



***United Nations
Field Staff
Union Council
Meeting FSC
XXXIII***

UNGSC, Brindisi,
9th – 13th March
2026

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Executive Summary

The 33rd Annual Council Meeting of the United Nations Field Staff Union (UNFSU), held 9th March until 13th March 2026, brought together representatives from across UN missions and departments to address key challenges affecting field personnel in an evolving operational and financial environment.

The meeting opened with remarks from the Director of the United Nations Global Service Centre (UNGSC), Mr. Anton Antchev, who highlighted ongoing structural constraints in peacekeeping operations, including misalignment between mandates and resources, rigid staffing systems, and the need for more strategic human resources management.

The UNFSU President, Mr. Milan Dawoh, reflected on a year marked by sustained advocacy and strong staff solidarity, resulting in the preservation of over 400 positions across multiple missions undergoing transition or downsizing. He emphasized the Union's growing influence, increased membership, and strengthened engagement with senior leadership across the UN system.

The Council engaged with senior stakeholders including OSLA, UNISERV, UNFCU, UNJSPF, and the Office of Human Resources Management, addressing issues such as legal protection, pensions, financial services, workforce planning, and after-service benefits. Discussions highlighted systemic concerns around downsizing processes, staff mobility, compensation erosion, ASHI eligibility, and inconsistencies in HR policies across missions.

Mission-specific interventions provided detailed insights into operational and staff welfare challenges, including mission transitions, security and mobility constraints, visa restrictions, duty station classifications, and unequal application of entitlements such as danger pay, R&R, and separation programmes.

Cross-cutting issues were also addressed, with emphasis on Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA), ASHI and pension-linked eligibility rules, UNLP recognition and staff mobility, gender-related workplace measures, FS category protection, delegation of authority, and post-adjustment inconsistencies. Additional focus was placed on strengthening safeguards for FSU representatives, including protection from retaliation, improved escalation mechanisms, and clearer distinctions between harassment and retaliation frameworks.

The Council also discussed the need to improve internal communication and solidarity across missions through structured regular meetings, enhanced digital platforms, and coordinated website development.

The minutes from 2025 have been approved

A Constitutional update was deferred to the next meeting.

The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation of the Union's commitment to protecting staff rights, strengthening solidarity across missions, and ensuring effective representation in a rapidly changing UN environment.

List of attendees

Mr. Milan Victor Dawoh	UNFSU Executive
Ms. Carine Lucas	UNFSU Executive
Mr. Riccardo Maia	UNFSU Executive
Ms. Rosa Colucci	UNFSU Executive Office
Ms. FAYE DIOUF, Aimee Therese	BINUH
Mr. STEPANOVIC, Dejan	ENTEBBE
Mr. SMITH, Paul	KJSO/UNFSU Acting Treasurer
Mr. CONTEH, Samuel Sarrah	MINURSO
Mr. CAESAR JR, Louis Blopai	MINUSCA
Ms. LY, Penda	MONUSCO
Ms. ALHINHO, Jùlia	UNAMA
Mr. GJYREVCI, Amir	UNDOF
Ms. ANNETTE, Eva	UNFICYP
Mr. EL HAJJ, Charbel	UNGSC
Ms. POLLOCK, Nino	UNIFIL
Mr. QAZIMI, Besim	UNISFA
Ms. SAKEEVA-UKA, Venera	UNMIK
Mr. WROBEH, Edward	UNMISS
Mr. VAN DER EERDEN, Bram	UNMOGIP
Mr. GALATA, Maurizio	UNSMIL
Mr. HELAL, Mohammed	UNSOS/UNTMIS
Ms. FARAMARZ, Reyhana	UNTSO/UNSCO
Ms. GIRMA, Meselu	UNVMC

Welcoming Statement

The Director of the United Nations Global Service Centre (UNGSC), Mr. Anton Antchev, welcomed all participants.

The Director reflected on the challenges currently facing United Nations peacekeeping operations, noting that the closure of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has raised fundamental questions regarding the viability of multidimensional mandates. Particular attention was drawn to the misalignment between available resources and operational expectations, as well as to concerns related to overly broad and unrealistic mandates.

Structural constraints within the Secretariat were underscored, especially the rigidity of workforce management systems, which limits the Organization's capacity to adjust staffing levels rapidly and, consequently, reduces operational responsiveness. Increasing competition from other United Nations entities in the area of service delivery was also highlighted.

The Director further emphasized the necessity for more strategic management of human resources, including centralized oversight of senior positions. Concerns were raised regarding recruitment practices and the delegation of authority.

The importance of undertaking a comprehensive review of peacekeeping operations was stressed, with particular emphasis on ensuring that mandates are focused, realistic, and aligned with core functions. Caution was expressed against any expansion beyond these parameters.

Staff representatives were encouraged to submit practical and feasible proposals for consideration.

Opening Statement

Mr. Milan Dawoh, President of the United Nations Field Staff Union (UNFSU), officially opened the 33rd UNFSU Council Meeting, welcoming the Vice Presidents, Ms. Carine Lucas and Mr. Riccardo Maya, the Administrative Assistant, Ms. Rosa Colucci, and the newly appointed minutes taker, Ms. Johanna Bulté.

The President invited participants to observe a one-minute silence outside in memory of a former Vice President, Nicole, who passed away while on duty in Brindisi. The symbolic importance of maintaining the office in Brindisi in her memory was emphasized.

In the opening remarks, participants were welcomed to the 33rd UNFSU Council Meeting, and the significance of the gathering was highlighted as an opportunity to review progress, address ongoing challenges, and establish future priorities. The Union's vital role in representing staff serving in difficult and often hazardous conditions, and in safeguarding their rights and welfare, was underscored.

Reference was made to the challenging context facing the United Nations system, including financial pressures and ongoing reform discussions, while also acknowledging key achievements over the past year.

Through strong collaboration between field representatives and Union leadership, more than 400 positions were preserved across several missions undergoing downsizing or transition. Positive outcomes were noted in missions such as UNSOS, UNSMIL, MINUSCA, MINURSO, and UNMISS.

The President stated:

“The strength of our Union lies in our unity, rooted in the willingness of colleagues across missions to work together, stand together, and defend the interests of the staff we represent.”

In conclusion, it was emphasized that, by working together in solidarity and standing firm in the defense of staff rights, the Union can transform challenges into opportunities, ensuring that the dedication and contributions of every field staff member are valued and protected.

Brief from Mr. Marcos Zunino Chief of OSLA

Mr. Zunino, Chief OSLA, addressed the Field Staff Union Council (FSU), providing an overview of OSLA role, Annual Briefing: Requests, Expansion, and Support Services

OSLA's role

The Office of Staff Legal Assistance, provides legal advice and representation to UN staff members, supporting them in workplace disputes, separation cases, and other administrative or legal matters across missions and duty stations worldwide. It ensures staff rights, entitlements, and welfare are protected.

Presentation

Mr. Zunino highlighted that 2025 was an unprecedentedly busy year for OSLA, with requests for assistance rising 70% from 1,500 in 2024 to 2,700 in 2025, particularly due to roster cases, contingency plans, and peacekeeping transitions. Separation cases, which carry higher stakes, also saw a significant increase.

Mr. Zunino noted that OSLA expanded its presence globally, opening new offices in Santiago and Bangkok and reopening the Entebbe office to provide closer support to staff in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia-Pacific regions. These expansions were made possible through the Voluntary Staff Funding Mechanism (VSFM), which allows staff contributions to fund legal officer positions and support services.

He further emphasized that OSLA continues to engage deeply in both formal and informal processes, including representation before administrative tribunals, and encouraged staff representatives to inform colleagues about OSLA services and the impact of their contributions.

Case Evaluation and Decision-Making

Mr. Zunino, emphasized that each case is unique, and the responsibility for deciding whether to proceed lies with the Chief. Decisions depend on whether the case is consistent, viable, and strong enough to go to court. He assured that all cases are thoroughly supported and that no external influence affects the decision.

Transparency

The chief of OSLA acknowledged that providing complete statistics for the current year is difficult, as many cases are still ongoing or resolved through separation. He confirmed that funds are used to support cases and that guidance is provided to staff on financial matters related to their cases.

Emotional and General Support for Staff

Mr. Zunino highlighted that staff well-being is a priority. Surveys are conducted to collect feedback on support needs, and OSLA strives to provide guidance and assistance wherever possible, recognizing that formal legal procedures cannot be altered.

Group Cases and Procedural Limitations

He clarified that procedures cannot be changed and each case is handled individually. Group cases must be approached within the existing procedural framework.

Downsizing Policy and Eligibility Clarification

Mr. Zunino stated that staff must be directly impacted by downsizing policies for any action to begin. Guidance is provided on when and how policy applies to specific missions.

Transparency of Case Statistics and Communication

The chief of OSLA explained that efforts are ongoing to improve transparency regarding case outcomes, including cases won, lost, or not taken, and to clarify distinctions between OSLA and OLA. He also highlighted the importance of ensuring staff understand which entity to contact for support.

Roster Issues and Administrative Discrimination

Mr. Zunino addressed concerns where administrative decisions may lead to unequal treatment, encouraging staff to refer individual cases for assessment and supporting actions to ensure fairness.

Group cases

On group cases, the VP Riccardo Maia clarified that the current system does not formally allow collective actions. As a workaround, staff members must file individually, even when the issue is of general interest. He noted that a significant number of staff have already joined such cases (e.g., roster-related cases), effectively creating de facto collective actions.

He further explained that, whenever a case would allow so, he is prepared to join it personally to demonstrate support. In situations where he cannot do so, the Union will seek another staff member with a direct interest in the case to participate, thereby ensuring representation and support on behalf of the Union.

Briefing of Executive Activities and Achievements

Activities

During the reporting period, the UNFSU President outlined a range of executive activities undertaken by the staff union to safeguard the interests of personnel across multiple UN missions. The BINUH FSU, under the leadership of Hassan Fattin, engaged in proactive advocacy with senior UN leadership in New York, presenting well-substantiated cases to support staff retention during mission transitions and closures.

The Union conducted strategic negotiations with Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs) and senior management in several missions, including BINUH, with the objective of preventing unnecessary separations and facilitating smooth transitions for affected personnel. In Libya (UNSMIL), the Union advocated for a cost-effective relocation of staff to Tunisia, a proposal that was ultimately accepted by the SRSG.

Mission visits formed a key component of the Union's activities. Delegations traveled to various field locations, including UNAMI, to provide direct support to staff, reinforce the work of local staff committees, and demonstrate solidarity during periods of uncertainty. The Union also provided financial assistance for emergency travel related to these visits, underscoring its commitment to staff welfare.

In addition, the Union actively represented the interests of field staff at major UN governance and consultative platforms, ensuring that staff concerns were reflected in high-level discussions. Continuous efforts were made to strengthen constructive engagement with management, fostering a collaborative environment aimed at achieving sustainable solutions for personnel.

Achievements

These activities resulted in several significant achievements. The Union successfully advocated for a 20-day exceptional contract extension for staff across missions, ensuring continuity of employment during critical transition periods. The President personally ensured that the majority of the staff member from BINUH received a contract prior to departure, contributing to the near-complete transition of personnel.

In Libya (UNSMIL), the successful agreement to relocate staff to Tunisia not only preserved employment but also reduced operational costs, demonstrating the effectiveness of the Union's pragmatic approach.

The Union's protective advocacy across other missions further minimized anticipated staffing impacts, with the Field Staff Union (FSU) successfully preventing additional staff removals. These efforts reinforced confidence among personnel and highlighted the Union's role as a reliable advocate.

The Union successfully prevented the withdrawal of danger pay in MINUSCA through coordinated advocacy and evidence-based engagement with UN leadership. By demonstrating that the security conditions did not justify the decision, the measure was ultimately rescinded, protecting staff entitlements.

During a mission visit to MINURSO, discussions addressed a contingency plan aimed at staff reductions. While initial proposals focused on junior staff categories,

the SRSB reviewed the approach and redirected the exercise toward a more balanced cost-cutting strategy, including senior positions. This reinforced the Union's long-standing position that downsizing should not disproportionately affect lower-grade staff, but instead address structural imbalances across the organization, particularly at senior levels.

The Union has significantly grown in membership, doubling in recent years despite a general decline in mission staffing levels. This growth has also strengthened the financial base of the organization. It reflects increasing staff trust in the Union's work and confidence in its representation and impact.

Overall, the President emphasized that these achievements were made possible through sustained advocacy, strategic negotiations, and constructive collaboration with management, all of which contributed to positive and tangible outcomes for staff across the UN system.

Brief from UNISERV President Ms. Karin Audrey Esposito (VTC)

Ms. Karin Audrey Esposito, President of UNISERV, addressed the Field Staff Union Council (FSU) via video teleconference (VTC), providing an overview of UNISERV's role, ongoing policy discussions, and the impact of recent developments on UN personnel.

UNISERV, the United Nations International Civil Servants Federation, is a system-wide staff federation that represents UN personnel across multiple common system organizations. The Field Staff Union (FSU) holds two executive seats within UNISERV, playing a key role in ensuring that field staff concerns particularly those serving in hardship duty stations are represented at the system-wide level.

Ms. Esposito explained that UNISERV works to integrate field staff perspectives into system-wide policies, ensuring that staff concerns are considered in compensation reviews, local salary scales, and security and hardship classifications. The federation closely monitors downsizing and mission closures, advocating for fair treatment, access to severance and unemployment insurance, and continuity of entitlements such as ASHI and pension contributions for staff separating before retirement age. She highlighted that staff representation is strengthened by active engagement, documentation of policy issues, and the collection of narrative evidence reflecting real-life staff experiences.

She noted the challenges posed by the current UN landscape, including financial constraints, budget reductions, and downsizing of peacekeeping missions. Closures in Mali, Sudan, and Iraq, along with upcoming changes in MONUSCO, illustrate the impact on field staff livelihoods, while AFPs face ongoing funding uncertainties. UNISERV remains committed to ensuring that these developments do not undermine staff rights and to advocating for systemic improvements in compensation, security, and social protection measures across the UN system.

Discussion – Key Issues Raised During Q&A

During the discussion, concerns were raised regarding the limitations of the current framework governing after-service benefits. In particular, it was noted that eligibility for After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI) remains linked to early retirement age, resulting in the exclusion of staff who separate before this threshold despite significant years of contribution. UNISERV President reiterated its position that eligibility should instead be based on length of service; however, management continues to uphold the existing criteria, and no immediate change is expected. In addition, the possibility of allowing separated staff to continue contributing to the pension fund on a voluntary basis was highlighted as a potential avenue to mitigate financial loss, although this would require broader regulatory changes and remains under discussion. Overall, these issues reflect ongoing concerns regarding the adequacy of protection for staff upon separation, with advocacy efforts continuing at various levels.

During the Q&A session, several key issues were raised by staff representatives across missions.

Concerns were expressed by the **UNDOF** representative regarding the significant decline in purchasing power of international staff, estimated at around 30% in 2024 and potentially rising further. It was noted that salaries are not keeping pace with inflation. In addition, the post adjustment in **UNDOF** (12%) was considered not reflective of the actual cost of living, with staff reportedly left with insufficient disposable income after covering accommodation costs. The lack of recent review for international staff—last conducted approximately 14–15 years ago—was also highlighted, as well as the disparity with other missions such as UNIFIL.

UNISERV President acknowledged these concerns and confirmed that the matter has been raised with the ICSC and staff federations. It was emphasized that discussions are ongoing; however, progress remains limited as current priorities are focused on General Assembly–mandated reviews, including the compensation package and margin, with some Member States advocating for reductions. **UNISERV** President indicated that further engagement with the ICSC will be necessary, noting also the constraints of existing survey schedules.

The **UNISFA** representative raised concerns regarding the compensation package, in particular the conditions related to After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI). It was highlighted that staff separating before the age of 55 are not eligible for benefits, even after long periods of service.

In response, **UNISERV** President indicated that this issue will be brought to the ICSC spring session under health insurance discussions. It was further noted that the matter is being addressed within the Staff-Management Committee, where staff representatives continue to advocate for eligibility criteria based on years of contribution rather than age. However, management currently maintains its position linking eligibility to early retirement age, and no immediate change is expected. **UNISERV** President confirmed that advocacy efforts will continue and updates will be provided following the upcoming SMC meeting.

Additional questions were raised by the **UNMISS** representative concerning unemployment insurance, including its scope and the possibility of extending coverage to life insurance. Concerns were also expressed regarding the loss of access to insurance products upon separation, despite long-term contributions, and whether continued individual contributions could be allowed.

UNISERV President clarified that unemployment insurance does not currently include life insurance. It was noted more broadly that staff often lose access to several insurance schemes upon separation, which can be difficult to replace later in life. This issue has been raised repeatedly within the Staff-Management Committee, although progress remains limited due to management's concerns, particularly regarding budgetary implications. **UNISERV** President indicated that some entities are exploring staff-funded pilot initiatives and confirmed that advocacy on this matter will continue, including at the ICSC summer session, alongside discussions on support for staff not eligible for termination indemnity.

Brief from UNFCU

Ms. Valentina Pinchetti and Mr. Massimiliano Miliano of the United Nations Federal Credit Union (UNFCU) presented an overview of the organization's structure, services, and global support to UN personnel.

- UNFCU is a global financial cooperative established in 1947, serving over 260,000 members in more than 200 countries, with offices in key duty stations worldwide.
- It supports a mobile workforce through accessible digital banking services and remote financial management tools.
- It provides financial education resources and tailored support, particularly for staff transitioning out of service.
- Members are reminded to keep contact details updated and ensure account activity to avoid dormancy issues.

The full presentation is available in Annex I for reference.

During the meeting, representatives raised several questions regarding UNFCU services and support, particularly in the context of staff transitions and financial management.

Representatives inquired about the handling of outstanding loans, including mortgages and personal loans, upon separation from the UN. They asked whether it is preferable to continue monthly payments until departure or if the loans could be settled directly from final entitlements or pensions.

UNFCU clarified that the approach depends on the type of loan and the individual circumstances of the member. Mortgages, being secured by property, generally have lower interest rates and structured repayment plans, while unsecured loans carry higher rates and stricter requirements. Each case is assessed individually, taking into account tenure, financial status, and ability to repay. UNFCU explained that portions of loans could be covered by final entitlements, but continued payments may still be required, and pension payments could be used to continue repayment on a case-by-case basis.

Representatives also discussed cross-border financial transactions. Concerns were expressed about restrictive local banking regulations that make even small transfers slow and cumbersome. Representatives suggested expanding mobile money services to allow faster and more convenient transfers. UNFCU responded that mobile money is available in some countries but not universally, and that the feasibility of extending such services to additional locations would be reviewed internally.

Additional topics included high card fees in certain regions and the possibility of partnerships with local banks to reduce costs.

UNFCU confirmed that they would review existing commercial arrangements to explore potential improvements, including the introduction of mobile wallet options. Representatives were reminded of the importance of proper tax documentation for

US-based accounts and of existing limits on member-to-member transfers, which are managed on a case-by-case basis due to past misuse.

Overall, UNFCU reaffirmed its commitment to supporting UN staff worldwide, emphasizing personalized assistance, flexible financial solutions, and guidance during separation. Representatives were encouraged to use available resources, maintain updated contact information, and engage proactively with UNFCU for any financial planning or transitional needs.

For support and guidance, UNFCU provided the following dedicated email contacts:

- For general inquiries info@unfcu.org
- For collections or loans-related questions collections@unfcu.org
- For financial guidance, including separation support financialguidance@unfcu.org

Financial Report and Budget Overview Paul Smith, Treasurer

The Treasurer, Paul Smith from **KJSO**, presented the 2025 financial report focusing on the Union's recent investment activities and overall financial position.

Mr. Smith presented a financial report highlighting the Union's investments in UNFCU share certificates, which have generated steady returns and strengthened the Union's financial position.

Liquidity remains strong, ensuring coverage for operational needs such as meetings, travel, and mission activities, while overall balances reflect careful financial management and investment performance.

Following clarifications requested by Council members, the report was further explained and discussed.

The Council subsequently approved the financial report.

The presentation of the financial report was followed by the election of the new Treasurer. **UNFICYP** proposed Dejan Stepanovic from **ENTEBBE**, seconded by **KJSO**. No other nominations were made, and The Council members unanimously agreed to elect Dejan Stepanovic as Treasurer.

Brief from Mr. Gabriele Borla Alternate Board Member UNJSPF (VTC)

The discussion highlighted concerns regarding mass staff separations and their potential impact on the sustainability of the pension fund.

It was clarified that, under the UN pension system, continued participation and contributions are governed by established agreements, and each case (including separations and transitions between organizations) is reviewed individually.

The Pension Fund confirmed that it remains financially stable and regularly conducts studies to ensure it can meet its obligations, even under scenarios involving large-scale retirements or changes in contribution patterns.

It was explained that gaps in contributions (for example, when moving between organizations) are generally not recoverable after a certain point, and reconciliation requests are limited.

Participants were reminded that continuity of contributions is essential, and in some cases, individuals may continue contributing through special arrangements, such as during periods of special leave without pay prior to retirement.

The importance of clear procedures, individual case assessment, and long-term fund sustainability was emphasized throughout the intervention.

Brief from Christine Cartner, Chief Client Services and Outreach, UNJSPF (VTC)

Ms. Christine Cartner Chief Client Services and Outreach UNJSPF provided an overview of the pension estimates process and the importance of data accuracy.

Participants were informed that pension estimates can be accessed through the secure Member Self-Service (MSS) portal and are based on data available at the time of calculation, which may not reflect recent updates such as grade or step changes.

An overall data update for all participants is scheduled, and members were encouraged to verify their information through their annual pension statements.

The annual pension statement provides a detailed overview of pension data, including personal information, service history, contributions, and accrued interest, and should be reviewed regularly for accuracy.

Clarifications were provided on retirement rules, contributory service, restoration of pension rights, and benefit options upon separation, including required documentation and applicable forms.

The MSS portal allows users to access statements, run estimates, and securely upload documents, including setup of multi-factor authentication for secure access.

Key pension concepts were explained, including contributory service impact on benefits, the rate of accumulation (up to a maximum of 70%), and deferred retirement benefits for eligible participants.

Members were encouraged to attend pension briefings and ensure all data and documents are up to date for smooth processing of benefits.

Final Questions and Closing Remarks

In response to additional questions, the representative provided further clarification on the rate of accumulation and the options related to deferred retirement benefits. The importance of regularly reviewing annual pension statements and maintaining accurate personal records was reiterated. The session concluded with the UNJSPF representative thanking participants for their engagement and encouraging them to consult the available resources and recorded materials for further information. Participants expressed their appreciation for the informative presentation and their interest in continued engagement with the Pension Fund in future session

Day 3

The **Council** focused on discussing the content and scope of a question for ASG OHRM. This included reviewing relevant background information, clarifying key points, drafting the question, and finalizing it for submission to ensure accuracy and clarity. (Please refer to Annex II for reference)

VTC with Ms. Martha Helena Lopez, ASG OHRM

Martha Helena López is the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management (ASG OHRM) at the United Nations. In this capacity, she leads the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) - the central UN department responsible for global HR policies, staff conditions of service, workforce planning, and implementation of HR reforms across the Secretariat and many other funds and programmes.

The **Council** focused on discussing the content and scope of a question for ASG OHRM. This included reviewing relevant background information, clarifying key points, drafting the question, and finalizing it for submission to ensure accuracy and clarity.

During the session with ASG OHRM, several issues were discussed, covering FS staff, gender and family support, early separation programs, global lateral reassignment, rosters, vacancy rates, and Inspira flagging. Her interventions were noted throughout to clarify the Organization's position on each topic.

Field Service (FS) Category

ASG OHRM agreed that the FS category remains relevant and necessary for field missions. Ms. Lopez said that reductions in FS posts over the past year reflect an overall decrease across all staffing categories, including international and locally recruited positions. She noted that FS staff are limited to lateral movement within the FS category and cannot be reassigned to other categories or levels. ASG OHRM acknowledged that challenges are most pronounced for FS staff in missions affected by downsizing, contingency measures, and the increased availability of qualified local expertise.

Regarding the issue of FS staff and mitigating measures, no differentiation in treatment is normally applied in this context. FS staff can only be moved to FS positions, just as General Service staff can only be reassigned within their respective duty stations.

Within the framework of the duty station and the global lateral reassignment exercise, the main challenges are observed among locally recruited staff, where in some locations there are very few available positions. As a result, movement is often not possible due to the absence of suitable vacancies within the same duty station.

It has already been communicated to certain locations that locally recruited staff cannot be moved where no equivalent vacant positions exist within the same duty station across any entity.

On the FS issue, should further discussion be required, ASG OHRM suggested that to be raised at the FJNC, with the FSU leadership preparing a note outlining specific proposals on mitigating measures for consideration and possible review.

Gender and Family-Related Support

ASG OHRM reaffirmed the Organization's commitment to gender parity and the advancement of women. She said that female staff in non-family and hardship duty stations face limited access to breastfeeding, maternity support, and family accommodations, and acknowledged that progress has been uneven across missions. She encouraged staff to submit specific, practical proposals outlining measures they wish to see implemented, rather than general requests. On healthcare coverage, including fertility treatments and menopause-related support, ASG OHRM explained that these fall under the health insurance framework, and no expansion of coverage is currently foreseen. She proposed that such requests be submitted through the FJNC process and the Health and Life Insurance Section for review.

Early Separation Program (ESP)

ASG OHRM explained that the primary objective of the ESP is to mitigate involuntary separations. She said that voluntary separation requests were approved in cases where positions were not required for lateral reassignment, with priority given to staff affected by post abolishment, relocation, or contingency-related drawdowns. Regarding future rounds of ESP, she indicated that further guidance will be provided as planning progresses. She acknowledged concerns from missions such as MINUSCA, where staff had signed MOUs for separation, but their requests were not approved and proposed that the matter be reviewed in line with the program's objectives to support workforce rejuvenation.

Global Lateral Reassignment Exercise

ASG OHRM said that the global lateral reassignment exercise is ongoing and that information has already been released for some duty stations, particularly for locally recruited staff. She indicated that the exercise is expected to be finalized by mid-April, with results being shared on a rolling basis. ASG OHRM explained that no detailed global financial projections or consolidated timelines are currently available, and she proposed that further updates will be provided as the exercise progresses. She emphasized that individual staff cases, such as UN personnel in Yemen, should not be discussed.

Rosters and Vacancy Rates

ASG OHRM said that the rationale for roster expiration dates and the timing of the next roster campaign is under review by DOS, and updates will be provided to SMC. Regarding vacancy rates in peacekeeping missions and positions vacated through contingency planning, she explained that these are under review by the Controller, and no projections for 2026 are available at this stage.

Flagging in Inspira

ASG OHRM acknowledged the request to extend the flagging period for separated staff due to the recruitment freeze. She said that the Executive Office of the Secretary General is reviewing the matter and that a decision is still pending.

Other Operational Concerns

ASG OHRM recognized the financial and operational challenges arising from restructuring exercises, including relocation and retirement costs, particularly for missions operating under resource constraints. She emphasized that updates will continue to be provided as exercises progress and that staff should raise concerns through the appropriate channels.

Mission's specific issue

The representative from **KJSO** initiated the dialogue, highlighting several issues affecting staff across missions. They raised concerns regarding unequal access to UN separation and reassignment programs, noting that personnel working side by side within the same mission experience different access to the Early Separation Program and the Global Reassignment and Global Lateral Reassignment Programs, depending on the funding source of their posts. The representative emphasized that these inconsistencies raise questions of fairness and equity.

The Executive acknowledged the concern, explaining that the situation results from current policy: staff in missions that are closing, whose posts will be abolished, are not eligible for the Global Lateral Reassignment Program. Accordingly, personnel in UNAMI-funded positions are excluded from these opportunities, in line with guidance from senior management.

The representative from **MINURSO** highlighted operational challenges related to visa and UNLP entry limits. Staff can only remain for 90 days without leaving the country, and overstaying results in being stopped at airports. Dependents are issued single-entry visas, complicating travel further. Efforts by the mission to negotiate with the host government have not resolved these issues. The representative also noted that airline systems often fail to recognize UNLP, causing delays or requiring staff to pay for alternate travel.

The Executive responded that the visa issue is unique to MINURSO's designation as a family duty station and confirmed that it will be escalated to the USG for DPO.

The **MINURSO** representative additionally addressed concerns regarding representation in the Staff-Management Group (SMG), as some senior staff questioned whether FS5-level FSU representatives could effectively represent higher-grade personnel. **The Executive** clarified that duly elected FSU representatives are fully empowered to represent all staff, including senior personnel, and emphasized the importance of communicating this authority across missions to prevent confusion.

The **MINURSO** representative also raised concerns about the criteria used to classify duty stations. While factors such as education and healthcare are reportedly considered, security continues to dominate the assessment. This has led to situations, such as in Western Sahara, where poor living conditions, limited access to schools and medical services, and visa restrictions for families are not adequately reflected, resulting in missions being designated as family duty stations despite significant constraints.

Following the discussion on **MINURSO**, the representative from **MINUSCA** raised a broader concern regarding emerging retaliation against FSU members, which could discourage staff from serving in voluntary union roles. They stressed the need for a

formal policy and a catalog of retaliation instances to protect staff and uphold the integrity of FSU representation.

The Executive concludes by reiterating that elected FSU officials are fully empowered to represent all staff and encouraged reporting of any challenges so that leadership can maintain and enforce the authority of representatives.

During the discussion, the newly elected FSU representative from **UNDOF** highlighted concerns that the current dialogue has focused too heavily on damage control related to the UN liquidity crisis and post closures. They emphasized that the staff union should take a more proactive approach to protecting staff rights and dignity. The representative identified two mission issues.

First, there is a declining respect and recognition for UN personnel.

This is evident in visa complications, airport delays, and even direct hostility toward staff, including attacks or public insults, stemming from a perception of UN staff as passive bureaucrats. Representatives agreed that this trend has negatively affected staff morale and daily operations.

Second, the representative raised concerns about the decline in purchasing power and competitive remuneration. Focusing only on damage control will not address these issues.

Restoring respect, dignity, and fair compensation is essential. The representative also noted a mission-specific issue regarding post adjustment, which is being addressed through ICSC in New York.

The Executive emphasized the importance of maintaining direct engagement on the ground during downsizing processes, noting that such involvement has previously contributed to successful staff redeployment.

The representative from **UNAMA** reported that mission downsizing disproportionately affects FS, UNVs, and NPOs, while leadership positions remain largely intact. She highlighted the increasing precarity of temporary contracts, TDYs, interns, and UNVs, declining staff morale, a reduced sense of purpose, and growing vulnerability to Member State pressures, particularly regarding Article 100 considerations. They also pointed to the challenges posed by a heavy security footprint, reduced R&R, and fragmented decision-making, which hinder mission efficiency.

To address these issues, the **UNAMA** representative proposed several recommendations:

- Combat precarity: monitor downsizing, streamline processes, challenge inappropriate delegation of authority, support staff in mission issues.
- Strengthen staff knowledge: provide simplified guidance on UN legal framework, policies, and dispute mechanisms; establish task forces/focal points; revamp FSU website.
- Promote UN core values: conduct internal and external communications

campaigns on ethics, principles, and UN staff role.

- Enhance FSU capacity: train council members, hold regular executive-to-committee check-ins, develop SOPs, and exchange experiences with other unions.

The representative from **UNSMIL** linked their input to the **UNAMA** discussion, noting that reverse-engineering of the SRM has extended R&R cycles and, in some locations, reduced danger pay, while security requirements remain high. They observed inconsistencies between administrative decisions, security measures, and staff entitlements, which restrict staff movement, and suggested cross-checking for policy compliance and consistency across missions.

The Executive responded by emphasizing the importance of promoting UN core values both internally and externally and confirmed their support for public information campaigns as well as increased FSU visibility through the website and multimedia content. **VP Riccardo Maia** noted that delegation of authority is a complex issue extending beyond HR and stressed the need for a unified global approach. He highlighted FSU's success in advocating for fair mission downsizing and underscored the importance of ensuring consistency between security measures and R&R frameworks, while taking local conditions into account in post adjustment decisions. He further confirmed that work is ongoing on pension, ASHI, and insurance improvements, and agreed on the need to revamp the FSU website to improve visibility and professional management.

The representative from **MINUSCA** raised a security-related concern, referring to a specific case that illustrates how inconsistencies in security reporting directly impact R&R cycles, danger pay, and overall staff safety.

The representative from **UNISFA** raised several issues, beginning with concerns about anticipated budget reductions for the 2026–2027 period, which may lead to job losses, although the implementation modalities remain unclear. He expressed concern regarding the potential impact on staff.

UNISFA Representative also highlighted issues related to the UNFSU Long Service Awards project, noting that some staff members have not received recognition despite meeting eligibility criteria.

It was suggested that both FSU Committee and local HR should be more closely involved in verifying staff records. In this context, the representative raised the question of whether periods of service prior to short separations could be taken into account, particularly in cases where staff have accumulated long years of service interrupted by brief breaks, and whether these could be aggregated for the purpose of awarding long service medals.

The UNFSU Executive Administrative Assistant clarified that, due to inaccuracies in Umoja records regarding Entry on Duty (EOD) dates, staff are now required to apply individually for long service awards by providing proof of their actual EOD date. It was noted that recent complaints are likely linked to cases where staff did not submit applications despite reminders.

Regarding the count of years of service, it was clarified that cumulative count is applied but only service in the UN Secretariat is counted. Service in other UN organizations, such as the Agencies Funds and Programs, do not qualify towards years of service for the UNFSU Long Service Awards.

The **UNISFA** representative also raised security concerns following a drone attack that resulted in casualties, requesting strengthened Secretariat wide measures, including improved detection, mitigation, and early warning systems. In addition, they highlighted concerns regarding the R&R cycle, noting that despite extreme hardship conditions, the mission remains on a six-week cycle, and staff are requesting a review to move to a four-week cycle. Mobility constraints were also raised, with some staff reportedly serving 10 to 15 years in the same duty station without reassignment opportunities.

FSU Executive addressed the mobility issue, confirming that the global mobility exercise has been approved in principle and that eligible candidates have been identified. However, its implementation is currently on hold due to funding constraints at the Secretariat level. It was further noted that no new mobility announcements are expected until the UN's financial situation improves, although the framework remains in place for future implementation.

UNIFIL representative outlined significant uncertainty regarding the mission's future. The mandate is expected to expire at the end of 2026, followed by a one-year drawdown and liquidation phase. The mission currently employs approximately 205 international staff, including personnel on permanent and continuous peacekeeping contracts, with a recent early separation programme reducing staffing levels.

The proposed budget, under review by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and pending approval by the United Nations Fifth Committee, was described as complex, covering both mandate implementation and drawdown planning.

Concerns were raised about the future of staff, including lack of clarity on redeployment processes, timing of staff "flagging," and risks of unemployment.

The representative noted that FSU has already engaged with leadership and called for early advocacy to ensure UNIFIL personnel are considered for positions in peacekeeping and potential successor missions.

Broader issues highlighted included a high number of cases related to the abolition of roster memberships, declining trust in the organization, inconsistent application of policies across missions, and the impact of delegation of authority. The importance of fair and consistent implementation of existing rules was emphasized.

The representative underscored the critical role of leadership, noting improved staff morale under current management, particularly during the recent security crisis.

Regarding the situation in Lebanon, non-essential staff have been evacuated under administrative guidelines issued for the Middle East crisis, with applicable allowances in place.

Concerns remain about hardship classifications, lack of danger pay for Beirut, and R&R arrangements, as well as operational challenges linked to changes in security

coordination.

The representative also stressed the importance of strengthening the visibility and outreach of UNFSU. Concerns were further raised regarding administrative provisions (notably paragraph 69) affecting contract renewals during the drawdown phase.

Finally, the upcoming expiration of the UNIFIL Staff Union mandate in mid-2026 was highlighted, and guidance was requested on whether to proceed with elections or adopt interim arrangements to ensure continued staff representation.

UNGSC representative highlighted several mission-specific concerns affecting staff welfare and the attractiveness of the duty station.

Schooling and Family Separation

The representative emphasized the ongoing challenges related to schooling in Brindisi. Despite the duty station's family status, limited access to suitable educational facilities has led to situations where staff families are compelled to relocate elsewhere in Italy or abroad. This has resulted in family separation and additional burdens, particularly for single parents. The issue was noted as not only affecting staff well-being but also impacting on the Centre's ability to attract and retain qualified personnel.

Boarding and Education-Related Costs

Linked to the schooling issue, concerns were raised regarding the reimbursement of boarding and education-related expenses. Current procedures reportedly provide financial support only for families relocating within Italy, leaving those who relocate abroad without assistance. Additionally, no reimbursement has been provided for boarding or online schooling costs, creating financial strain for affected staff members.

Post Adjustment Fluctuations

The representative reiterated long-standing concerns about the fluctuation and relatively low level of post adjustment at UNGSC. It was noted that some staff members with long service at the Centre are currently receiving lower compensation than in previous years at the same grade and level. Despite ongoing engagement and support from both local management and the global FSU, limited progress has been observed. The issue continues to affect staff morale and the attractiveness of the duty station.

In response to the concerns raised by the **UNGSC** representative, the **FSU Executive** addressed the issue of boarding assistance linked to the absence of an international school in Brindisi.

The Executive noted that this matter should be formally reflected in FSU's forthcoming position paper. It was recalled that previous engagements with the Office of Human Resources (OHR) had resulted in an initial agreement to provide boarding fees to affected staff members. This understanding was supported by written correspondence from **ASG OHRM** confirming the intention to grant such support.

However, it was observed that the implementation of this commitment has been inconsistent. While boarding assistance was initially expected to be broadly applicable due to the absence of an international school in Brindisi, subsequent guidance limited eligibility to:

- Staff members whose families remained within Italy; and
- Those whose children had been enrolled in the specific school that closed.

The executives emphasized that these restrictions do not adequately reflect the realities faced by staff. Following the school's closure, many families relocated to other European countries to secure appropriate education for their children. As a result, a significant number of staff members are currently ineligible for boarding assistance, despite the continued lack of suitable schooling options at the duty station.

UNSO/UNTMIS addressed two aspects related to boarding assistance eligibility for UNGSC staff in Brindisi. First, he noted that the current limitation restricting eligibility to families residing within Italy appears inconsistent with the general education grant framework. However, he acknowledged that boarding assistance for Brindisi is granted as an exception endorsed by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the Office of Human Resources, allowing for administrative discretion in its implementation.

Second, regarding staff members whose children were not enrolled in the closed international school, he clarified that this is not strictly a legal matter but rather a policy issue that would require engagement and advocacy with the relevant authorities.

The **UNSO/UNTMIS** representative offered his support in developing a position paper and proposed collaborating to engage with ASG OHRM in order to advocate for broader and more equitable eligibility criteria.

Representative of **BINUH** outlined several mission-specific challenges arising from the ongoing transition toward the establishment of the United Nations Support Office (UNSO) in Haiti.

Structural Transition and Staffing Pressures

The drawdown of BINUH alongside the stand-up of UNSOH has created overlapping roles, mandate gaps, and unclear reporting lines, particularly for staff temporarily reassigned between the two entities. Critical functions—including security, aviation, logistics, coordination, and political engagement—continue to operate with reduced staffing levels, increasing burnout and operational risk. The absence of uniformed components in UNSOH, following the elimination of police and corrections units, has placed additional responsibilities on civilian personnel.

HR Compliance in FS to P Transitions

The representative raised concerns regarding the reassignment of staff from Field Service (FS6) positions to Professional (P3) roles without proper application of the established salary-setting framework. It was noted that such transitions should follow Staff Rule 3.3 concerning step determination. Reported issues include incorrect

salary placement, loss of financial entitlements, and unequal treatment compared to similar transitions in other missions, raising concerns about regulatory compliance and equity across staff categories.

Operational Constraints in Haiti

The operational environment in Haiti remains exceptionally challenging. Territorial control by armed gangs severely restricts mobility, with staff effectively confined to a small portion of Port-au-Prince. The prolonged closure of the airport and heavy reliance on UNHAS flights limit medical evacuation, supply chains, and emergency response capabilities. Although limited helicopter support has recently resumed, the mission continues to operate at the threshold of acceptable risk.

Duty of Care and Staff Safety

The representative emphasized that Haiti's non-permissive environment requires enhanced duty-of-care measures. Staff face significant risks, including kidnapping, armed violence, restricted access to healthcare, and severe deficiencies in local medical facilities. Downsizing of medical, security, and aviation support further exacerbates these risks. Additionally, repeated evacuations have created uncertainty for staff, including a group of police officers recruited on fixed-term contracts who remain outside the country following the abolition of their positions, with unresolved administrative and personal matters.

Opportunities for Staff Support and Future Planning

Despite budgetary constraints, it was noted that funding for certain abolished positions had previously been approved. The representative suggested exploring mechanisms—such as temporary assignments or alternative contractual arrangements—to support affected staff and mitigate the impact of downsizing. Furthermore, consideration was given to the potential evolution of the UN presence in Haiti, including the possibility of future peacekeeping or support structures that could absorb experienced personnel from BINUH and other missions.

Following the presentation by the **BINUH** representative, a discussion ensued regarding the policy framework governing the transition of staff from Field Service (FS6/FS7) to Professional (P) category positions. Participants referred to OHR Policy RMOHR/PG/2024/Revision 1 and Staff Rules 3.3 and 4.5, noting that such movements are treated as new contractual agreements while salary step determination should reflect the staff member's experience and qualifications. Concerns were expressed about significant reductions in remuneration resulting from the application of these provisions. It was also clarified that, despite acceptance of the new contract, staff retain the right to request a review or recalculation of their salary within the applicable timeframes. The discussion was considered directly relevant to the HR compliance issues highlighted in the BINUH presentation and aimed at informing potential follow-up actions within the SMG and broader FSU advocacy efforts.

The representative of **MINUSCA** brought several issues to the meeting:

Delegation of Authority: It was noted that delegation of authority is sometimes overly used, particularly concerning recruitment and staff reassignments.

Mission Reconfiguration

Following the successful elections, MINUSCA plans to reconfigure the mission, focusing on the eastern region. This includes the closure of two field offices, with an additional four to six offices potentially closing. Several HQ locations in Bangi are also being consolidated into the main office at Opoco. Staff reassignment plans are being developed to manage these changes.

Staff Welfare Facilities

Concerns were raised regarding the management of staff welfare facilities, such as gyms. Although the staff welfare policy specifies that these should be funded through extra-budgetary resources, international staff are increasingly being charged for their use. Experiences from other missions will be considered to inform best practices.

The representative of **UNFICYP** reported several mission-specific challenges affecting international staff, operational readiness, and overall mission functioning. International staff, particularly non-EU personnel, face significant difficulties in obtaining and renewing temporary residence and work visas, which creates administrative and operational complications. The representative highlighted that the mission is insufficiently prepared to respond to security threats, including tactical drone attacks, noting that there is currently only one DSS officer after the retirement of a P4 staff member.

Most security tasks fall to military personnel who are not trained for these scenarios, and national security measures, such as shelters, do not adequately cover UN staff, leaving them vulnerable in the event of an emergency. Although Cyprus benefits from EU membership, nearby NATO countries, and security guarantees from Israel, these protections do not fully mitigate the mission's vulnerabilities.

Staffing shortages are a major concern, with several key positions, including P4 HR officers and legal advisors, either vacant or abolished, forcing remaining personnel to cover multiple roles and creating high workloads. Early separations and unfilled positions exacerbate the problem, leaving the mission under-resourced and stressed. Budget constraints further limit recruitment and onboarding, and the representative indicated that some international staff now cover responsibilities for other missions, stretching capacity even further.

Operational resources, such as energy and water, are expensive and vulnerable to regional disruptions, including attacks affecting fuel supply from Qatar, and these costs are not fully reflected in post adjustment calculations.

Despite these limitations, the mission continues to provide welfare services using Cyprus facilities, with support from the UK, ensuring basic staff support in challenging circumstances. The representative emphasized that the cumulative effect of visa issues, security gaps, staffing shortages, budget constraints, operational restrictions, and high living costs highlights the limits of long-established missions like **UNFICYP** and underscores the need for careful attention to both safety and operational efficiency.

UNFICYP representative added that, in some missions, staff concerns at local level relate to residency and work authorization frameworks, particularly in contexts such

as Cyprus where non-EU staff are issued temporary residence permits, which may create practical and administrative constraints affecting staff conditions.

It was also noted that in this context there appears to be limited interest among some staff in engaging with union representation structures, with a stronger focus placed on individual status-related issues rather than collective representation.

It was emphasized that these dynamics reflect local circumstances and should not be interpreted as a formal or system-wide position of the Union or a request to the Council. The importance of maintaining sustainable staff representation structures was nevertheless reiterated, given ongoing capacity constraints and upcoming departures to certain field locations.

The Executive took note of UNFICYP's comments on residency and work authorization frameworks, which may create practical constraints for staff in certain missions.

It was also noted that engagement with union structures varies, with some staff placing greater focus on individual administrative issues.

These dynamics were recognized as context-specific and not a system-wide position, while the importance of maintaining sustainable staff representation structures across missions was reiterated.

The **UNTSO/UNSCO** representative presented an overview of operational and staff-related challenges across the missions. UNTSO operates in Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt, while UNSCO is based in the West Bank, Ramallah, Gaza, and Jerusalem, sharing premises with UNTSO. The representative highlighted that a broadcast issued by DOS HR on 10 March 2026 regarding administrative guidelines in response to the situation in the Middle East failed to adequately address conditions in Israel. Staff felt overlooked, as UNDSS assessments did not reflect the real security risks they experienced, despite frequent exposure to missile attacks and rocket fire, including observing Iron Dome interceptions over Jerusalem.

While shelters exist, staff remain concerned about personal safety when traveling for daily necessities, which has contributed to ongoing stress among staff and their families.

The representative emphasized that danger pay is inconsistently applied; although Gaza staff previously received it during crises, staff in Jerusalem were not granted danger pay, despite being under comparable risk. Staff in the West Bank have been unable to access offices for extended periods, working from home under challenging conditions, which also adds to stress and operational difficulties. The representative underscored that UN personnel in Israel often feel unconsidered in assessments and guidelines, further affecting morale and well-being.

Additionally, the issue of granting special leave with full pay was discussed. Although guidelines were released on 10 March 2026 allowing up to ten days of special leave, delays in implementation from June 2025 to January 2026 meant that some staff missed the opportunity entirely. Both missions required intervention from the representative to secure approval, despite the head of entities having delegation of authority to implement such leave. Overall, the intervention stressed the combination of security risks, procedural delays, and the resulting stress on staff, which continues

to affect both welfare and mission operations.

Concerns were raised regarding the post adjustment system for **UNTSO/UNSCO** highlighting inconsistencies in the classification of duty stations, particularly between Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. These differences result in varying post adjustment rates that do not appear to reflect comparable living cost realities.

It was emphasized that current post adjustment levels are not keeping pace with the actual cost of living and do not adequately cover staff expenses, despite regular salary adjustments based on cost-of-living indicators. The matter was requested to be brought to the attention of the ICSC for review, with support sought to raise the issue for both missions.

The Executive noted that any review of post adjustment requires initiation of a formal place-to-place survey process by the ICSC, which is necessary to trigger potential adjustments.

It was confirmed that the matter will be escalated to the relevant bodies, including USDSS, and that it will be raised with the ICSC in an upcoming meeting in New York.

UNMIK provided an example and clarification on how the post adjustment system operates across duty stations. It was explained that the system had been the subject of extensive internal discussion, including with CMSI, and that post adjustment is regulated independently from the “zero loss, zero gain” principle, which applies only to net base salary. It was further clarified that post adjustment is reviewed on a quarterly basis and is linked to movements in local currencies. As an example, when the US dollar strengthens against the local currency, the post adjustment rate may decrease, resulting in fluctuations that can lead to small gains or losses for staff on a monthly basis.

UNMIK also referred to the introduction of a “cushion” mechanism designed to soften the impact of sudden changes in post adjustment levels. It was emphasized that these variations are determined by the established ICSC methodology and cannot be influenced at mission level, with adjustments only reflected following the quarterly review process.

MINUSCA commented that the post adjustment system should be understood based on the official ICSC methodology, as detailed on the ICSC website. It was recalled that post adjustment is a comparative measure of the cost of living at each duty station relative to New York, taking into account key components such as housing, medical insurance, pension contributions, and other living-related expenses.

It was further explained that the system is based on place-to-place surveys that assess living conditions in each location compared to New York. Reference was made to past practice where ICSC representatives regularly provided briefings to staff, which helped improve understanding of the methodology.

MINUSCA suggested that it would be useful to formally invite ICSC, along with security and relevant stakeholders, to a future council session in order to provide a clear explanation of the system and improve overall understanding among staff.

SMG issues

SMG Discussion – Key Topics for Tour de Table

- Pre-SMG context (Contingency Planning / UN80)
- Mission approach to cost-efficiency measures
- Human Resources impact and transparency
- SMG process – scope and staff representation
- CRP process (if applicable)
- Mitigation measures – differentiation of frameworks
- Role of Human Resources
- Delegation of Authority (DoA)
- Post-SMG phase (downsizing outcomes)
- Confidentiality constraints

During the discussion, participants highlighted significant challenges in the implementation of SMG processes in the context of contingency planning and prior strategic reviews.

Concerns were raised regarding transparency and access to information. Staff representatives reported that prior to the formal establishment of the SMG, critical data on staffing reductions, contingency planning, and mitigation measures were not shared. This limited their ability to provide input or propose alternatives before key decisions were taken. Communication to staff about potential reductions sometimes occurred in broad notices without sufficient context, reinforcing perceptions of pre-determined outcomes.

Participants noted that the methodology used to identify positions for reduction was not clearly explained, and opportunities to consider mitigation measures—such as reassigning functions or reducing non-staff costs—were constrained. Requests for information on non-staff functions or alternative measures were largely denied, leaving the SMG with limited tools to minimize staff impact. As a result, the comparative review process proceeded with incomplete information, and the majority of affected staff positions were ultimately terminated. Only in one instance was early voluntary separation applied.

The role of SMG members was also emphasized as constrained. While the SMG was intended to provide oversight and advice, participants reported that ex officio guidance was primarily procedural, with limited capacity to influence management decisions. Attempts to record disagreements or ensure accurate representation of SMG discussions were reportedly altered before final submission, creating further concerns about procedural integrity.

Overall, participants described the process as rushed, with insufficient prior consultation, limited access to critical information, and minimal opportunity to implement mitigation measures.

The discussions underscored the need for greater transparency, clearer methodologies, and strengthened procedural safeguards to ensure that SMG processes function effectively and in line with policy.

Cross Cutting Issues

Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA) – Medical and Oversight

The discussion focused on the implementation of Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA), including medical-related cases and short-term disability provisions. It was emphasized that the existing policy should be properly enforced across all missions, with clear oversight mechanisms in place.

It was noted that all FWA requests, approvals, and rejections should be systematically recorded, including clear justification for each decision, to ensure transparency and accountability. The importance of proper documentation was highlighted as a key element of the policy framework.

The intervention clarified that the objective is not to restrict or control FWA usage, but to ensure fair application, prevent any potential misuse, and avoid discrimination. The emphasis was placed on balanced implementation, ensuring that staff access FWA appropriately while maintaining oversight and consistency in its application.

ASHI and Pension-Linked Eligibility

The discussion addressed concerns regarding ASHI eligibility rules linked to pension participation, particularly the exclusion of staff who do not opt into pension benefits. It was noted that this issue is particularly difficult for staff who separate after long service but before reaching the required age threshold, resulting in loss of ASHI coverage.

It was explained that the minimum service and eligibility conditions are constrained by the financial sustainability and liquidity of the fund, and that expanding coverage to additional categories of staff would have significant financial implications. It was further noted that any modification to these rules would require policy-level changes, including approval by Member States.

Concerns were also expressed that current provisions, particularly those linking ASHI eligibility to pension participation, should be reviewed and potentially amended, as they may represent a structural limitation rather than an operational requirement. A specific provision in the relevant policy framework was identified as needing review to remove the restriction tying ASHI eligibility to pension election.

The matter was ultimately recognized as a policy issue requiring discussion at the appropriate governance level, including within staff-management consultation mechanisms, rather than an operational adjustment at field level.

UNLP and Freedom of Movement

The discussion addressed concerns regarding the issuance and recognition of the United Nations Laissez-Passer (UNLP) and its implications for staff mobility and privileges in host countries.

It was noted that the Department of Operational Support (DOS) has introduced a directive limiting the issuance and renewal of UNLPs to cases of official travel, a measure initially linked to previous shortages and cost-containment efforts. This policy has raised significant concerns among staff, particularly in duty stations where the UNLP is essential for entry, exit, and visa facilitation.

Participants emphasized that, under Article VII, Section 24 of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, the UNLP is intended to be recognized by Member States as a valid travel document, facilitating visas and supporting freedom of movement. However, it was observed that recognition and practical application vary across host countries, leading to operational challenges. Several mission-specific examples were highlighted:

In Uganda and other duty stations, staff were required to use national passports during periods when UNLP issuance was suspended, and the continued restriction has created uncertainty.

In Somalia and Colombia, the absence of a valid UNLP may hinder staff entry and exit, given the limited recognition of national passports in certain contexts.

In Kosovo and Cyprus, additional documentation such as residency permits or national passports is often required despite the presentation of a UNLP.

In Lebanon, the UNLP is generally well recognized, although family members still require appropriate residency or visa arrangements.

It was further noted that reliance on national passports may lead to visa costs, administrative burdens, and unequal treatment among staff, particularly for those holding passports with limited international mobility. Concerns were also raised regarding access to UN premises in New York, where additional security passes are now required even for staff holding a UNLP.

Way Forward it was agreed that missions should document and consolidate specific cases where UNLP issuance or recognition affects staff mobility. These cases may be addressed initially at the mission level through engagement with senior leadership, Resident Coordinators, and Legal Affairs Offices, with potential escalation to DOS and the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) if systemic issues persist. The matter may also be reflected in a position paper for further advocacy.

Gender Issue Proposal

The Council discussed the need to move beyond highlighting gender-related concerns and instead develop practical and actionable proposals. It was suggested that a small task force be established to review existing rules and regulations and identify areas for improvement, focusing on measures that do not require additional financial resources but rather adjustments to policies and workplace arrangements.

Reference was made to guidance received during discussions at the General Assembly, emphasizing the importance of presenting concrete and feasible proposals, particularly in the current political and budgetary climate.

It was clarified that the focus of the initiative would be on female-specific workplace considerations, such as support related to breastfeeding, menstruation, and menopause, rather than broader or more politically sensitive gender debates.

It was also noted that differing perspectives among Member States may influence the reception of gender-related initiatives, underscoring the importance of framing proposals in a pragmatic and inclusive manner.

Action Point: it was agreed that **UNFICYP** will take the lead in collecting inputs and drafting a set of proposals for consideration by the Council, with the aim of reviewing existing policies and recommending practical improvements.

FS Category – Proposed Mitigation Measures

The Council discussed the development of proposed mitigation measures to address the ongoing reduction of Field Service (FS) positions. It was emphasized that the proposals should be supported by reliable data, including mission-specific statistics on abolished, nationalized, or redeployed FS posts, to demonstrate the scale and impact of the trend.

Members noted that existing organizational data already indicates that the FS category has been among the most affected by recent liquidity-driven restructuring. However, it was agreed that additional field-level evidence would strengthen the case and provide a more comprehensive picture of the situation.

The discussion also highlighted the importance of career mobility and retention, including advocating for expanded opportunities for FS staff to apply for Professional positions. Reference was made to previous initiatives aimed at facilitating such transitions, with acknowledgment that while progress has been made, further efforts may be required at the General Assembly level due to financial implications.

Action Points: It was agreed that **ENTEBBE** and **UNSOS/UNTMIS** will take the lead in drafting the paper on proposed mitigation measures.

Existing Draft: A three-page background paper has already been prepared and will serve as the basis for further development.

Data Collection: Missions are encouraged to submit relevant statistics on FS staffing changes to support the proposals.

Deadline: Contributions and the finalized paper are to be submitted by 25 March.

Delegation of Authority (DoA)

The Council discussed concerns regarding the Delegation of Authority (DoA), emphasizing that it remains a standing item on the Staff-Management Committee (SMC) agenda, originally introduced to monitor its impact on staff, particularly in the field.

Participants highlighted that, while DoA was intended to decentralize decision-making, it has increasingly resulted in inconsistent interpretation of HR policies across missions. This lack of uniformity creates disparities in the application of staff

rules and reduces accountability and oversight mechanisms. The complexity is further compounded by the multiple administrative layers involved (e.g., DMSPC, DOS, DPPA, DPO, and local mission leadership), increasing the risk of misapplication of policies.

To address these concerns, it was proposed that missions identify and document the top three recurring issues where DoA has negatively affected staff through inconsistent policy interpretation. These findings will support future engagement with the SMC and, where relevant, OSLA/UNAT.

Action Point: **UNSOS/UNTMIS** and **UNAMA** agreed to take the lead in collecting inputs from field missions and developing a consolidated paper outlining key concerns and recommendations for submission to the SMC.

Mobility

The Council discussed mobility as a cross-cutting issue affecting staff across missions. It was proposed that a global survey be conducted to assess the percentage of staff wanting to relocate, including the possibility of waiving certain relocation entitlements if necessary. The rationale is that flexibility in entitlements could help facilitate movement and address stagnation in some duty stations.

Participants noted that reluctance to move is often linked to existing entitlements, suggesting that introducing voluntary waivers could remove barriers to mobility. The discussion also emphasized the need to revisit the current mobility policy, particularly to address situations where staff remain in the same duty station for extended periods.

In addition, the possibility of within-entity mobility and the use of agreed terminations were highlighted as practical mechanisms to free positions and encourage staff movement within the system.

Action Point: UNAMA agreed to take the lead in designing and conducting the global mobility survey, with the aim of gathering data to inform future policy discussions and recommendations.

Internal Issues

Protection of FSU Representatives

FSU representatives may face direct or indirect pressure from management or HR, particularly during downsizing or contingency postings. Given that union activities are not confidential, representatives are sometimes required to share information with management, which can increase their vulnerability. Strengthening safeguards to ensure their protection is essential.

Oversight in Downsizing and Contingency Plans

Concerns were raised about the potential targeting of specific positions during downsizing exercises. Decisions affecting staff should be transparent, evidence-based, and subject to appropriate oversight. Early separation mechanisms are necessary to address concerns before irreversible actions are taken.

FSU representatives who believe they are being targeted should document all relevant evidence and promptly inform the Executive.

Constructive Dismissal and “Shadow Banning”

Instances of marginalization, such as exclusion from meetings, reassignment of responsibilities, or reduced engagement—often referred to as “shadow banning”—may amount to constructive dismissal. Prompt reporting and escalation of such situations are crucial to ensure timely intervention and support.

Retaliation vs. Harassment

It is important to clearly distinguish between retaliation and harassment to ensure that the appropriate policy frameworks are applied. Proper classification of cases enables the use of the correct protection mechanisms and strengthens the response to staff concerns.

Policy Framework and Further Clarification

Reference was made to existing policies on protection from retaliation, including ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1. Further clarification is needed regarding the mention of “293,” which should be investigated to determine its relevance within the regulatory framework. A broader review of retention and protection mechanisms for FSU representatives was also suggested.

Rapid Escalation Mechanism

When an FSU representative feels targeted, there should be a clear and immediate process to escalate the matter to the Executive. Early intervention can prevent escalation of the situation and ensure that appropriate protective measures are implemented.

Communication and Solidarity

Demonstrating unity among staff representatives is essential to deter potential targeting. Increased and regular communication between the FSU and staff will reinforce trust and ensure that concerns are addressed collectively and effectively.

Broadcast and Communication Strategy

A carefully worded communication strategy was proposed. The initial step would involve formally addressing the Heads of Entities and relevant decision-makers. If

necessary, this would be followed by a global broadcast to staff, with relevant senior leadership copied. All communications should align with staff rules and procedures and use precise terminology to avoid confusion.

FSU Awards – Accumulation of Service

Clarifications were provided regarding FSU award eligibility, including the requirement to complete the relevant application form and follow the established procedure. It was also noted that a broadcast will be issued to further clarify the eligibility criteria and provide detailed guidance on the process to be followed.

National Staff Joining the FSU

The Council discussed the possibility of national staff joining FSU. While the value of inclusivity was acknowledged, concerns were raised about the differing nature of issues faced by national staff compared to international staff, as well as the risk that the FSU's mission and focus could be diluted due to the significantly higher number of national staff. It was emphasized that FSU's primary purpose is to advocate for international field staff without engaging in salary-related matters. Following the discussion, a motion to allow national staff to join the FSU was not approved, with 13 votes against and 3 members abstaining.

Recognition plaque

The Council agreed to introduce recognition plaques for retired, separated, and no longer chairman after their last mandate.

The design was proposed by Vice President Maia, based on the same concept as the Long Service Award medal, with the cost not exceeding USD 40 per unit. This initiative aims to formally acknowledge their service and contributions as representative staff member.

Communication with Council and Staff

The Council discussed improving communication between the Executive, Council members, and all staff. While monthly meetings with the Executive were initially proposed, concerns were raised that this frequency might be excessive. It was also noted that holding only one large annual meeting creates significant pressure, as it provides limited opportunity for ongoing dialogue.

To enhance engagement and solidarity, it was agreed that meetings will be held quarterly via Microsoft Teams, scheduled in the afternoon to better accommodate different time zones. These sessions will serve as a platform to discuss key topics, gather suggestions from Council members, and encourage staff participation. The concept of informal “coffee meetings” will also be explored with the Council as an additional way to foster interaction.

The need for a structured communication framework was emphasized, including the use of an FSU SharePoint platform to facilitate information sharing and collaboration. It was reiterated that the Executive retains the flexibility to convene additional meetings when necessary.

Website Focal Points: It was agreed that **UNAMA** and **ENTEBBE** will act as focal points for the development and maintenance of the FSU website.

The motion to hold quarterly virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams was approved with 16 votes in favor.

Budget Approval

The Council reviewed the budget implementation and related proposals.

Legal Fund (Lawyer): It was recalled that the motion adopted last year for the allocation of funds for legal support (lawyer) remains valid. These funds should be formally included in the current budget. It was also agreed that the legal support should be operational within three months.

Budget Use – Travel: The Executive clarified that the budget is primarily intended to cover mandatory travel required for the proper functioning of activities. It was noted that only about 50% of the travel budget was used last year, and there was no opposition to its allocation.

Broader Budget Needs: Members stressed the importance of including additional operational priorities in the budget, such as the future FSU website and other structural initiatives.

Contribution: It was noted that **ENTEBBE** will contribute to the proposed legal fund.

Decision: The budget was approved with 13 votes in favor.

Constitutional Update

It was agreed that the update of the Constitution will be addressed at the next meeting, to be held virtually via Microsoft Teams.

Future action points

- **Legal Fund Contribution:** It was noted that **ENTEBBE** will contribute to the proposed legal fund.
- **FSU Website Development:** **UNAMA** and **ENTEBBE** will act as focal points for the development and maintenance of the FSU website.
- **UNGSC Boarding Fees:** A paper will be developed on boarding fees related to UNGSC for further review and consideration by **the Council**.
- **Gender issue proposal policy review:** **UNFICYP** will lead the collection of inputs and draft a set of proposals aimed at reviewing existing policies and recommending practical improvements for Council consideration.
- **Consolidated Input Paper:** **UNSOS/UNTMIS** and **UNAMA** will lead the collection of inputs from field missions and prepare a consolidated paper outlining key concerns and recommendations for submission to the SMC.
- **Global Mobility Survey:** **UNAMA** will lead the design and implementation of a global mobility survey to gather data for future policy development and recommendations.

- Mitigation Measures Paper FS Category: **ENTEBBE** and **UNSOS/UNTMIS** will lead the drafting of a paper on proposed mitigation measures, building on an existing background document already prepared.
- Election of the new Treasurer. **UNFICYP** proposed Dejan Stepanovic from **ENTEBBE**, seconded by **KJSO**. No other nominations were made, and The Council members unanimously agreed to elect Dejan Stepanovic as Treasurer.

Closing and Leadership Recognition

The President thanked all members for their dedication, constructive engagement, and continued commitment to the staff represented. The discussions over the past days were noted to reflect the depth of experience and responsibility within the Council.

It was recalled that the organization is operating in a particularly challenging period, both for the institution and for colleagues across all duty stations. In such times, unity of purpose was emphasized as essential.

The effectiveness of the Council was highlighted as dependent on close collaboration with the Executive, guided by mutual respect, transparency, and a shared commitment to staff welfare.

Members were encouraged to move forward in a renewed spirit of cooperation. It was underlined that only through unity and constructive engagement can staff be effectively represented, issues adequately addressed, and stability ensured going forward.

The President then declared the annual meeting closed.

Field Service Union Council Meeting 2026



Presented by: Valentina Pinchetti, Senior Specialist, UN Affairs & Partnerships

Date: 10 March 2026

UNFCU overview



3✓

- ✓ Non-profit
- ✓ Owned by members
- ✓ Exclusive to the UN



1947

US\$ institution founded by United Nations employees



260K

serving members from the United Nations family



200

nations and territories in the UNFCU member community

12 locations

Global:

- Rome, Italy
- Geneva, Switzerland
- Vienna, Austria
- Nairobi, Kenya
- Kampala and Entebbe, Uganda
- Dakar, Senegal (2026)

United States:

- Headquarters, LIC
- UN Plaza Branch, NY
- UN General Assembly Branch, NY
- Washington, DC
- Tysons Corner, VA

Digital Banking



ONLINE BANKING

Securely access your UNFCU account from anywhere.



MOBILE BANKING

Manage your finances on your UNFCU mobile app.

Financial wellness



2-minute read

US tax Form W-8BEN
for non-US taxpayers

[Read more](#) →



6-minute read

Protect yourself from
fraudsters & scammers

[Read more](#) →



2-minute read

Budgeting basics:
The 50-30-20 rule

[Read more](#) →

Separating from the UN?

Update contact details

Always update your personal details or ID changes in your UNFCU Digital Banking profile.

Keep account active

After 2 years of inactivity, UNFCU accounts become dormant and incur a \$5 monthly fee.

After 3 years, funds must be transferred to a US state institution by law.

Support and guidance

Manage your loans

[Contact us](#) as soon as possible to discuss your plans.

If you would like to discuss repayment options, please contact us directly at collections@unfcu.com.

We are committed to helping you make the best decision for your financial situation.

Financial guidance

Contact us directly at financialguidance@unfcu.com so that we can better understand your individual circumstances and provide assistance.

Visit our website

Find answers to your questions about separating from the UN.

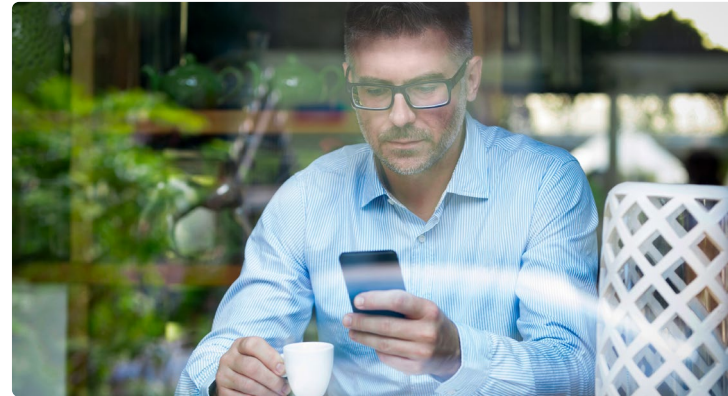
[UNFCU Separation FAQs](#)

Contact us



In person

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By phone

See toll-free numbers by country at:
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Questions from UNFSU to Ms. Martha Helena Lopez, ASG OHRM

1) FS category: While the ICSC has recently reconfirmed the relevance of the FS category, what we are witnessing in practice is the convergence of four concurrent dynamics putting the FS category at risk of annihilation. First, UN80 has resulted in the abolition of FS posts, whose incumbents, although included in the global lateral reassignment exercise, have no equivalent positions outside missions, and those missions which were not included in UN80 have themselves undergone contingency planning and therefore cannot absorb downsized FS staff. Second, under the upcoming CAPs, locations such as UNON being considered for these functions do not offer FS positions. Third, nationalization is also advancing, further eliminating FS positions. Finally, under contingency measures, the staff most targeted were FS staff. The FSU is therefore requesting urgent mitigation measures for all FS staff.

2) Gender question: The Secretary-General has made gender parity and the advancement of women a cornerstone of UN reform. Yet a structural gap remains unaddressed: female staff serving in non-family duty stations and hardship peacekeeping missions have no access to breastfeeding, maternity support, or family accommodation provisions equivalent to those available at Headquarters and family duty stations.

a) This effectively forces women in field and peacekeeping careers to choose between career progression and motherhood.

b) Question: What concrete steps is OHR/DMSPC taking to close this policy gap — specifically for women in non-family and hardship duty stations — and if development of provisions that would allow women to sustain both a peacekeeping career and a family, is in the pipeline?

c) We would like to also explore the possibility to consider healthcare coverage for fertility treatment (freezing is not covered by cigna); and administrative provisions for those impacted with menopause and peri menopause.

3) Question related vacancy rate and contingency: What happen to the posts that were vacated as part of contingency planning in peacekeeping missions? Missions already have vacancy rates and what happens to these positions that are vacated through contingency and not abolished in the budget?

4) Roster: what is the rationale for putting expiration date on rosters? When is the next round of roster campaign? UNFSU urges the Organization to call the next round of campaign as soon as possible.

5) Global lateral reassignment: What is the start and end of the exercise and what are the financial impact?

6) Early Separation Programs: Could you please explain the rationale in granting or denying the early separation program, given that there is a high interest among staff and we have instances where MOUs were signed and then denied. Can you also confirm if more rounds of ESP are advertised in the future?

7) Flagging in Inspira: Could you please extend the flagging period for separated staff, given the recruitment freeze?

8) We would like to inform you that the FSU Council will be having the after-action-review of the SMGs from peacekeeping missions and discuss the shortcomings. Relevant shortcomings and concerns from the AAR will be shared with you and your team for your situational awareness and further action.