

**MINUTES  
ENVIRONMENT CANADA LABOUR MANAGEMENT CONSULTATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
May 29, 2015**

<b>MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVES</b>	
<b>Michael Martin</b>	<i>Deputy Minister</i>
<b>Carol Najm</b>	<i>ADM, Finance</i>
<b>Geneviève Béchard</b>	<i>A/ADM, Meteorological Service of Canada</i>
<b>George Enei</b>	<i>ADM, Corporate Services</i>
<b>Mike Beale</b>	<i>ADM, Environmental Stewardship</i>
<b>Karen Dodds</b>	<i>ADM, Science &amp; Technology</i>
<b>Lynette Cox</b>	<i>ADM, Human Resources</i>
<b>Dan McDougall</b>	<i>ADM, Strategic Policy and RDG Offices</i>
<b>Louise Métivier</b>	<i>ADM, International Affairs</i>
<b>Max Guénette</b>	<i>DG, Communications</i>
<b>Gord Owen</b>	<i>Chief Enforcement Officer</i>
<b>SECRETARIAT SUPPORT</b>	
<b>Michelle Laframboise</b>	<i>DG, Workforce Development and Wellness Services</i>
<b>LABOUR REPRESENTATIVES</b>	
<b>Waheed Khan</b>	<i>PIPSC (President, National Consultation Team)</i>
<b>Bill Sukloff</b>	<i>PIPSC (Vice-President, National Consultation Team)</i>
<b>Todd Panas</b>	<i>UEW-PSAC (National President)   STE-AFPC (Président national)</i>
<b>Daryl Hoelke</b>	<i>UEW-PSAC – Replaced by Jeff Irwin</i>
<b>Jayne Powers</b>	<i>UEW-PSAC</i>
<b>Isabelle Petrin</b>	<i>CAPE – Not in attendance</i>
<b>Paul Cameron</b>	<i>IBEW – Not in attendance</i>
<b>Vivian Gates</b>	<i>ACFO – Not in attendance</i>

## Opening Remarks

The Deputy Minister (DM) welcomed everyone to this inaugural two-2 part event co-chaired by himself and Todd Panas, National President, UEW-PSAC.

Todd Panas was pleased about the Symposium and stated that it is an opportunity to get to know each other better.

### 1. Review of Agenda Items and Approval

The agenda was approved.

### 2. Follow up actions

Lynette Cox, ADM HR Branch, provided an update on action items following the previous ECLMCC which took place on December 11, 2014.

Michelle Laframboise, DG, Workforce Development and Wellness Services, provided an update regarding the union's request to partner with the department in the Joint Learning Program (JLP) on mental health in the workplace. She stated that there were two possible approaches to offering that training at EC. The first approach would involve training EC employees to provide the training to their colleagues, in partnership with the bargaining agents. That approach would require a sufficient pool of trainers which could be a challenge at this time considering the various transformation initiatives underway. The other approach would be to rely on the existing pool of trained JLP facilitators from various departments. It was suggested and agreed to that there would be a subgroup of ECLMCC members that would discuss the potential for the second approach to be conducted via a small pilot group in the department.

The Institute asked that EC explore the possibility of collaborating with the JLP to offer a retirement planning course considering that the School has phased out some courses such a retirement planning that were popular and are very important to employees.

#### Action:

Form a sub-group to elaborate an approach for providing JLP mental health in the workplace training and sign an agreement with the bargaining agents.

### 3. EC Current Budgetary Situation

Carol Najm, ADM Finance Branch provided highlights on the Budget 2015

Budget 2015 proposes to commit funds to key environmental initiatives under Environment Canada's mandate. Protecting the health and well-being of Canadians by promoting a clean, safe and sustainable environment continues to be a Government priority:

- The Government will invest in enhancing meteorological and navigational warning services to support safe marine navigation in Canada's Arctic waters.
- Funding is also earmarked for the implementation of the *Species at Risk Act*, highlighting the Government's commitment to conserving our species at risk and their habitat.

- The Government will renew the Chemicals Management Plan to continue to assess and manage the risks to human health and the environment from new and existing chemical substances.
- In addition, the Budget proposes to renew the Government's support for the Federal Contaminated Sites Action Plan, whose mandate is to assess, remediate and monitor contaminated sites for which the Government is responsible.

Ms Najm mentioned that in the budget for the period 2015-16 to 2016-17 we will notice a reduction of FTEs and funding reflecting the end of sunseting programs.

The DM indicated that the programs that were up for renewal this year received funding.

The Institute raised concerns regarding management's approach to participation to in training and conferences and the negative impact on employees' morale, career development and updating skills and knowledge.

The DM informed the unions that the department has spent time reviewing the process for event planning in order to streamline it and believes that this will respond to some of the bargaining agents concerns.

The ADM, Science and Techonology Branch specified that there is an S&T policy for travel for conferences to ensure consistency. Since 2011, the number of conferences has stayed about the same.

In response to concerns raised by UEW the ADM Finance responded that budgets have been allocated to the lowest possible level and that programs are appropriately funded. She will be able to provide a budget summary in the near future and reminded participants that the department has just migrated to SAP.

The Institute indicated that term employees are concerned about their future with the department, particularly in the S&T Branch. Sunset funding for a significant number of term employees ends this fiscal year. The continuity of program delivery will suffer if they are not retained in the department.

The ADM, HRB reminded participants that EMC has made the decision to maintain the suspension of the indeterminate conversion for another year.

The Institute reiterated their request that unions should be consulted before a recommendation is made to EMC in the Fall.

The DM specified that the focus is on indeterminate staffing while the ADM, STB indicated that term employment in S&T is now down by half and that indeed the Branch is maximizing indeterminate staffing.

#### **4. Communication and Engagement**

##### **a. EC Guidelines on Union Activities**

UEW stated that they were pleased that the department has instituted guidelines that will ensure consistency of approach form region to region as approval of union activities at this time is inconsistent throughout the country. It is also their view that there should be discussion and compromise to avoid confrontational situations and gave the flag situation in Place Bonaventure as an example. Bargaining agents would like the department to consider in the future moving to a system whereby unions would not need to ask for approval. .

PIPSC indicated that they are also pleased with the revised guidelines. The Institute mentioned that it is important to be able to engage members at the workplace on bargaining issues in order to properly represent the members'

interest at the bargaining table. When holding meetings outside of the office, chances are that many members will not have time to attend. Unions should not have to seek permission; the employer needs to trust employees and their unions in the spirit of good relations.

The DM agreed that having consistency is important and as well as a collaborative spirit and support. He thinks that the guidelines are clear and he invited unions to let management know if there are issues. The DM reiterated that we have to defend non-partisanship and that management does not want to micro-manage what is being said during union's meetings.

UEW asked for clarity regarding the union's calendar and could be distributed to its members via a desk drop. The DG, HRB responded that promotional material can be distributed via desk drop.

**Action:**

HRB to clarify the Guidelines on Union Activities regarding promotional material.

**b. Scheduling of Branch LMCCs**

UEW requested that Labour Relations monitor that Branch LMCCs are happening. The DG, HR Branch agreed to track the frequency of those meetings but reminded unions that Labour Relations' are not the coordinators of those meetings.

The DM indicated that the LMCC Framework is clear on the frequency of those meetings.

**Action:** Labour Relations to monitor the frequency of LMCCs.

**5. Business Transformation – Delays in Compensation**

UEW raised concerns with the Public Service Pay Centre and asked for clarification if an employee wished to file a grievance to which HRB responded that the employee should follow the normal route (ie Environment Canada).

PIPSC suggested that there should be an escalation mechanism and raised as an example the printing problem of the pension statement due to a departmental system issue. The Institute also suggested using management meetings to inform employees on transformation initiatives.

HRB indicated that a Compensation Liaison Unit is in place and encouraged employees to contact the Unit when they have issues and also reiterated that it is important to complete the proper paperwork when dealing with the Pay Centre in order to avoid delays. .

It was also brought forward by the DG, Communications that Buzz@Ec is EC vehicle to inform employees on departmental business and the unions were invited to contact him directly, if topics needed to be raised.

The DM indicated that he will make sure that the PS Pay Centre (via Public Works and Government Services Canada) is aware of EC's issues. In regards to the systems concerns raised, the DM stated that there is a departmental outage protocol to which the ADM, Corporate Services Branch added that the department is looking at improving this protocol.

The DM reiterated that Buzz@EC's goal is to promote regular engagement and dialogue regarding issues of concern.

## **6. Workforce Development and Effectiveness**

### **a. Performance Management Update**

Management presented statistics on year-end performance management. They also mentioned that there will be a post-mortem meeting with unions and review panels to review more specific data and discuss lessons learned and next steps.

UEW requested that performance management be a standing item at ECLMCC. During the year end process some members were surprised by the difference between the feedback received at mid-year and year-end. UEW asked for clarity around who is responsible for obtaining feedback when supervising an employee for less than six months to which HRB replied that it is the current manager and that this is specified in the manager's handbook and is also mentioned during the training sessions.

PIPSC would like information on employees who were rated as "do not meet expectations" or had action plans.

**Action:** HRB to organize a post-mortem meeting with Unions and provide more performance management data once available.

### **b. Respectful Workplace Committee Update**

The bargaining agents were pleased with the meeting held a month ago. However, UEW is disappointed with the progress regarding the 3-month initiatives and is hoping that the proposed actions will be implemented by National Public Service Week. They also indicated that some regions are not yet engaged and are waiting for the DM's approval to implement their own respectful workplace committees.

Mr. Beale, ADM, Environmental Stewardship Branch, thanked Joseph Silva, former Director, Labour Relations and Occupational Health and Safety, for his assistance and indicated that a note to staff on the committee would be forthcoming.

The DM indicated that he is very supportive of the Respectful Workplace initiative as are the members of EMC.

### **c. Pre-retirement Transition Leave Approval**

UEW brought forward a concern regarding the denial of a request for Pre-Retirement Transition Leave.

PIPSC mentioned that the employer needs to consider the employee's interest. Some employees were denied assignment opportunities by management invoking the provision of "operational requirements", which in the union's view not justified. PIPSC maintained that management should give due consideration to the employees' career aspirations and encourage assignments.

Geneviève Béchar, A/ADM, Meteorological Service of Canada, stated that assignment opportunities are discussed at the management table and will bring the union's concerns back to MSC management.

The DM indicated that this issue will be looked at.

## **7. Round Table**

UEW and PIPSC raised concerns regarding problems with the new travel system – HRG, and the time it takes to process a travel claim.

PIPSC suggested that system changes should first be launched on a pilot scale with proper testing by a focus group and quality control to minimize glitches and ensure appropriate level of support

The ADM, Finance stated that we are still in the early stages of HRG and that an EC SWAT team has been created to address some of the systematic issues.

The DM indicated that all departments are experiencing similar problems.

UEW wanted to recognize the good work of the ADM STB for her responsiveness to a situation in the Moncton office that resulted in a positive outcome. They also wished to thank the ADMs/DGs around the table for their overall responsiveness and concern in addressing issues that are brought to their attention by the bargaining agents

## **8. Closing Remarks**

The DM thanked everyone for their participation and the open and honest discussions at the table.

Drafted by: Labour Relations Team  
Date sent to Bargaining Agents: July 10, 2015  
Date comments received by Bargaining Agents: August 7, 2015  
Final version: August 10, 2015