UN agencies, and could be in a position to defend the rights and privileges of the UN Staff in Ethiopia e.g.. paternity leave

6. Questions & Answers

- Q: Is there a membership card that proves Union membership?
- A: We used to have membership card” but for budgetary reasons we stopped making them.
- Q: What documents could enlighten the member on their privileges ○ A: Yes, there are documents, sometimes only in English. Staff Union will send. An effort will be made to translate in French. The need is there because the ECA has 4 French-speaking sub-offices; An effort must therefore be made.
- Q: How do the President and Staff Union members manage the professional life and union activities?
- A: There is a circular (ST/AI/293) that deals with the discharge on working hours for the President and members of the Executive Committee and the Council. Staff Union will circulate.
- Q: Is there a differentiation in terms of entitlements for headquarters staff in Addis and IDEP staff?
- A: No, there is no difference when it comes to the rights of staff members and the union is committed to ensuring that every staff has full rights within the organization.
- Q: What are the benefits for people who are members of the union?
- A: In addition to being able to benefit from the services rendered by the Executive Committee in terms of rights and welfare, one of the advantages could be seen financially; For example, to have loans or loan guarantees to be able to carry out personal projects. Staff Union also provide loans from its own budget.
- Q: How are salary increases going? because some time ago, the staff in Addis benefited from it, whereas at IDEP it was not.
- A: Local Salary increase depends on the results from Local Staff Salary Survey (LSSS). That is done in each country level. The question will be put to the UNRC when the President meet the RC
- Q: Contract on a long duration instead of one year: possibility to review this?
- A. It seems that there is no uniformity at ECA for contract extension. That will be discussed with HR Addis
- Q: Why should a staff stay 10 years at the same level?
- A: That's the system. There is no promotion in the UN, one has to compete. That's the way it is. The United Nations does not promote internally. Moreover, at the ECA, internal rostered staff are not given the chance to be automatically chosen when they apply for positions. This will be discussed with Top management in Addis. However, this is also one of the demands of the Action Plan of Staff Engagement-2022.
- Q: Are G staff eligible for the *Education grant*?
- A: No, it's for internationals staff only.
- Q: Staff mobility ○ A: The new Staff Mobility announcement will be made soon. Staff representatives in the Staff Management Committee (SMC) have worked with Management in New York to revised the New Mobility ST/AI. . The revision was done and many paragraph were changed. What staff wanted was an optional mobility. Staff Union has already made several announcements on this.
- Q: Staff Union Contribution to Staff work/Life balance ○ A: This was discussed at length with focus on the well-being of the staff, including the establishment of a relaxation area (cafeteria/lounge/gym). The President reassured IDEP staff members that if the request is made to Staff Union, it will get favorable treatment.

In Conclusion, on the issue of recruiting foreign (non-Senegalese) staff to G posts, the President said it could be a regional law like that of ECOWAS or a bilateral agreement, but he will look into it. He added that the G staff in Addis are regularly accepted for G positions in New York and he says that even as they speak 2 staff are preparing to join the Headquarters in G positions.

7. Presentation of Upper Structure of Staff Union

Staff Management Committee (SMC) which operate at New York and CCSIUA (Coordination Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations) based in Geneva **Questions and Answers after the Presentations**

- Q: What are the possible means of action of UN staff unions (e.g. right to strike) in the event that dispute resolution mechanisms (e.g. conciliations) do not work ?
- A: No, UN staff do not have the right to strike because everything is in place to appeal and to negotiate. Ombudsman office is there to conciliate. However, they have the right to boycott.
- Q: Is there a hierarchy between SMC and CCISUA?
- A: No hierarchy. They are two sister organizations that deal with the staff issues of the United Nations and other sister agencies. CCISUA is broader than SMC as SMC is mostly Secretariat organizations.
- Q: Regarding the provisions for reporting abuse, doesn't that open up the door for staff to use the system to hide their shortcomings, etc.?
- A: According to the President, their work is based on the presumed honesty of union members to tell the truth when necessary. It is up to the staff to talk to their managers, in case of negligence on their part, instead of considering certain situations as abuse of power. There may be controversial rating situations during performance evaluation, but the new Epas format allows for frequent discussions between manager and staff.

8. Other topics discussed with IDEP staff and leadership

Following the reopening of offices and the requirement for staff to physically be present at the office, staff felt that there is a need to discuss ways and means to still keep some telecommuting. They asked for flexibility to adopt a hybrid form of work (2-3 days of presence in the office and the rest of the week in teleworking). This seems to depend on the discretion of the Director, who has a delegation of authority, with regard to the new arrangements for the integration of FWA (tele-working) in the Next-Normal. However, the President informed that he had discussed it with the Director and called for everyone's wisdom, professionalism and responsibility to avoid abuses (late reactions to interpellations related to work; weak reachability; respect for the time of physical presence in the office; respect for office hours remote work; deliver the results). According to him, the heads of divisions/sections will be able to set up a niche to ensure that the time of presence at work in the office or remotely is respected. In any case, it is a provision to be considered for the move to Diamniadio.

Values & Behaviours

The Framework

- Builds on the competencies' strength and transform them to better reflect the goals of the organization for the next decade.
- Takes into account the constant changing nature of the world.
- Renews our commitment to the people we serve.



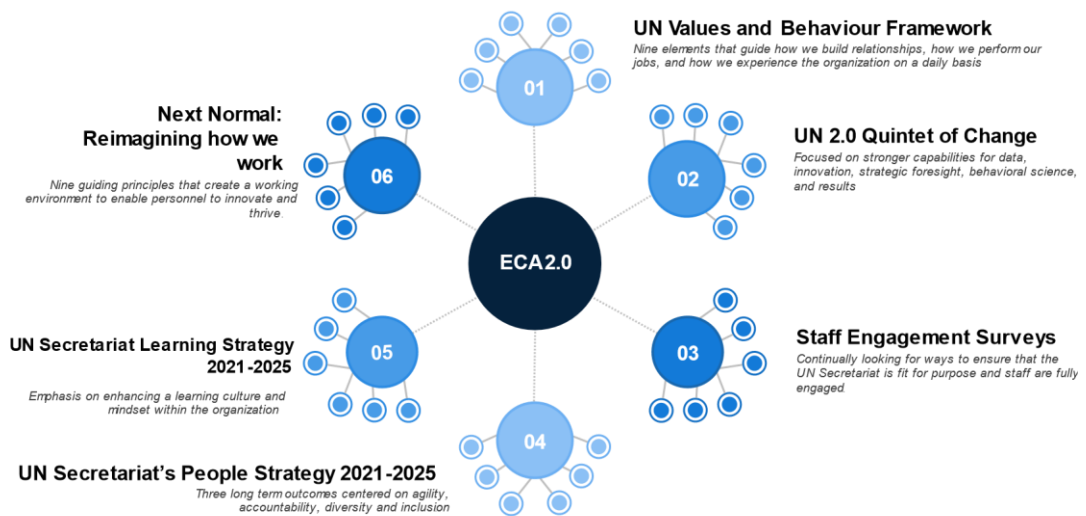
9. Presentation of: Values and Behaviours

For this presentation the Director of IDEP Participated in her capacity as champion of “Values and Behaviours” at the ECA Level

Items presented:

- Integrated chain management approach: the different frameworks are interrelated Inclusion, integrity, humility and humanity. These 4 values are the result of many investigations, verifications and interviews. The observation was that we focused on the deliverables without paying attention to the means of achieving them. Thus the question of where humility and humanity are to be found in this framework. Even the living environment/conditions of the staff counts. This makes it possible to take into account the general interest of the organization.

The opportunities



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Integrated Chain Management Schema

- The revision of these values was made on the basis of the former UN competencies that already existed. Those competencies still exist some how but are merged with these new schemes.
- Regular dialogue is necessary to dilute tension, allowing reach-out between colleagues and supervisors): once a month or even more.
- Need for each division and section to support it

10. Intervention of the Director of IDEP, Ms. Karima



- According to her, Covid has made it possible to reflect on the value of the human. The staff could work and deliver under stress. This must have an impact on everyday activities. At the individual level, belonging to the UN makes it possible to serve the world in the context of work.
- The aspects were discussed at the level of leadership dialogue (already done at IDEP). Which allows to go in depth.
- ECA is one of the departments that has made more progress. She and the current acting ES, Mr Antonio Pedro, have benefited from awareness-raising training to identify bottlenecks where more work needs to be done. They had the opportunity to discuss with the staff and this during different townhalls, SLTs, with HR as part of integrated change management. A lot of effort is being made to spread this culture at all levels. From 2023 it will be at the level of e-pas.
- According to her, everyone is learning during this implementation and colleagues need to ask questions. This should make it possible to reflect this at our level by appropriating these new values and ensure that they are well assimilated and become a reality in the context of change management.
- In other institutions, some constraints in relation to the implementation of values and behaviours are linked to a lack of leadership involvement.
- After the results of the Staff engagement survey, an interesting analysis was carried out at IDEP level so that a plan was made to make it possible to define IDEP own priorities. These priorities can be translated into better performance at IDEP. e.g. communication at ECA level is not the same as at IDEP level: internal communication, etc.

11. Questions from the floor

- Q: Humanity vs. technology? Isn't UMOJA replacing the staff?
- A: The President reframed by calling not to confuse humanity as a physical subject but rather humanity as a human value; that is, to be sensitive to others. e.g., one person does not have all the solutions. A leader can learn from a supervisee. We must all work together. In addition, UMOJA is set up by humans; It is the context of a moving world that demands it.
- Q: How do I measure values? Assessment of the degree of humanity/humility?
- A: The new e-pas system addresses several problems, namely, regular meetings (recorded on paper) between manager and staff. These discussions make it possible to dilute any tension, talk about problems and find solutions. If an issue is overlooked, the materials of these discussions may be used.
- Q: Why does ECA offer jobs to citizens of countries on other continents? Is it just diversity or is it because skills don't exist in Africa?

- A: The positions are UN positions and are open to everyone. The decision is made by the hiring manager. Managers, ESs and SG have an obligation to achieve objectives and commitments such as respect for cultural/regional diversity, geographical representation, gender balance. But the President said that the questions need a closer look as other continents Un don't recruit as much from Africa.

12. Presentation of UN "Next Normal".

With Covid there have been gains in terms of carbon footprint reduction and other charges like electricity, water, telephones, etc. The possibility of integrating the hybrid working aspect by strengthening the provisions of Flexible Working Arrangement (FWA) was then discussed. Agility here consists in giving the staff the latitude to telecommute from home. Indeed, it has been observed that significant gains in teleworking concerning the possibility of producing more and delivering better without coming to the office. But in the case of prolonged telecommuting outside the duty station when allowed, the benefits associated with the position are expected to be lost in a prolonged telecommuting situation, the parties concerned chose to discuss a better way to innovate in the workplace. In this case, the focus is that the outputs must be higher, and the values and behaviours applied. This calls for the professional conscience of all UN staff.

13. Questions from the Floor:



- Q: Inclusion of people living with disabilities?
- A: There is a committee dealing with these issues.
- Q: Taking care of the mental health of the staff? (Health professional in SROs and IDEP)
- A: The professional in charge of the Mental Health issue at ECA is only English-speaking, whereas for some staff, consulting a doctor to talk about mental health problems requires being able to communicate in French. According to Ms. Karima, a system is set up by the UNRC in Dakar with 2 staff counsellors; and during Covid there was another counsellor. Some colleagues have used it.
- Q: Surely physical and virtual consultations have a difference?
- A: Of course, but many people consult virtually even if they are in Addis.
- Q: Is diversity reflected in the consideration of other working languages during meetings?
- A: The debate is ongoing and next year, during the big meetings (town hall and APPRM) **hopefully** interpretation will be possible.
- Q : Activités de teambuilding?
- A: Managers need to organize team-build activities.
- Q: Is capacity building for staff funded by the institution?
- A: No, there is no budget for that. However, time is allocated for each staff to do 1 week of professional training.

14.Diverse

- Find the solution for the material/equipment depreciated always keep in the premises before moving to Diamniadio.
- Meeting with UNCT: salary surveys in Senegal (current salary freeze for Dakar, but a new survey is being launched); move to Diamniadio; Need to rethink telework with distance in mind.

Conclusion:

The mission allowed the Staff Union president to interact with IDEP staff on many issues used to be partially or never been discussed.

The Director is leaning to accommodate most of the Staff request in the condition that output delivery and staff professionalism and engagement are not compromised.

Many miscellaneous issues were brought back to HRSM and were resolved and/or in the way to be resolved.

IDEP Staff are all paying- member of Staff Union and engaged to support the Staff Union in its endeavour to preserve and protect staff rights, privileges, safety, security, and wellbeing.

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