



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 Subregional Office of North Africa

Rabat/ Morocco

Mahamadou Nassirou Ba, President, ECA Staff Union
Messkir Lemma, Chairperson, ECA Staff Council Bureau
Hiwot Tadesse, Administrative Assistant, ECA Staff Union

19 - 22 September 2022

BACKGROUND

A delegation of three-member mission from ECA Staff Union visited the Subregional Office of North Africa, Rabat from 19 to 22 September 2022 with the purpose of (i) meeting the staff physically, listen to their issues, proposals, asks and together design solutions, (ii) of sensitising the staff members in the benefit of joining the ECA Staff Union and (iii) meet with management to also get their issues and views on issues on the office .

It was noted that Morocco was one of the African countries with the strictest Covid 19 prevention measures and curfew for the general population. The SRO/NA was practically closed and almost everyone was working from home until very recently. Staff Union has always been in contact with the staff on personal and general issues. To this effect a technical team composed from the Staff Council comprising of 2 member and a support staff went to Rabat:

Mr. Mahamadou Nassirou Ba, President of the Staff Union executive Office
Mr. Messkir Lemma, Chairperson of ECA Staff Union Council Office
Ms Hiwot Tadesse, Administrative Assistant, ECA Staff Union

About the Office: The Subregional Office for North Africa (SRO-NA) is located in Rabat (Morocco). It is headed by a Director who reports to the Deputy Executive Secretary (Programme). Its main objective is to contribute to achieving structural transformation and balanced development through implementation of an environment conducive to the creation of employment for women and young people in North Africa. Its core functions are as follows:

- Strengthening the capacity of member States in the subregion to design and implement national policies and strategies for sustainable employment creation.
- Contributing to the implementation of subregional development priorities in line with the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 with due consideration for youth and gender perspectives;
- Improving macroeconomic policies and fiscal policies, and to ensure sustainable growth.
- Providing relevant technical assistance to member States and to regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations in building their capacities to sustain economic, social and political transformation, with a particular focus on employment, skills and balanced development, with the aim of ensuring inclusive growth, taking into consideration access to equal opportunities for women and young people.

The office covers 6 member states: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia.

The agenda: The visit had the following pre-set agenda which was the outcome from a virtual consultation with the local Staff Union representatives

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 Rabat/Morocco
8. Presentation of UN Staff Rules: Focused on Article 8
9. Presentation of UN values and Behaviours
10. Presentation of UN Next Normal
11. Courtesy visit to the UN Resident Coordinator in Morocco

Proceedings

The mission was welcomed by the Director Ms. Zuzana Schwidrowski with whom the delegation had a long conversation on different administrative and staff issues. The delegation also had a conversation with the local staff union members. We discussed about staff security and wellbeing, and they relate to staff union functions. The Director mentioned that the SRO/NA was almost on full virtual working until recently when the physical presence in office was allowed by the government.

Day 1

After the welcome meeting with the Director, the delegation has an all-staff meeting at the big conference room in hybrid format where staff who were out of the country on mission and /or out of the office that day could also join. Several presentations were made:

1. Presentation of the Staff Union Executive committee and its role
2. Presentation of the Staff Union Council and its role
3. Presentation of FUNSA
4. Presentation of SMC (the Staff management Committee) and CCISUA (Coordination Committee of International Staff Associations)

After that presentation, there was a session on Questions and Answers (Q&A) In the afternoon, the delegation met with the local Staff Union and discuss specific issues pertaining to staff and to the office in general.

Day 2

Day two was filled with interesting meetings. We first met with the SRO/NA local staff Union again, to clarify some staff union functional issues and respond to questions.

- 1) Meeting with the SRO/NA Local Staff Association: Addis representatives responding to all questions and providing clarifications
- 2) Meeting with UN Morocco Federation of Staff Associations: We had a meeting with the Federation of Staff Union in Morocco which have only four core founder Staff Unions: UNDP, UN Woman, UNICEF and UNFPA Mr. Faissal Khattabi. We discussed their mode of functioning and the how and why they are only 4 members while the country has a dozen of UN agencies. Mr. Khattabi gave us the reasons but was quick to mention that all the agencies are tacit members as they all work together and also all the benefits agreed with the 4 members of the federation are automatically applied to other UN agencies. We asked the question of inflation in Morocco and how the federation is handling it. His response was that the inflation in Morocco was very low and has been that way for many years. It is at a level where it doesn't affect the local staff income that much to trigger any action according to him. Although we didn't fully agree with him as staff mentioned continuous increase prices against almost a fixed salary.

Presentations: -

(a) UN Staff Rules: ST/SGB 2018/1 (Article 8)

The Staff Union President presented the Staff Rules with focus on Article 8 which points out the privileges of the Union and clarifies the relation with management. The presentation was made by the President and he insisted that every staff needs to familiarize him/herself with the Staff Rules as it helps understand the day to day operation of the organization. He emphasized on Article 8.1 (a) and 8.1.(b): see below

Regulation 8.1

- (i) The Secretary-General shall establish and maintain continuous contact and communication with the staff in order to ensure ***the effective participation of the staff in identifying, examining and resolving issues relating to staff welfare, including conditions of work, general conditions of life and other human resources policies;***
- (ii) Staff representative bodies shall be established and shall be entitled to initiate proposals to the Secretary-General for the purpose set forth in paragraph (a) above. They shall be organized in such a way as to afford equitable representation to all staff members, by means of elections that shall take place at least biennially under electoral

regulations drawn up by the respective staff representative body and agreed to by the Secretary-General.

In the above two paras, the ST/SGB points out to the fact that continuous communication must be maintained with staff and that in order to ensure the effective participation of the staff in identifying, examining and resolving issues relating to staff welfare, including conditions of work, general conditions of life and other human resources policies.

At all time staff need to be consulted and be part of decisions related to staff welfare, wellbeing and conditions of work.

The President insisted that all staff need to know this privilege

b) - The President, the Chairperson all made presentation to the SRO/NA staff at large. It was underscored in detail the composition/structure of the Staff Union. Also, the Staff Union's function in the local and international arena through FUNSA, SMC, ICSC and CCISUA.

Membership Status: In addition, the SRO/NA staff members were briefed of the adherence status of their office in the Staff Union and the many benefits and advantages of joining the staff union. The staff members acknowledged the importance of joining the SU. In addition, they raised many concerns and issues regarding permanent contract, individual contract and Job term of references which in some cases are not respected.

c) One to One Meeting with ECA Staff Members: The President continued his one to one meeting. The one-to-one meeting is the prerogative of the President only so that staff members can discuss their personal issues and seek for guidance and advice.

d). Staff Union delegation daily brief

Day 3

1. The President continues his "one to one meeting" with staff
2. presentation of UN Values and Behaviours, the next normal and ECA 4.0

(a) UN values and Behaviours: The President made a short presentation and told the staff that they are the first to receive such presentation as there will be an All-staff Townhall with the ES a.i. on the same topic very soon. He emphasized on the need for all staff to embark on these values and observe them on a daily basis.

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.



The framework comprises: **Four values:** Inclusion, Integrity, Humility and Humanity. **Five behaviours:** Connect and Collaborate; Analyse and Plan; Deliver Results with Positive Impact, Learn and Develop; and Adapt and Innovate. The 'UN Values and Behaviours Framework' forms the basis of an organizational culture that is both current and aspirational. Its nine

elements, the result of a co-creation process involving nearly 4500 staff, should guide how we build relationships, how we perform our jobs, and how we experience the organization on a daily basis. As such, they will also inform human resources processes, such as workforce planning, recruitment, learning and performance management.

b) Next Normal: NEXT NORMAL REIMAGINING HOW WE WORK @UNHQ

The president explained that "The Next Normal" is a cross-functional, multi-disciplinary project team compiled lessons learned and good practices that HQ wishes to apply in our Next Normal, when we expect a greater use of flexible working arrangements. The President explained how this came to play and how it was worked out. A cross-functional project team composed of over 130 focal points from across the UN Secretariat, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women and including the New York Staff Union developed recommendations for the Next Normal. Staff-at-large, provided suggestions through a Dialogue Series organized by the New York Staff Union and Department of Management Strategic Programming and Compliance (DMSPC). This report describes a first iteration of the Next Normal for UNHQ and includes overarching principles that are envisaged to be shared across all duty stations to guide similar efforts. Implementation of the action points will be closely monitored through.

He then went on to display and explain the key actions points:

- Flexible working arrangements (telecommuting): Mainstreaming the operational implementation o
- Strengthening cybersecurity and deploying secure and resilient technological solutions
- Review our real estate footprint and office space configuration
- Occupational Safety and Health Management System (OSH)
- Mental health and well-being
- A new culture that reflects a combination of working arrangements is cultivated (balance between teleworking and physical presence working)
- Maintain our international character and mainstream diversity/inclusion in all that we do,
- Internal communications will be more important than ever in a hybrid working environment, to engage and inform staff, promote well-being, and help maintain our UN identity and sense of belonging, with particular attention to multilingualism and access to persons with disabilities.

- Keeping staff engaged and motivated is important for productivity, creativity and overall well-being. With increased use of teleworking, there is the potential for staff to become less engaged, and there are also opportunities to engage them in new and creative ways.

The holistic approach proposed in this strategy is meant to cultivate an agile, resilient, diverse and inclusive workforce, and foster innovation and continuous improvement. It should render better support for Member States and our colleagues in the field and make us better prepared for future emergencies.

He later share the full document where a list of key action points is found on pages 8–11 (Each workstream includes a full set of more detailed)

Day 4

Meeting with the Acting Resident Coordinator of the UN Systems in Morocco:

The Staff Union delegation paid a courtesy visit to Mr Francois Reybet-Degat, Head of UNHCR in Morocco and Acting RC (rebetd@unhcr.org) on Thursday 22 September 2022 at the UNHCR office. . After a brief introduction of SU members, the RC a.i, also introduce his Personal Assistant Mr. Nicolas Martin Laborde (Nicolas.martinlaborde@un.org) who actually coordinate all the UN system meetings and all other UN system activities in country. The RC briefly briefed us on the different tasks the Office was engaged since his Tenure. We were also informed of the existing taskforces which are dealing with cross cutting issues among UN agencies and also coordinating with the Host government.

On discussion related to the Pegging of the Moroccan Dinar to the US Dollars, the RC and his PA informed us that the inflation in Morocco is under control, and they didn't see the need for such action yet. But they were happy to ask questions on how we were able to do this in Ethiopia with the RC. The Chair of ECA Council explained clearly how this was done and it was a strong collaboration with the RC office in Ethiopia.

We also shared our experience on the different committees and sub-committees organized at ECA. We shared our experience working with the LSSC in bringing the local salary pegging in dollars. The Chair explained that in Ethiopia we are using Comparators for the LSSS where there are a dozen of agencies which are surveyed and he also explained that we are contemplating to use indexation methodology next time as comparators method is not yielding much in Ethiopia's case.

The RC pointed out that his focus is a 3 mains actions points in the country: Economic considerations, Work environment of the staff, Career progression of the local staff

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, we have had a fruitful mission in in SRO/NA Rabat as we were able to do the health -check of the office and most importantly listen to the staff and register their concerns. Some of the concerns were discussed with the Director and advise was given how to dilute some of the staff concerns.

HR Chief was also briefed specially on some personal staff issues which were discussed with the President

On arrival in Addis, the ES a.i. was briefed about the visit and Staff Union comments were provided to him with the view of the advancement of the office work and the preservation of staff rights, wellbeing and condition of work.