

PROVISIONAL TITLE PAGE

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Abbreviations

ACPAQ	Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions
APB	Appointment and Promotion Board
APC	Appointment and Promotion Committee
APP	Appointment and Promotion Panel
CAC	Commissary Advisory Committee
CATAC	Catering Advisory Committee
CCISUA	Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
ILOAT	Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization
JAB	Joint Appeals Board
JAC	Joint Advisory Committee
JAGGO	Joint Advisory Group on Garage Operations
JDC	Joint Disciplinary Committee
OHRM	Office of Human Resources Management
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PAS	Performance Appraisal System
SMCC	Staff Management Coordination Committee
UNAT	United Nations Administrative Tribunal
UNJSPB	United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board
UNJSPF	United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund
UNSCV	United Nations Staff Council at Vienna
VBOs	Vienna-based organizations

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REVIEW OF STAFF COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

The United Nations Staff Council Vienna has prepared this review in an effort to provide staff at large with a concise picture of its activities over the past year. This review is divided into sections on advocacy, services for staff, outreach, and finances. It also addresses the work atmosphere in UNOV/ODCCP. Finally, this review makes a plea for greater staff involvement in the work of the Staff Council. For additional information, please see the relevant section of the full report.

Advocacy: Protecting the Rights of Staff

The primary role of your Staff Council is to advocate on behalf of all UNOV/ODCCP staff in matters of common concern related to conditions of service, terms of employment, and the implementation of the UN Staff Regulations and Rules.¹ Although the Staff Council is funded by the voluntary contributions of staff, it makes no distinction as to membership or employment status when representing staff. Dues paying, non-dues paying, Professional, General Service, short-term, fixed-term, permanent, project staff, and field staff are all represented equally.

Formal advocacy is primarily limited to the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) for local matters, the Staff Management Coordination Committee (SMCC) for UN Secretariat-wide matters, and the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) for UN common system matters.

In the JAC, the staff representatives have been satisfied with the degree of professionalism and respect granted them by their management counterparts. The JAC has been able to conclude its deliberations on several issues including the following:

- revisions to General Service recruitment criteria which make UNOV/ODCCP more competitive with the other Vienna-based organizations (VBOs) while still maintaining promotion and appointment preference for incumbent staff;
- new eligibility and priority criteria for admittance to the expanded child care centre that are fair, reasonable and transparent; and,
- the abolition of the Departmental Advisory Panel for General Service Staff which was seen by the staff members of that panel as being both duplicative and insignificant.

¹ For your information, the United Nations Human Resources Handbook is available online. The Handbook includes the Staff Regulations and Rules, administrative instructions and other administrative issuances related to human resources management in the Organization. Staff in Vienna can access the Handbook via the Headquarters Intranet at <http://57.150.190.14/handbook>

The JAC was also able to team-up with its counterpart in UNIDO to discuss and adopt the proposals of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Life Insurance.

Apart from these achievements, the staff representatives of the JAC feel there are two issues for which they would request prompt action on the part of the administration. Those issues are the flexible working hours scheme and the social security agreement with the Austrian Government.

Flexible working hours have been in effect in Vienna, on an “experimental” basis, since December 1993. In 2000, the JAC convened a working group to review the results of questionnaires of the system circulated desk-to-desk at the end of 1998. Due to the overwhelming support for flexible working hours indicated by those surveys and with the understanding that all modern employers provide some flexible arrangements, the JAC agreed that the administration would formalize the scheme in an information circular. No such circular has been drafted to date.

Recently, the legal office of the IAEA has successfully negotiated a new *social security agreement* with the Austrian Government which appears to provide a number of benefits to Agency staff. The Staff Council has requested the Senior Legal Liaison Officer of UNOV/ODCCP to study the matter with some urgency with a view to following the path already paved by our colleagues in the Agency.

The *SMCC* is the highest level staff-management consultation and negotiation body in the United Nations Secretariat. While each staff union represented is independent, there is often an effort to speak with a common voice on matters that are of general interest to staff. Since the year 2000 session of SMCC was convened in Vienna, your Staff Council had an opportunity to be very active in the deliberations on accountability; recruitment, placement and promotion; mobility; and, contractual arrangements. In addition, it participated in the more recent SMCC working group on the reform of the internal justice system.

Accountability is perhaps one of the most used yet least understood terms in management. SMCC agreed that accountability refers to “responsibility to someone for one’s actions”. For the staff representatives in SMCC, that responsibility is linked to a number of other more tangible elements of management such as a clear, approved and followed work plan, and effective and clear communication on the expectations of staff and managers. In Vienna, there is an effort to decentralize authority from the office of the Director General/Executive Director to the respective managers. While all would agree that UNOV/ODCCP is simply too large for one person to manage, delegation of authority does pose some concerns. The Staff Council has indicated that managers must have a clear understanding of their role with regard to staffing, finances, and substantive matters. Mere delegation of authority without concurrent accountability measures to balance that authority will not allow our managers or our staff to succeed.

On *recruitment, placement and promotion*, SMCC acknowledged that the present system is cumbersome and inefficient. The management suggested the creation of a central review board to oversee the various processes. The staff felt that such a review board, whose main function would be one of process rather than substance, might undermine the existing appointment and promotion machinery that has peer review at its core. The staff felt that the exiting mechanisms should be strengthened and that the respective human resource management offices should continue to ensure abidance to the UN rules and regulations.

Mobility represented an area for which staff and management were able to come to a consensus on a number of issues. The primary points of departure were in the details of implementing mobility throughout the Secretariat. It was the impression of the staff representatives in SMCC that the administration had not studied adequately the logistics of the scheme. As such, there was an agreement that mobility would be initially implemented in a phased approach starting with P2 staff entering the UN through the National Competitive Recruitment Examination. Here in Vienna, the significant number of project posts in ODCCP may pose unique problems. The current proposals on mobility must include all contractual types, so that certain staff who may, in fact, be in the majority, are not excluded from the mobility scheme. Further, the exclusionary mechanism that labels some long-serving staff as “external” to the Organization jeopardizes the career prospects of many of our colleagues.

Contractual status was an area where neither the staff nor the management sides of the SMCC negotiation table were satisfied. For staff, the extensive use of short-term and fixed-term contracts lead to uncertainty and stress. For management, the current contract types did not adequately address the Organization’s operational requirements. In this debate, the most significant proposal is for the inclusion of a continuing contract that would be renewed on an annual basis. Staff who had completed five years of satisfactory service would be converted to continuing contracts. Continuing contracts could not be terminated without due cause and adequate notice. Staff already holding permanent contracts would not be affected by this proposal.

While any changes to the types of contracts that the Secretary-General may offer rest with the General Assembly, the Staff Council feels that continuing contracts would afford greater stability and job security than the present short-term and fixed-term options. What is not clear at present is the manner in which project staff will be accommodated in this scheme. These staff members have some of the most tenuous terms of employment; if the Staff Council can help to stabilize those contracts, it will have made a significant achievement.

The Staff Council is a member of the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA). CCISUA, as a federation, is permitted to participate in the sessions of the ICSC. For UNOV/ODCCP, our membership in CCISUA gives us access to ICSC deliberations on wide-ranging issues of the common system such as security and safety of staff, salary determinations for both local and international staff, education grants, etc. In this context, the most significant exercise in the past year was the *place to place survey of living expenses* for use in the Professional salary calculations.

Your Staff Council assisted in organizing and monitoring the price collection exercise for the place to place survey. Since all Professional staff acknowledge a loss in local spending power experienced over the past year, it is hoped that our input and that of a consultant supported by all staff unions and administrations of the VBOs will bring a meaningful positive change to those salaries.

With regard to informal advocacy outside the context of the JAC, the SMCC, and the ICSC, your Staff Council is assisting staff on a daily basis in one or another matter. Concerns are wide-ranging and include contractual disputes; procedural concerns in terms of placement or promotion; termination of contracts; conflicts between staff and managers; access to training, and much more.

On a larger scale, the Staff Council has represented the staff in a series of meetings to prepare for the *removal of asbestos* from the VIC. If all goes according to schedule, the removal will commence in early 2002 through a process of shuffling staff, for 3 month periods, to temporary office space to be built on the VIC grounds later that year. Based on the level of expertise and seriousness exhibited in the various negotiations between the VBOs and the Austrian Government, the Staff Council has every reason to believe the removal of asbestos will be conducted in a safe and transparent manner.

Services for Staff

The Staff Council, either directly or indirectly, provides a number of services for UNOV/ODCCP staff members. The Council fully supports the Staff Services Officer who establishes discounts with local businesses for goods and services (e.g., automobiles, clothing, fitness club memberships, access to financial planning experts, telephone cards, etc.) and makes arrangements for UN staff to attend special events (e.g., concerts, plays, etc). The Staff Council also directly manages the Souvenir Shop at the UN Visitor Centre at Gate 1. Profits support the Staff Defence Fund. Further, the Staff Council provides up to two free legal consultations with local attorneys on non-UN matters for all dues paying members.

The Council has also created a US Dollar Housing Service Trust Fund Account that permits you to use the IAEA Housing Service. Staff members make an up front payment of \$700.00 (or \$750.00 for non-dues paying members) to have access to the housing service. This payment is held in trust by the Staff Council. If staff members conclude a contract through the housing service, then a payment of \$700.00 is made by the Staff Council to the IAEA. If no such contract is concluded, the staff members (dues paying and non-dues paying) can reclaim \$700 from the Staff Council. If it were not for this inexpensive and practical option, UNOV/ODCCP staff would be required to peruse the newspapers or consult with very expensive local real estate agents.

Finally, while it does not have a direct administrative role, the Staff Council works closely with the Staff Welfare Board on matters relating to expenditure incurred for the benefit of staff at large and payable from the Staff Welfare Fund (e.g. the new Child Care Centre; partial costs for those participating in the Inter-Agency Games), as well as the operation of the Staff Assistance and Benevolence Funds. Funds administered by the Staff Welfare Board receive income primarily from a share of nominal charges levied on the sale of liquor, tobacco products and other luxury goods sold in the Commissary.

Outreach

The Staff Council is involved in a number of outreach activities designed to promote the work and the ideals of the United Nations. In the past year, your Council has been particularly active in the area of charities. It has developed a clear donation policy designed to support projects and agencies focusing on development, human rights, natural disaster relief, peace maintenance and conflict resolution, and counselling. As such, donations have been made to *Hope'87*, *The Befrienders*, *School Network Human Rights*, *SOS Kinderdorf*, and in support of *World AIDS Day*. The Staff Council was also an active participant in promoting the *UN Millennium Day Celebration*. Its poster - "The UN works to reflect cultural diversity"- was well received. In addition, the Council co-hosted the *UN International Day of Volunteers* with the United Nations Information Service (UNIS).

Finances

In accordance with its Financial Rules, the Staff Council maintains a checking account and a savings account in which its regular income is deposited and from which expenditures are made. Voluntary dues paid by the great majority of UNOV/ODCCP staff represent the primary source of income of the Staff Council. Such dues are generally paid by an automatic deduction of 1.5 per mille of the monthly net salary plus allowances from the member's salary. Certain project personnel for whom such an automatic deduction is not possible, arrange for payment of their dues through standing orders with their individual financial institutions. Additionally, the Staff Council receives voluntary dues from staff at UNICRI, and a monthly payment from CTBTO which allows staff of that organization the use of the facilities provided by the Staff Council's Staff Services Office. Expenditures by the Staff Council that exceed ATS 3000 require a Council vote and are recorded in the minutes of its meetings.

In accordance with rule 8 of its Financial Rules the Staff Council has also established a Staff Defence Fund Account. The funds in this account are used to cover, in whole or in part, the costs of legal advice and assistance to staff filing an application with the United Nations Administrative Tribunal on issues of general interest for the staff at UNOV/ODCCP or for the staff of the Organization at large.

Work Atmosphere

While the Staff Council can point to several clear and tangible outcomes to its work and deliberations in the past year, it has also attempted to address some less tangible matters. The Staff Council continues to be contacted by staff at all levels who indicate concerns about poor communication, lack of transparency, uncertainty in their expected roles, low morale, and funding instability.

Clearly, these concerns have been exacerbated by the recent flood of journalistic reports on the management of UNOV/ODCCP. Although most of those articles have been directed at the Director-General/Executive Director himself, the Staff Council understands that public criticism of an executive head always filters down and affects all those associated with the organization in question. Negative press, whether founded or unfounded, can often call into question the credibility of an organization. Credibility might impact negatively on funding. Decreases in funding would, naturally, impact on job security. Job security is at the heart of the mandate of the Staff Council. As such, your Council is watching the developments in the press, and more importantly, the findings of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) carefully.

Regardless of the origin of the press accounts or the accuracy or inaccuracy of the claims made, the administration seems to have regarded them as a kind of wake-up call. Sometimes reform in an organization can not happen without the convergence of several factors. Although for the past two to three years, the Staff Council raised the very same concerns that have been raised more recently by departing staff and by the press, perhaps now is the time for change. The Staff Council intends to embrace that change in a methodical and cautious manner premised on transparency and inclusion.

A Plea for Increased Staff Involvement

Annex 3 to this report lists all staff nominees to the twenty statutory joint bodies. Apart from those official bodies, the Staff Council must locate willing participants to other ad hoc groups. While membership in the Staff Council and the requisite official release associated

with such membership is outlined in GA A/C.5/50/64 and ST/Al/293, the involvement of staff in all other committees and panels is entirely voluntary. The Staff Council would make a plea to supervisors to acknowledge that the time your staff dedicate to the common good is *official* time. Similarly, the Council would make a plea to staff members at large to get involved. Bring your concerns along with ideas for *solving* those concerns to the Council.

Unless it is declared as closed or confidential, any staff member may attend any Staff Council meeting, as an observer, should he/she have a particular interest in one of the agenda items. The Council continues to post the provisional agenda and the minutes of Council meetings on its Lotus Notes electronic bulletin board, under the heading "UNOV Bulletin Board". Anyone who wants more detailed information, therefore, can easily obtain it. The Council is happy to receive feedback from staff members. Please make your voice heard. We are listening!

I. INTRODUCTION

1. During the first year of the eighteenth session of the United Nations Staff Council at Vienna, a total of 12 regular meetings were held. The Council was consulted and expressed its position on the items before Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA) and Staff Management Coordination Committee (SMCC). The Council's energies were mainly devoted to the reform agenda of the Secretary-General, which includes the issues of accountability; recruitment, placement and promotion; mobility; and contractual arrangements; and the long-standing issue of the reform of the internal justice system. See section IV of the report for details.

2. Closer to home, the Council was directly involved with a wide range of concerns, from asbestos removal to the child-care centre expansion project, to the convening of the Inter-Agency Games. Each of these is covered below. In addition, the Council spent much of its time addressing the proposed management and career planning initiatives of ODCCP and the subsequent OIOS visit. See the relevant section below for more information.

A. THE UNOV INTERNAL JUSTICE SYSTEM²

1. Joint Appeals Board (JAB)³

3. In 1999, two appeals were filed, and six appeals were filed in 2000.

Appeals filed

6 

²Apart from the formal mechanisms of dispute resolution and litigation that are provided for staff, several informal mechanisms are available to staff members. They include: discussing a grievance with the other person(s) concerned or having another staff member act as a mediator/conciliator to assist in dialogue and resolution in a non-confrontational manner. Staff from the Office of Human Resources Management and/or Executive Offices may, as an extension of their official duties, assist in the informal resolution of a matter or in the interpretation of a rule or entitlement. Members of the Panel of Counsel are available to assist or advise in this capacity. Staff Representatives and the Staff Counsellor are also viable options to informal methods of resolution. Staff Rule 111.2(b) provides for conciliation procedures under the auspices of the Joint Appeals Board. Section III.B. of the Rules of Procedure and Guidelines of the Joint Appeals Board at Headquarters elaborate on how this might be implemented. For general information on the formal and informal mechanisms of dispute resolution available to you, as a UN staff member, see the following web site prepared by the Coordinator of the Panel of Counsel in NY: <http://157.150.196.1/POC/aboutpoc.htm>.

³**The Joint Appeals Board (JAB) has been established pursuant to Chapter XI of the Staff Regulations and Rules. JAB's have been established in Geneva, Nairobi, New York and Vienna to review appeals submitted by staff members contesting an administrative decision that allegedly violates their conditions of employment.**

Requests for suspension of action	1
Reports completed on appeals	0
Reports completed on suspension of action	1
Cases which are still under conciliation	2
Cases settled through conciliation	0

4. The Vienna JAB was unable to consider appeals in 2000 due to delays in the selection of members to replace those whose terms had ended. The composition of the new JAB was announced on 29 September, and the consideration of appeals has resumed.

An additional case has been referred to the Classification Appeals Committee.

2. Joint Disciplinary Committee (JDC)³

5. The Joint Disciplinary Committee was not seized of any cases during the reporting period, and therefore was not convened.

3. Panel of Counsel⁴

6. As reported last year, the period under review has shown little increase in the number of cases brought to the attention of the Panel of Counsel. In addition to what is reported on the Joint Appeals Board, the Panel has also been involved in mediation in the areas of promotion and contractual status.

7. Efforts will nevertheless continue in order to encourage staff members to bring their grievances forward and make use of the machinery which exists for this purpose, in complete confidence and without fear of intimidation or retaliation.

8. The membership of the Panel has considerably diminished during the past year, due to staff turnover and resignations. A circular has been issued urging staff members to volunteer to serve on the Panel. Any staff member with a good knowledge of the staff rules and regulations and a grasp of legal process would be very welcome as a Panel member. Please consider volunteering.

4. Panel on discrimination and other grievances⁵

³ Pursuant to Chapter X of the Staff Regulations and Rules, the Secretary-General has established the Joint Disciplinary Committee to advise him in disciplinary cases. The Draft Rules of Procedure of the Joint Disciplinary Committee explain in some detail how the JDC secretariat functions. Also see ST/AI/371, the purpose of which is to provide guidelines and instructions on the application of Chapter X of the Staff Rules, Disciplinary Measures and Procedures, and to outline the basic requirements of due process to be afforded a staff member against whom misconduct is alleged.

⁴ The Staff Rules provide that a staff member may be represented by any other serving or retired staff member when initiating formal appeals before the Joint Appeals Board (Staff Rule 111.2(i)) or replying to charges of misconduct and defending themselves against those charges in a hearing before the Joint Disciplinary Committee (Staff Rule 110.7(d)), whether or not they are a member of the Panel of Counsel. Before the Administrative Tribunal, a staff member may be represented by another serving or retired staff member or by an outside attorney of his or her choice.

9. During the reporting year, the Panel on Discrimination and Other Grievances dealt with one case involving an individual staff member, which was solved through mediation by a Panel member. Apart from that case, the Panel's main activity was a case initiated by the Director of DACS in 1999, involving allegations of discrimination in a work group of more than 100 staff members. The Panel contacted all the staff members in the work group and managed to interview nearly all the members of the unit. The interviews were carried out using a standardized questionnaire so as to ensure that all interviews would be comparable, thus allowing for comprehensive analysis. Specific categories of discrimination investigated included race, nationality, sex, religion and culture. The interview process was carried out from 5 October 1999 to 30 March 2000. Thereafter, the Panel drafted a report on the investigation, including conclusions and recommendations, and submitted it to the Director of DACS in May 2000.

10. During the reporting period, the strength of the Panel was diminished by the retirement of the Panel Coordinator, the departure of a Panel member from UN/Vienna, and the resignation of another Panel member due to other professional obligations. However, after some delays, at the time of this writing, the Panel is operating at full capacity.

B. STAFF COUNSELLING SERVICE

11. UNOV is fortunate to have a staff counsellor. Information circular ST/IC/1999/111, of 29 December 1999, on mental health and medical and employee assistance facilities, states that the policy of the Organization is "...to engender a more open, supportive and effective approach to mental health...", and reminds staff that they have the "opportunity and the responsibility to seek assistance when they are unable to work for any health-related reason". Staff are further encouraged to make the fullest use of existing medical and employee assistance facilities.

12. Our in-house counsellor is trained to understand the kind of problems that staff typically face, and in particular to be sensitive to cross-cultural and organizational-climate issues. Under her terms of reference, the counsellor respects the confidentiality of all consultations. This type of emotional support can help individuals and can also head off interpersonal conflicts in the workplace. Thus, the staff counsellor can be an asset not only to the individual and to his or her family, but also to the Organization. The staff counsellor is there for each of you. If you need the kind of help that she can offer, please feel free to make an appointment for a consultation with her!

13. The primary concern that the Staff Council would like to voice is that the Administration provides for only ten hours a week of staff counselling service. Given the importance of assisting staff in need of such service, the Council would request the Administration to make every effort to secure the additional resources required to increase the number of weekly hours of counselling service available to

⁵The Panel on Discrimination and Other Grievances was established by the General Assembly in 1977 to investigate any work-related grievance (e.g., religious, racial or gender discrimination) made by staff members with an emphasis on resolving the matter at the earliest stage. Access to this panel does not require a written administrative decision.

UNOV staff members. As a demonstration of the scope of the counsellor's activities, 97 UNOV/ODCCP staff, or approximately one-eighth of us, made use of the service in the last year. The staff Counsellor, Ms. Patience Gebauer, can be reached, by appointment only, at extension 5786.

C. STAFF WELFARE BODIES

1. Staff Welfare Fund

14. The Staff Welfare Fund provides financial support for activities that are of potential benefit to the staff as a whole. The Board met on 10 March 2000. Several new members were nominated to the Staff Welfare Board and the Staff Assistance Committee (as announced in circulars UNV/INF.86 and 99). Some other issues of interest were as follows.

15. As specified under the cost-sharing agreement for the child-care project, ATS 1,046,976 was paid out in 2000, plus ATS 3,115 as UNOV's contribution to a special ceremony at the Child-Care Centre.

16. ATS 150,500 went to participants in the Inter-Agency Games at Aix-les-Bains, France.

17. ATS 53,139 was approved to reimburse UNOV/ODCCP Staff Council representatives' expenses for participation in CCISUA and SMCC meetings (incurred in 1999).

18. A later funding request by the VIC Parents Club for ATS 10,000 to support the 2000 Summer Camp was also approved.

19. Moreover, the Staff Assistance Fund was advanced a further ATS 200,000 from the Staff Welfare Fund.

2. Staff Assistance Fund

20. The Staff Assistance Fund is a sub-account of the Staff Welfare Fund and is designed to provide loans for provident and productive purposes to staff members of the United Nations units at Vienna. The Committee processed 66 loan applications during the year, disbursing a total of ATS 5,428,000.

3. Staff Benevolent Fund

21. The Staff Benevolent Fund is a sub-account of the Staff Welfare Fund designed to render financial assistance to staff members of the United Nations units at Vienna, in case of urgent financial need or distress. The Trustees of the Staff Benevolent Fund were able to approve two interest-free loans, totaling ATS 70,000 during the past year.

D. STAFF SERVICES OFFICER

22. The Staff Services Officer, Mr. Mario Jordan, continued to serve UNOV and CTBTO staff who are dues-paying union members, by providing information on rebates and discounts available at numerous firms throughout Vienna and the surrounding area. From 4 to 8 December, he organized the annual Christmas exhibition in the Staff Lounge. Proceeds from the exhibition, amounting to ATS 34,000, were donated to SOS Kinderdorf.

23. In addition, Mr. Jordan was nominated by the Council to act as an observer for the ICSC price collection in the place-to-place survey exercise. Due to his extensive knowledge of the commercial environment in Vienna, Mr. Jordan was made responsible for arranging for and scheduling all of the visits to the various firms on the price collection list.

E. HOUSING SERVICE

24. The arrangements negotiated by the Staff Council and the IAEA Housing Service, under which staff pay to make use of the Service, have continued to operate satisfactorily. It is expected that the Service will continue unchanged for the foreseeable future.

F. CLOSING OF THE VIC DURING THE YEAR-END HOLIDAYS

25. As in past years, the Staff Council supported the closure of UNOV/ODCCP during the three-day period between Christmas and New Year's Day. The proposal forwarded by staff to the administration called for a 50/50 split in annual leave days, under which staff would spend 1.5 days of annual leave and the administration would absorb the remainder. The DG/ED presented a detailed financial argument justifying the closure to the administration at UN Headquarters. But, alas, it was all to no avail: Headquarters rejected the submission and the building remained open for a few lonely souls.

26. In September 1999, the Staff Council was informed by the administration that the Souvenir Shop would be required to move from the Rotunda to the Visitor Centre at Gate 1. The Staff Council fought for the shop to remain in the Rotunda, but it was moved to Gate 1 along with some, but not all, of the businesses located in the Rotunda at that time.

27. Since the move to the new location, sales have fallen off considerably, to the detriment of the Staff Defence Fund and other charities. However, the last quarter of 2000 saw a modest increase in sales, presumably due, to the arrival of an attractive café and to better advertising. As to the latter, the UNSCV must thank the administration for providing flyers and a web site for the Souvenir Shop (www.unvienna.org/Souvenir/home.htm). It is hoped that staff will log on to admire the range of reasonable gift items, and do their "pre-shopping" online!

H. INTER-AGENCY GAMES

28. The Staff Council has combined efforts with the councils of UNIDO and CTBTO to form joint teams to participate in the Inter-Agency Games, sponsored by ITU-Geneva, and scheduled to be held in Alicante, Spain, from 26 to 30 April 2001. Disciplines include athletics, badminton, basketball, bridge, chess, darts, golf, petanque, 7-a-side football, table tennis, tennis and volleyball. The Council would like to thank the Director-General for granting partial annual leave for UNOV/ODCCP participants. The Council hopes the Games will be a resounding success, and wishes all our teams the very best luck, as they battle for victory!

I. CHARITABLE DONATIONS

29. The Staff Council has developed and implemented a well structured charity donation policy. That policy is designed to support projects and agencies focusing on the following areas: development, human rights, natural disaster relief, peace maintenance and conflict resolution, and counselling. UNOV staff members can be proud of the fact that their Council is doing its part to advance the values and ideals of our United Nations.

30. With the help of the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) and with input from Council members and staff members at large, as well as information provided by the interested organizations themselves, the Council identified a number of meritorious small- to medium-sized projects. Several projects that received donations from UNSCV are briefly described below.

HOPE '87: As in past years, this Austrian NGO, active in the field of economic and social development in Africa and other regions, has been selected as the recipient of a consolidated UNSCV donation with a view to maximizing our impact. Our previous support to HOPE '87 had gone to a project in Burkina Faso designed to train young farmers in sustainable agriculture. This year, the Council has requested HOPE '87 to assign its donation once again to a similar project in order to provide continuity of support. A donation of ATS 50,000 was made. In addition to this donation, the Staff Council was able to collect and donate an additional ATS 3,100 on the occasion of the retirement of Ms. Heide Almoslechner, HRMS.

THE BEFRIENDERS: The Council has decided to support this small but highly effective counselling and distress-mitigating organization which has for many years been active in Austria as a service to the English-speaking community. The UNSCV donation will support one of the Befrienders' posters, which are prominently displayed in various central *U-Bahn* stations throughout the city. The poster will indicate the Council's sponsorship. A donation of ATS 12,000 was made.

SCHOOL NETWORK HUMAN RIGHTS: This international project in the field of human rights education, conducted by the Vienna-based *Interkulturelles Zentrum*, received the World Aware Award for Global Education in April 2000. In November 2000, another component of its Human Rights in One World was organized, this time with high-school students (ages 15-18) from Africa and Latin America coming to schools in different parts of Austria to participate in group activities and exchange experiences in the area of human rights. The students and their teachers investigate their own environment in order to find out whether human rights are respected in their schools, their homes and their communities, comparing theory and practice in the context of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This activity is carried on abroad, with students and teachers in other countries, in order to provide an opportunity for exchange and mutual interaction on a North-South basis. This project is viewed as a contribution to the UN Decade for Human Rights 1995-2004. The Council made a donation of ATS 15,000 to cover the international air transport and related local costs for one of the participants.

SOS KINDERDORF: Mr. Herman Gmeiner pioneered the SOS-Children's Village concept. Today, these Villages are dedicated to neglected children in over 130 countries. The

objective of the Villages is to provide a new home, a new family, the loving care of a Village Mother, and education. The Council, through its support of the annual Christmas Exhibition, has supported this charity since 1994. A total donation of ATS 36,193, including monies received from the Tombola, was made.

WORLD AIDS DAY: Men make a difference in the fight against AIDS, but many do not pay attention to their health and continue to engage in behaviours that put them and their families at risk. This was the theme of the World AIDS Campaign, which culminated with World AIDS Day on 1 December. The Staff Councils of the Vienna-based Organizations in cooperation with the VIC Joint Medical Service marked World AIDS Day by distributing information materials, showing videos and handing out red ribbons to staff in the VIC. The collection of donations was a complete success, with a total of some ATS 51,600, taken in a considerable increase over the previous year, thanks to the efforts of volunteers from UNOV, IAEA, UNIDO and CTBTO. Equal shares of ATS 17,200 were transferred to three charities (AIDS Hilfe, Buddy Verein and Privatinitiative SIDA) that are involved with HIV/AIDS prevention and care work.

J. ASBESTOS REMOVAL

31. The Staff Council continued to follow developments on the project to remove asbestos from the VIC buildings, through its Working Group on Occupational Health and Safety. Staff Council representatives attended meetings of the United Nations Asbestos Task Force and Technical Sub-Committee as observers, and were in regular contact with other VBOs as well as Buildings Management. The Staff Council believes that Buildings Management is representing the concerns of staff in discussions with the Austrian authorities and is making an effort to keep staff informed about the removal project.

32. The Vienna-based international organizations are negotiating with the Austrian authorities on the details of the asbestos removal process. The international organizations have managed to shorten the asbestos removal period from eight years, as indicated in the Austrian specifications, to five years, and at the same time have saved more than ATS 5.5 million on consultants' costs for the Austrians. Under current plans, asbestos would be removed a few floors at a time, with a one-floor buffer above and below the removal area. Staff would be housed for roughly three months, on a rotating basis, in temporary office containers, which the Austrian authorities have offered to install next to the VIC. Staff Council representatives were invited to inspect the containers and found them to be similar to our present work space. An Austrian contractor, "IC Consulenter", has been selected to carry out the asbestos removal project. The project is expected to commence in January 2002.

K. VIC CATERING

33. The new caterer has been operating since 1 January 2000. Naturally, food is not unlike the weather - everyone has an opinion! In an effort to gather these opinions, the caterer conducted a survey in July. Unfortunately, a small percentage of the responses came from UNOV/ODCCP staff. These results were presented by the caterer to the Catering Advisory Committee (CATAC) at its meeting of 12 October 2000.

34. The results indicated that the majority of respondents were “satisfied” with the service. CATAC agreed that “satisfied” would also indicate that improvements could be made and would be welcomed. Staff are, therefore, encouraged to provide clear suggestions, in writing, to the **Cafeteria Suggestion Box** for possible follow-up.

L. AUSTRIAN BURSARY TO THE VIENNA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

35. The Vienna International School (VIS) began its academic year on 23 August 2000. On 12 September 2000 the school received a brief notification dated 25 August 2000 from the Austrian Education Ministry that the tuition assistance bursary would not be paid for this school year due to budgetary constraints. There was no prior indication to the parents that the letter was coming.

36. The bursary given to the VIS amounts to approximately ATS 6 million per year. Those parents that do not receive education grants from their organizations are eligible to apply for a bursary based on family financial need. In many cases, those receiving the bursaries are VBO staff members from developing countries. After being approached by several effected parents, the Staff Councils have played a liaison role between the parents and the Executive Heads of the VBOs. To date, there has been no change in the Austrian policy.

M. ODCCP MANAGEMENT ISSUES

1. Career Aspiration Survey and Skills Matrix

37. On 11 May 2000, all staff members of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention received a memorandum from the Executive Director asking that they complete a career development questionnaire. The questionnaire asked the staff member to provide responses to several open-ended questions on his/her short-term and long-term objectives. The questionnaire was to be signed by the staff member, the supervisor, the second reporting officer and a staff member of the newly created ODCCP Management Advisory Unit (MAU). The questionnaire was designed and distributed without the input or knowledge of the Staff Council.

38. In July and August 2000, the Management Advisory Unit designed a matrix to score or rate the skills and achievements of staff according to various objective and subjective criteria. Early versions of the matrix were shared with the Staff Council.

39. Both the career aspirations survey and the skills score matrix raised serious, varied and multiple concerns among staff. While the Staff Council conveyed its very strong interest in and commitment to any and all efforts designed to enhance the career opportunities of ODCCP staff, in a letter to the Executive Director dated 1 September, it asked that the MAU activities be suspended until all relevant parties, including the Staff Council and HRMS, who had no previous knowledge of the initiatives, had been given the opportunity to become involved in such a way as to give the exercise the greatest degree of clarity and transparency possible.

40. The concerns of staff included the following, in random order:

Does not the matrix overlap with PAS and IMIS? For what purpose will the "score" be used? How will the scores from the matrix and the results of the questionnaire be presented to and used by the existing appointment and promotion bodies? What is envisioned to be a minimum score for promotion? How will supervisors make their subjective assessments? How will staff be able to refute their scores? Will a skills score card rebuttal panel be created? How will the issue of gender balance be addressed, given that male colleagues would likely fare better than female colleagues in the scoring? How will MAU address the scoring imbalance that favours subjective assessments over objective criteria? Why would staff be open and honest in responding to a questionnaire to be signed by two supervisors? How would confidentiality be ensured?

41. As these and other questions were never adequately answered, the Staff Council, in a letter of 28 September, addressed to the Director of Administration and Common Services, asked that the MAU initiatives be discontinued for the reasons outlined below.

42. First, the Council was of the opinion that IMIS and PAS, when implemented properly, were sufficient to address the issues of staff skills and career aspirations. The MAU initiatives therefore would duplicate systems which are being implemented already under a Secretariat-wide policy.

43. Second, the Council was not adequately convinced that the initiatives of the MAU would bring any benefits as management tools over and above those already afforded by IMIS and PAS. On the contrary, there remains considerable concern among the staff that the implementation of the MAU initiatives alongside the other two mechanisms would result in an overall weakening of the human resource and performance management system as a whole.

44. Third, the initiatives were presented to the Council as mechanisms to "map the staff" and to "encourage dynamic staff/management communication." The Council feels that the information contained in IMIS will adequately address the former concern, and the latter is best addressed through proper implementation of the PAS.

45. The Council offered a number of suggestions for strengthening the existing mechanisms. It was considered that staff should be encouraged to check the accuracy of the information stored in IMIS. In addition, the MAU, together with the Staff Development and Training Unit of UNOV, could embark on the organization of a series of management training courses addressing issues such as communication skills, negotiation, conflict resolution and team building. Those courses could be coupled with the PAS training courses, which have not been offered for some time.

46. It appeared to the Staff Council, therefore, that full and accurate information in IMIS and a properly implemented and rebuttable PAS could be combined to provide more than enough information to enable the Director-General and other managers to make informed decisions on staffing matters.

47. Throughout the various discussions, the Council maintained its stand that the process, even at an experimental or pilot level, must be carried out as a joint initiative of management and staff. Staff must "own" the exercise in order for them to be supportive and willing to participate openly. As a result, the Council asked that a meeting of all the relevant parties be convened to give very serious thought to career development. Such a meeting was never held. Rather, the Council learned that the MAU initiatives had been presented to a group of donor Governments in early December.

48. The Council was astonished by this news and expressed these feelings to the Executive Director in a letter of 4 December. It seemed as though the countless discussions, e-mails and memoranda on the matter had been for naught. While the Council was assured that the Governments would be informed of the staff's reservations regarding the MAU initiatives, the minutes of the meeting at which government representatives were briefed suggest otherwise.

49. All these debates and discussions may have been futile, as the new Chief of the MAU has informed the Council that the career aspirations survey and the skills score matrix have been placed on the back burner and assigned low priority. However, should they awaken from their dormant state, the Council intends to be fully engaged in ensuring that any information collected remain confidential and that any initiatives move ahead only with full staff involvement and support.

2. Working Groups to review ODCCP management practices

50. The Executive Director, by an interoffice memorandum of 16 February 2001, requested his top managers to assist in the convening of three working groups to review ODCCP management practices. That memorandum indicated that "after more than three years of intensive focus on substantial issues, visibility and international support, we now need to make an extra effort to consolidate and strengthen management practices within ODCCP..." The Staff Council certainly welcomes such an initiative as it is wholly consistent with the frequent and several year long claims of the Secretary-General that the staff are the Organization's greatest asset.

51. Under the overall coordination of the Senior Legal Liaison Officer, the three working groups met from 21-23 February to discuss organizational functions and structure, delegation of authority, and communication. The Staff Council was given one day to provide names of participants to the working groups. With no terms of reference given for the working groups, no provision for the inclusion of General Service staff, and no opportunity for the Council to meeting and give adequate thought to its role, it felt disadvantaged. The reaction of the Council was shared by other participants who felt the groups were convened with undue haste. However, the results of the working groups represent the start of a process of reform. Therefore, ODCCP staff will be pleased to learn that the Executive Director has agreed to continue the consultative process with the Council which will, it is presumed, involve continued participation of staff in all meetings and discussions.

3. OIOS inspection of management practices in ODCCP

52. The Office of Internal Oversight Services is the United Nations office responsible for reviewing a wide range of managerial, fiscal and programme delivery issues. It is headed by Mr. Dileep Nair, an Under-Secretary-General appointed by the General Assembly for a non-renewable five-year term. OIOS has four sub-units: the Auditing Unit, the Central Monitoring and Inspection Unit, the Evaluation Unit, and the Investigation Unit. Any reports compiled by OIOS staff are presented in a report by Mr. Nair to the General Assembly through the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General is not permitted to modify the text of the reports in any way, but is permitted to provide his thoughts, comments, ideas, expression of support, etc. in his forwarding cover note to the General Assembly.

53. The 2000-2001 work plan of OIOS included three assessments of ODCCP: a follow-up review of recommendations made to CICP in 1997, an in-depth review of CICP, and an in-depth review of UNDCP.

54. In an effort to be as efficient and economical as possible, Mr. Nair informed the Executive Director that his team would be coming to Vienna from 5 to 16 February 2001 to address all three issues at the same time. Mr. Nair has the authority to visit and inspect any office at any time he chooses.

55. In order for the inspectors to have as much information as possible on managerial practices in ODCCP, a survey was sent to 124 Professional staff members. OIOS made an effort to send the survey to all Professional staff in ODCCP. Those who did not receive surveys were excluded, not by intention, but due to technical or electronic mail difficulties. Replies were received from 53 staff members (43%). In the experience of OIOS, this represents a very high return rate. The normal return rate is between 5 and 10%.

56. At the time of this writing, the OIOS inspectors were not able to comment on the preliminary results or the impact of their investigation.

57. In addition to the OIOS team, external auditors are mandated by the General Assembly to carry out independent management audits in all United Nations bodies. A team of auditors from the United Kingdom visited UNOV/ODCCP twice in the past year. The external auditors are rotated every five years. In June, the present group will end their term and be followed by a team from France.

N. UNITED NATIONS INTERREGIONAL CRIME AND JUSTICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (UNICRI)

58. As reported in past years, the staff of UNICRI continue to face a situation of anxious uncertainty. After years of delay, in May 2000, the Institute at last moved from Rome to its new premises in Turin. It had been hoped that, once the Institute had settled into permanent accommodation, staff would no longer have to live a hand-to-mouth existence, on stop-gap contracts. However, the hope that the status of the staff would be regularized has failed to be realized, and still no contractual policy has been implemented so that staff could know where they stand and what their prospects are.

59. Partly as a result

60. of the move from Rome to Turin, a number of staff members have left and not been replaced. This has meant that the remaining staff have to fill the gaps and shoulder a much heavier workload, without even the minimum security of a contractual policy that can be relied upon.

61. At the session of the UNICRI Board of Trustees, in November 2000, staff representatives called for:

- Adoption and consistent application of a firm contractual policy, whereby both Professional and General Service staff would be offered at least two-year contracts;
- Introduction of a structured career development system including job training, horizontal and upward mobility and succession planning, as well as a comprehensive post classification scheme;
- Training of staff members given new tasks, to enable them to perform effectively;
- Improvement of consultations between management and staff.

62. As the Institute finishes settling into its offices in Turin, these requests must be addressed.

II. JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (JAC)

63. During the reporting year, four meetings of the Vienna Joint Advisory Committee took place, on 8 September 2000, 24 October 2000, 14 December 2000, and 16 February 2001. In addition, one joint UNIDO/UNOV JAC meeting, devoted to health insurance matters, took place on 14 December 2000.

64. The JAC represents the highest level staff-managements consultative body in UNOV/ODCCP. As such, the staff representatives endeavoured to ensure that the decisions of the JAC not be questioned but, rather, be fully respected. That being said, the general atmosphere in the JAC has been cooperative and productive. The Committee has endeavored to discuss issues in smaller working groups outside of the formal setting of meetings. As a result, meetings have been focused and efficient. This has allowed the meetings to function largely as an adoptive mechanism rather than as a discussion forum. In addition, the Staff Council is grateful to the administration for providing the services of one of its staff to serve as secretary of the JAC. This arrangement has allowed for a consistent flow of detailed information to all members.

A. GENERAL SERVICE RECRUITMENT CRITERIA

65. It has become apparent that UNOV/ODCCP is often unable to hire capable persons in the GS category due to rather rigid recruitment criteria, as compared to those applied by the other VBOs. Therefore, close consultations took place between staff and administration, which resulted in the adoption by the JAC of revised GS recruitment criteria. The revisions are outlined below.

66. For the G-3 level, the criterion for recruitment will be a minimum of four years of related experience within the United Nations or outside; for the G-4 level, it will be a minimum of five years of related experience within the United Nations or outside; for the G-5 level, it will be a minimum of seven years of progressively responsible related experience within the United Nations or outside; for the G-6 level, it will be a minimum of eight years of progressively responsible related experience within the United Nations or outside.

67. The criteria agreed on for the United Nations Security and Safety Section in Vienna were modeled along the lines of those applied by the New York Security and Safety Service, and would call for the following:

- No distinction should be made as to whether relevant experience has been gained within the United Nations or outside, so that candidates having acquired a total of four years of relevant military experience performing specific functions (not administrative) can be appointed at the G-3 level initially.
- Uniformed service with a police force (national, provincial, municipal) should be given double weight (two years of police experience would result in direct appointment at the G-3 level).

In negotiating these revisions, the staff representatives ensured that the following provisions will be retained and enforced:

- Recruitment of external candidates is only considered in cases where the search for a suitable internal candidate has been exhausted;
- There is no outside recruitment against General Service posts in the United Nations Security and Safety Service classified at the G-4 and higher levels;
- Clerical/secretarial staff hired against temporarily established and unclassified posts are generally not recruited at a level higher than G-3.

These revised guidelines have been implemented.

B. FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

68. The rules governing the flexible working hours (FWH) scheme in Vienna were put into effect, on a provisional basis, in December 1993. At the end of 1998, questionnaires on the

system were circulated desk to desk. A JAC working group was formed to assess the results of that survey. The working group met in 2000 and determined that there was overwhelming support for the flex-time programme in UNOV/ODCCP.

69. Some of the main points raised during the Committee's discussion regarding the working group's proposals are indicated below.

70. In view of the outcome of the survey, there was general agreement on the need to formalize the FWH scheme.

71. Once the FWH scheme had been approved by the JAC, core aspects of it should be available to ALL groups of staff, including offices that were not currently taking part in it, with the exception of those working shifts (e.g., Security and Telex).

72. Management indicated that there were likely to be some reservations by line managers where they considered special arrangements to be necessary and in this connection suggested that it would be important to define parameters, e.g., regarding who would have the authority to make adjustments to the scheme or suspend it, under what circumstances and for how long.

73. Staff representatives agreed that the development of parameters might be useful, but cautioned that great care should be taken in setting any limitations, and further emphasized the need to ensure that the staff concerned were involved in discussions. The staff representatives also indicated that they would support considering the possibility of establishing rosters instead of suspending the FWH scheme.

74. Management stated that they were very much in favour of the FWH scheme, as long as all staff were treated equally, and further indicated that whatever system was in place should be easy to monitor and audit.

75. Regarding time recording, there was general agreement that the use of the on-line form should be encouraged and that there was a need for monitoring to be carried out both by HRMS and within each section.

76. Regarding performance management, management and staff representatives agreed that great care would need to be taken in the development of any guidelines for handling abuses or providing recognition related to FWH.

77. As a result of the working group's report and the discussions in the JAC, it was agreed that the administration would draft detailed guidelines on flexible working hours, taking into account the above views, for the JAC's consideration. At the time of this writing, the Administration had not prepared the draft circular for review by the JAC.

C. ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY CRITERIA FOR THE NEW CHILD-CARE CENTRE

78. The Council, in cooperation with the Councils of the other VBOs, was involved in the expansion and funding (through the Staff Welfare Board) of the Child-Care Centre. The

expanded Child-Care Centre will become operational in the latter half of 2001 and will provide space for some 150 children aged between 3 months and 6 years.

79. The expansion of the Centre made it necessary for the JAC to address the issue of eligibility and priority criteria for the admission of children to the facility. The Centre was established for the purpose of providing child-care services for working parents employed with the participating VBOs. The number of places allocated to each participating organization is established in accordance with the cost-sharing principles laid down in the Supplementary Memorandum of Understanding.

80. The Advisory Committee on the Child-Care Centre presented the following criteria, which were adopted by the JAC.

Eligibility criteria

- Children of employees of the VBOs who can provide proof of a minimum continuous service of at least six months;
- Children of employees of the VBOs on maternity leave (a maximum of 16 weeks prior to and after confinement);
- Children of employees of permanent missions who are accredited to the participating VBOs, in case vacancies cannot be filled in accordance with the previous two points;
- Children of staff holding valid grounds passes employed by companies operating at the VIC, subject to clearance by the UN Security and Safety Section, in case vacancies cannot be filled in accordance with the previous three points;
- Other children registered through the Municipality of Vienna, subject to UN Security and Safety Section clearance, in case vacancies cannot be filled in accordance with the previous four points.

Priority criteria

- Fixed-term over short-term staff over consultants holding special service agreements;
- Single parents;
- Hardship cases;
- Siblings of a child already attending the Centre;
- Children of employees of the VBOs returning from maternity/parental leave;

- Lower family income over higher family income. The parent who is not employed by one of the VBOs is requested to submit evidence of income upon registration of the child or children;
- Children of parents who are both employed full-time over children of parents who are employed part-time or are not gainfully employed;
- Enrolment from the beginning of the kindergarten year, i.e. September, over enrolment during the kindergarten year;
- Full-time attendance over part-time attendance;
- Children of parents on post-maternity/parental leave.

D. DEDUCTION OF GRANT FROM THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S ALLOWANCE

1. In October 2000, pursuant to ST/AI/2000/11, dated 12 October 2000, a change in policy with regard to deduction of government grants came into effect. The Austrian Government grant was paid on behalf of children of staff, a number of whom were also receiving the full UN allowance. In an effort to identify these cases so that the necessary deductions could be made in a timely manner to minimize the amounts that would have to be recovered later on through the payroll, the administration proposed to issue an information circular, which was supported by the staff representatives.

E. SOCIAL SECURITY AGREEMENT

2. The IAEA's Legal Office has negotiated a new social security agreement with the Austrian Government. It seems that IAEA has successfully negotiated a number of conditions which are favourable to staff, particularly the terms under which certain staff can buy back time in the Austrian pension scheme corresponding to the period they have been in the UNJSPF. This is an arrangement that would appeal to UNOV/ODCCP staff, as might other viable options not now available to them.

3. The Staff Council raised the issue of a revised agreement in the JAC. The management and staff sides agreed that this matter would be brought to the new Legal Officer's attention and that staff participation in the discussions would be ensured.

F. ABOLITION OF THE DEPARTMENTAL ADVISORY PANEL FOR GENERAL SERVICE STAFF

4. Management solicited the staff's views about the functioning of the Departmental Advisory Panel (DAP) for General Service staff, pointing out that the same material considered by this group was also considered and, therefore, duplicated by the Appointment and Promotion Panel (APP). Staff indicated that they would support the idea of disbanding the DAP for General Service staff, as its activities were basically redundant, provided that superannuation cases would thereafter be considered by the APP. As a result, the JAC approved the abolition of the DAP for General Service staff as indicated in UNOV/INF.116, ODCCP/INF.117 dated 23 February 2001.

G. JOINT UNIDO/UNOV JAC ON HEALTH INSURANCE

5. The UNIDO and UNOV JACs met on 14 December 2000 to discuss group medical insurance issues emerging from the findings of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Life Insurance. Unanimous agreement was reached on the following: to reduce premium rates by 6%; to reduce contribution and subsidy rates by 2.59%, without prejudice to a possible higher reduction determined by the respective JACs and financed from the respective reserve funds; to increase the reimbursement rate from 90% to 100% for in-patient hospitalization in semi-private accommodation in countries outside Europe, Israel and North America at no additional cost to the plan; to increase the reimbursement rate from 80% to 90% for the services of identified preferred providers, i.e. providers who have agreed to provide discount tariffs for their services to Van Breda participants.

6. The list of preferred providers will be communicated to participants through the Van Breda website and through announcements of the UNOV and UNIDO Staff Councils. Staff may wish to log on, at www.int.vanbreda.com, and click on "personal access". After entering your index No. (013 for UNOV, then your own index number), and your date of birth, you will be able to see precisely what your health insurance entitlements are under the UNOV Van Breda coverage, and to find out what health care providers offer us special rates.

III. COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR INTERNATIONAL STAFF UNIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (CCISUA)

7. The fifteenth annual Assembly of CCISUA was held from 22 to 28 March 2000 in Geneva. The sixteenth annual Assembly of CCISUA, was held from 19 to 23 February 2001 in New York. Those meetings and subsequent discussions and actions addressed the issues outlined below.

A. CCISUA BUREAU

8. The Statutes of CCISUA require that the President should be either the President of the New York Staff Union or the Executive Secretary of the Coordinating Council of the United Nations Office at Geneva. The post is held on a one-year rotating basis. New York held the post of President during the reporting period.

9. On 21 November 2000, the New York Staff Union held a special meeting, at which it recalled its President, First Vice-President and Second Vice-President. As a result of this recall, there was some debate in CCISUA as to who would then hold the seat of President. It was decided that the newly elected President of the New York Staff Union would also assume the post of President of CCISUA. This uncertainty in the Statutes was raised by the President of the UNSCV, who was able to clarify the text at the sixteenth annual Assembly.

10. That Assembly spent considerable time addressing mechanisms to improve communication among CCISUA members. It was the impression of the President of UNSCV that UNOV was not being adequately consulted and represented by the CCISUA Bureau in its various public statements.

11. However, the general mood and tone of the sixteenth Annual Assembly was encouraging, indeed. CCISUA seems to be back on track as a fully representational, democratic and professional federation. With the complexity of the issues facing Secretariat staff, it is essential that CCISUA function properly. You can be assured that your Council will continue to be vocal in this global forum.

B. REPRESENTATION AT ICSC

12. The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) held two sessions in 2000: the fifty-first session, which took place from 3 to 20 April 2000 in Vienna, and the fifty-second session, which took place from 17 July to 4 August at United Nations Headquarters in New York. At

these sessions, the Commission discussed the following: review of the pay and benefit system; conditions of service of the Professional and General Service staff; draft standards of conduct; post adjustment for the Professional categories and salary survey for the General Service category of staff; common scale of assessment; and evolution of the margin between salaries in the US Civil Service and those in the UN; review of the methodology for fixing children's allowances and education grants.

13. The UNSCV President represented CCISUA in the discussions on the draft standards of conduct for the international civil service. While a decision was taken to postpone the adoption of the draft standards until 2001, the UNSCV President was able to strengthen the language with regard to the matters of harassment and abiding by supervisory instructions that might be inconsistent with, *inter alia*, the Charter of the United Nations. With regard to staff/management relations, unsuccessful efforts were made to introduce the notion of collective bargaining, as witnessed recently in the ILO.

C. OTHER ICSC MATTERS

1. Post adjustment for Professional categories

14. On the issue of post adjustment for the Professional categories, UNSCV has been an active member of the VBO committee implementing the place-to-place survey. As a result of that survey, it became apparent that the ICSC had calculated housing costs in Vienna in a manner financially detrimental to Professional staff. Consequently, on the recommendation of the UNSCV President, an expert consultant will be hired on a cost-shared basis by the VBO administrations and Staff Councils to prepare a joint paper for consideration by the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions (ACPAQ). It is hoped that, as a result, the methodology for housing calculations will be modified to the benefit of staff in Vienna.

2. Appeal on the 4 per cent language factor for GS staff

15. At the time of the 1996 GS salary survey, ICSC decided that the language factor, which had previously been added to GS salaries in recognition of the fact that the local language at our duty station was not an official language of the United Nations, should be abolished.

16. The UNOV/ODCCP staff submitted their class-action appeal to the UN Administrative Tribunal on 28 April 1999. At the time of this writing, no reply has yet been received from the UNAT. The Council's lawyer is following the issue but has expressed little hope at immediate reaction.

D. SECURITY AND SAFETY OF STAFF

17. CCISUA circulated a worldwide petition to call for the provision of further safety and security measures for staff serving in peacekeeping or with humanitarian missions. The petition was addressed to the President of the Security Council and copied to the President of the General Assembly, the Chairman of the Group of 77, the Chairman of the Fifth Committee

and the various regional groups. Over 14,000 signatures were collected worldwide and were submitted through the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council.

STAFF/MANAGEMENT COORDINATION COMMITTEE (SMCC)

A. SMCC XXIV

18. The XXIVth session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee was held from 27 April to 4 May 2000 in Vienna. The main issue on the agenda was the Secretary-General's proposed human resource management reform, which included four sub-items, namely, accountability; recruitment, placement and promotion; mobility; and contractual arrangements.

1. Accountability

19. After substantive debate, the staff and management agreed on the following with respect to accountability.

- Accountability is defined as “responsibility to someone for one’s actions”. Accountability mechanisms should be based on the principle of good governance, encompassing respect for law, rules and regulations; transparency; effective and clear communication; team work; enhancement of staff morale; respect for multiculturalism; loyalty to the Organization; and empowering, training and mentoring of staff;
- Discretionary powers have to be exercised in conjunction with full accountability of those acting on behalf of the Secretary-General. The circumstances under which discretionary powers are bestowed should be clearly defined. As emphasized in part IV, para. 5, of General Assembly resolution 53/221, the administrative and managerial discretionary power of the Secretary-General should be in conformity with the relevant provision of the Charter of the United Nations and the staff, financial and programme-planning regulations and mandates assigned by the General Assembly.
- Accountability mechanisms should provide for internal administrative procedures that respect due process and for means to raise grievances and appeal against administrative decisions, so that programme managers may take decisions that are fair, equitable and consistent with applicable rules and regulations. The system should allow the staff the right to effective defence, including representation by counsel in internal justice processes.
- In performing their functions, staff should follow instructions from their supervisors. If these instructions are in violation of staff rules and regulations or contrary to the United Nations Charter, they have the right to request written instructions from their supervisors and to appeal against instructions which they consider infringe their rights.
- A transparent system of checks and balances must be established in order to detect violations of rules and policies.

- Managerial responsibility and the scope of authority of managers concerned with human resources matters should be well defined for each manager.
- Effective and continuing training of managers is essential to the development of a culture of accountability.
- As an important tool for evaluation of staff performance, and commensurate with the system of accountability, a revised and more responsive PAS system should be put in place. This mechanism should include the provision for 360-degree feedback, should be implemented in a timely manner and must not be retroactive.
- Any system of accountability must include an appropriate system of rewards and sanctions.
- Clear linkages between personal accountability and organizational accountability should be established in any future system of accountability.
- An accountability system should incorporate a mechanism for protection of “whistle blowers”.
- OHRM should exercise the responsibility for the application of rules and regulations through an effective monitoring system.
- Managers are to provide a conducive and supportive environment for the development of their staff, and the staff are to perform in line with their maximum potential and effectiveness.
- A future accountability monitoring system should include a set of standardized human resources management performance indicators so that the effectiveness of a programme manager’s performance in human resource matters can be assessed.
- The mechanisms for monitoring and assessing the exercise of authority and responsibility must be in place and known to each programme manager before delegation of authority takes place.

20. Notwithstanding these agreements, the staff representatives considered that the proposals by management were insufficient to satisfy the requirements of a full system of accountability. Therefore, the staff were not comfortable with further delegations of authority at the moment.

2. Recruitment, placement and promotion

21. Both staff and management acknowledged that the UN’s system of recruitment, placement and promotion is cumbersome and inefficient. Management offered suggestions for improving this situation, *inter alia*, by the creation of a central review board, along with a call for limiting the role and authority of OHRM in the administration and management of staff and posts.

22. After careful consideration of the documents presented by various duty stations, and the management, the staff representatives offered the following for consideration:

- The appointment and promotion bodies should not be abolished, but rather further strengthened. Furthermore, the current recourse and/or appeal procedures should be strengthened and included as an integral part of the recruitment, placement and promotion process.
- An independent body should be established to verify that checks and balances have been instituted, and that additional resources are deployed to the programme managers until such time as a proper system of accountability is put into place.
- OHRM should maintain its central role in all issues concerning staff administration and management, and should be mandated to establish an active and verifiable career advancement policy.
- Any fundamental changes to the current rules, regulations and procedures should be made after negotiation between staff and management, to ensure that the due process rights of staff are not infringed.
- Reform of human resources management must be contingent upon strengthening of the internal system of administration of justice.
- The current performance appraisal system (PAS) should be reviewed with the aim of establishing a more reliable appraisal system, which should be accompanied by rewards and sanctions for both staff and managers, including a 360-degree feedback system.
- Appropriate steps should be taken to empower staff through the institutionalization of appropriate training and counselling programmes designed to enable them to carry out their responsibilities effectively.
- The new human resources management system should ensure that special measures are instituted for the career development of the staff of the General Service and related categories.

3. Mobility

23. Staff initially raised the following concerns with respect to the mobility proposals:
- Management's proposal on the issue of mobility, while supported in theory by staff representatives, lacked the specificity required for full agreement at the time of the SMCC. It was felt that management did not fully recognize the complexity of this exercise. For example, the clustering of job types into occupational networks would require extensive involvement of staff and managers alike. There was a fear, as with PAS implementation, job descriptions, etc., that this administrative burden would fall on the individual staff member.

- Mobility was appealing to a large group of staff members, particularly those young, single, childless Professional staff looking for opportunities to expand their experience and to build their CVs. However, it posed significant problems for staff for whom mobility would not be desirable.

- Lateral movements of some staff may “block” the opportunities of staff already present in the receiving offices.
 - Family concerns such as spouse employment, education, non-family duty stations, etc. were given insufficient attention.
 - Specialized occupational groups might be disadvantaged.
24. Given these concerns, the staff and management were able to come to some meeting of minds, as noted below:
- Mobility is an important component of career development and is required by changing organizational needs, which call for a flexible, versatile, multi-skilled staff to serve an increasingly field-oriented Organization (but understanding the continuing need for HQ-based activities and policy functions)
 - Mobility should support the greater human resource management reform goals of providing continuity, institutional memory and professional excellence.
 - Occupational networks should be broad to allow for ease of movement within and among the networks.
 - There was agreement to focus on the development of generic job descriptions and move away from restrictive and tailor-made job descriptions.
 - Mobility should not have a negative impact on specialization. It should be acknowledged that all staff can benefit from some mobility. Occupational networks will decide on duration of assignments, which will vary by location, level and type of function.
 - All levels of staff, including managers, should be subject to the mobility programme.
 - Mobility must go hand in hand with increased training; every effort should be made by the administration to increase the training budget.
 - In seeking staff exchange opportunities with organizations outside the United Nations, efforts should be made to ensure that conditions of service are not negatively impacted.
 - There is a need to actively address work/life issues, especially spouse employment, medical facilities, education, security, etc.
 - There was agreement that the mobility proposals should be implemented in a phased approach, commencing with the new P2s, as of 1 January 2000 (with provisions already included in their letters of appointment). For other P2s, a voluntary scheme was put into effect in 2000. Other staff would be brought into the scheme gradually.

- Mobility should be looked at in its broadest sense, comprising functions/ departments/ occupations/ duty stations and organizations, including opportunities outside the Secretariat.
- Management will continue to study the mobility programmes of other entities to establish best practices on matters related to family concerns, remuneration, rotation time-limits, “family-friendly” approaches (age brackets), etc.
- Mobility must be recognized as a two-way flow; field to headquarters and headquarters to field.
- Incentive packages need to be fully elaborated.
- For GS staff, voluntary mobility should be encouraged.

4. Contractual arrangements

25. Management offered proposals aimed at providing a more responsive match between the Organization’s operational requirements and the contractual status of staff. The underlying principle of the new approach to contracts was that they would be simple, flexible and equitable. Following the discussion on the issue of contractual mechanisms and the review of the management proposal, there was agreement on the following:

- There will be no change in short-term contracts.
- Fixed-term contracts will continue to be issued up to a maximum of five years.
- In the development of rules governing continuing appointments, the issues of adequate notice and cause for termination must be clarified.

105. There was no consensus by staff representatives on the management proposal regarding the elimination of permanent contracts and their replacement by continuing contracts. However, both parties agreed that the current issuance of permanent contracts was governed by decisions taken by the General Assembly and that such permanent contracts would not be affected or jeopardized by the proposals.

106. The Fifth Committee of the General Assembly was presented with the reform proposals of the administration, as outlined above, along with the comments of staff. Although the Fifth Committee held initial discussions on the issues, there was no resolution passed, and they will discuss the issues again during the resumed session in March 2001.

107. The Fifth Committee was almost unanimous in its support for the mobility proposals. With respect to recruitment and placement, there was general agreement that the system should operate faster and be more transparent. In addition, there was support for pre-established selection criteria and for providing for staff participation at this level. However, several Member States expressed the view that OHRM should retain some decision-making role.

108. As to the issue of contractual arrangements, a few Member States voiced support for the continuation of permanent contracts. Many agreed that the situation of all staff on fixed-term contracts needs to be improved and voiced support for an indefinite or continuing type of appointment. It seems unlikely that the matter will be resolved in March. Rather, the Secretary-General will most likely be asked to come forward with more concrete proposals on contracts during the next session.

5. Working Group on the reform of the Internal Justice System

109. The reform of the internal justice system has been a long-standing item on the agenda of the SMCC. Finally, after a number of delays, the working group was convened at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 26 February to 2 March 2001. Two members of the Staff Council represented Vienna in these meetings.

The working group was asked to:

(a) Review the various relevant documents including the working group papers from the different duty stations along with the models of the organizations of the United Nations common system;

(b) Examine the existing structure of the Internal Justice System, and make proposals for its possible improvement;

(c) Prepare a report covering proposals for organizational arrangements of the Internal Justice System, the functions to be undertaken by each component of the system, and a practical implementation plan.

110. As for the work programme of the Group, it was agreed to first discuss the applicable law, then the existing mechanisms, due process, dispute and conflict resolution and enabling measures, including training. Reference was made to recent developments at the ILO and the World Bank, including the establishment in both of those organizations of an ombudsperson mechanism for the conciliation of staff-management and employment-related disputes.

111. While the range of issues discussed was broad and complex, and the results of the working group are still in draft form and must be discussed at the next session of the SMCC, some clear points of convergence emerged. The group acknowledged that the present internal justice system is cumbersome, often intimidating, inadequate for those staff away from headquarters, lacking in professionalism, and litigious rather than conciliatory.

Annex 1

STAFF REPRESENTATIVES AND ALTERNATES

<i>Attendance at meetings of UNSCV from 4 April 2000 to 13 March 2001</i>				
<i>Unit</i>	<i>Representative</i>	<i>Attendance</i>	<i>Alternate</i>	<i>Attendance</i>
DACS	ARORA, Sarat		NARCISCO, Francisco	
DACS	BABA, Ely			
IMS/TES	BLANCO, Maria-Elena		COULIBALY, Macono	
IMS/TES	KAMINKER, Roger ⁱ		MERAL, Françoise ⁱⁱ	
IMS/TES	YIM, Wilfried		MORALES, Elpideo	
IMS/TES	WEITHALER, Maria-Regina		PALECZEK, Eva-Maria	
UNDCP/ODG/ED	AGUADO BOMBIN, Rosa		MIRZA, Sana	
UNDCP/ODG/ED	BERTERAME, Stefano		KORENBLIK, Johanna	
UNDCP/ODG/ED	TULLIS, Melissa		GRIFFITH, Paul	
UNDCP/ODG/ED	HJALMARSSON, Johanna ⁱⁱⁱ		LEROY, Bernard	
UNDCP/ODG/ED	CAMPELLO, Giovanna		VAN DER BURGH, Chris	
UNDCP/ODG/ED	SAMAN, Thaer		SANDOUK, Liliane	
UNSSS	ANALENA, Paulina		ROTHENDER, Robert	
UNSSS	MORRISON, Douglas			
UNPA	RAHMAN, Rose		FUERNSINN, Clarissa	
UNIS	HENKE, Renate		MAYERHOFER, Veronika	
CICP	BOULOUKOS, Adam		STOLPE, Oliver ^{iv}	
ITLB/UNSCEAR	ESTRELLA-FARIA, Jose		CLIFT, Jenny	
OOSA	McDOUGALL, Philip		DAVIES, Charles	
There were a total of 12 regular meetings from 4 April 2000 to 13 March 2001.				

Annex 2

OFFICERS OF THE STAFF COUNCIL

Staff Council	Presiding Officer	Paulina Analena
Staff Committee	President	Adam C. Bouloukos
Vice-President	Regina Weithaler	
	Secretary	Maria-Elena Blanco
	Treasurer	Philip McDougall
	Rapporteur	Melissa Tullis
Unit Presidents	DACS	-
	IMS/TES	Stella McDowall
	UNDCP	Françoise Maung
	CICP	Burkhard Dammann
	OLA/ITLB	David Levy
	UNPA	Clarissa Fuernsinn
	UNSSS	Anthony Marinze
	ODG	-
	OOSA	-
	UNIS	-
Polling Officers	Chairperson	Inge Fontane-Dalwi José Luis García Gonzáles Jill Tobin
Auditing Committee		Beng Teoh Mathew Kurinjimala Jose Mathew

Annex 3

STAFF NOMINEES ON STATUTORY JOINT BODIES, COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

Joint Advisory Committee	Members	Jose Angelo Estrella Faria Maria-Elena Blanco Adam Bouloukos
	Alternates	Philip R. McDougall Regina Weithaler Veronika Jeffrey
Joint JAC Standing Committee on Medical and Life Insurance	Members	Smart Eze Dimitrios Vlassis
General Service Classification Appeals and Review Committee	Chairperson	Carol Unterleitner
	Members	Takemi Chiku Beng Teoh Thaer Saman
Staff Welfare Board	Chairperson	Sally Reading
	Members	Mathew Seitz Waltraud Jochum Nada Blanusa Olaf-Michael Stefanov
Staff Assistance Committee	Chairperson	Veronika Jeffrey
	Members	Ricarda Amberg Sojan Vattapally Herbert Rotheneder Beng Teoh
	Alterntates	Sarat Arora Jill Tobin Heidi Berger Lilian Sandouk
Joint Appeals Board	Chairpersons	Andrea Teter Ingrid Lehmann Mazlam Othman Elisabeth Joyce

	Members	Natercia Rodriguez Valerie Lebaux Gillian Murray Dimitrios Vlassis
Joint Disciplinary Committee	Presiding Officer Chairpersons	Herbert Schaepe Alexandre Agaiants Herbert Schaepe Catherine Volz
	Members	Akira Fujino Charles Davies Boris Znamensky
Panel on Discrimination and other Grievances	Coordinator Members	Giesela Wieser-Herbeck Stefano Berterame Smart Eze Melissa Tullis Gabriele Wagner Diana Teplj
Panel of Counsel in Disciplinary and Appeal Cases	Coordinator Members	Marta Souza Samuel C.H. Chao Muki Daniel Pieter Delcour Timothy Lemay Eric Bergsten Paul Medhurst Mathieu Mounikou Pavel Pachta Winston Sims Andrew Wells Dolgor Solongo
Appointment and Promotion Board of UNDCP	Members	Catherine Volz Herbert Schaepe
	Alternates	Anthony Stead Carol Unterleitner
Appointment and Promotion Committee	Members	Cristina Albertin Mohammed Chafik Hallar Alex Schmid
	Alternates	Jose A. Estrella-Faria Sally Reading Burkhard Dammann

Appointment and Promotion Panel	Members	Estela Deon Elisabeth Friedel Patrick Seramy
	Alternates	Charles Davies Estell Osten Gisela Wieser-Herbeck
Placement and Promotion Advisory Panel for P staff (UNOV/ODCCP)	Members	Maria-Elena Blanco Paul Griffiths
	Alternates	Hans Haubold Valerie Lebaux
Joint Monitoring Committee (UNOV/ODCCP)	Chairperson	Sandeep Chawla
	Members	Elisabeth Bayer Martha L.B. Leroy
PAS Rebuttal Panel) (UNOV/ODCCP)	Chairpersons	Claudia Baroni Akira Fujino Beatriz Romero
	Members	Rosa Aguado-Bombin Gillian Murray Emil Wandzilak
Joint Advisory Committee on the VIC Child Care Centre	Member	Silvia Levissianos
Commissary Advisory Committee	Members	Rajah El Boury Dimitrios Vlassis
	Alternates	Sarat Arora Nicole Galeazzi
Catering Advisory Committee	Members	Sarat Arora Olaf Stefanov
	Alternates	Jose M.Gonzalez Susan Mlango
Joint Advisory Group on Garage Operations	Member	Thaer Saman
	Alternate	Gabriele Wagner
Departmental Focal Point for Women Alternate Departmental Focal Point for Women		Kristiina Kangaspunta
		Elisabeth Scheugl

Annex 4

FOCUSES

<i>Focus number</i>	<i>Date issued</i>	<i>Subject</i>
UNSCV/XVIII /F5	27 March 2001	Review of Staff Council Activities
UNSCV/XVIII /F6	24 May 2001	Dialogue Among Civilizations through Poetry
UNSCV/XVIII/F7	24 August 2001	The United Nations Internal System for the Administration of Justice
UNSCV/XVIII/F8	24 September 2001	An Eventful Year in Vienna: Are There Changes Ahead?
UNSCV/XVIII/F9	12 November 2001	Lawyers available for free consultations
UNSCV/XVIII/F10	17 January 2002	Election of Polling Officers

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- i* Reassigned to Geneva as of 17.12.2001
 - ii* Reassigned to Geneva ss of 1 July 2001
 - iii* Resigned on 1 March 2001
 - iv* Resigned on 1 January 2001