DECISION OF THE ENERGY CHARTER CONFERENCE

Subject: Adoption by Correspondence – Amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules

Following the recommendation of the Budget Committee, by document CC 810, dated 26 April 2024, the Energy Charter Conference (Conference) was invited to approve amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules as attached. In addition, it was recommended that:

- all references to “Assistant Secretary-General” in the Staff Rules and Regulations, including Staff Circulars, shall be replaced by “Deputy Secretary-General”;

- all references to “Board” in the Staff Rules and Regulations shall be replaced by “Advisory Board”;

- all references to “Head of the Finance & Administration [External Activities and Administration] Unit” and “Head of Administration and External Activities Unit” in the Staff Rules and Regulations, including Staff Circulars, shall be replaced by “Head of Unit in charge of Administration and Finance”; and

- all references to “finance and administration”, “Finance and Administration” and “FINAD” in the Staff Rules and Regulations, including Staff Circulars, shall be replaced by “Administration and Finance”.

As specified in Rule 20(c) of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference concerning the adoption of decisions by correspondence, Members of the Conference were informed that

Keywords: Staff Rules, Amendment
any delegation that wished to object to the approval of the amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules as recommended by the Budget Committee should notify the Secretariat of its position in writing by no later than 16 May 2024.

On 16 May 2024, the Secretariat received the below communication from Jordan:

“Dear Secretariat

Reference to the document CC810 dated 26 April 2024,

Jordan is not in a position to approve this decision by correspondence, and we need more time to review the document through our legal department. […].”

Following a consultation with the Chairmanship, the delegations were informed that the time limit for objections was extended until 5 June 2024.

Having received no objections within the specified time limit, on 5 June 2024, the Conference approved the amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules as recommended by the Budget Committee with immediate effect.
REGULATION 1 - SCOPE OF APPLICATION AND GENERAL PROVISIONS

Staff Circular

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

1. In the absence of the Secretary-General, he or she is replaced by the Deputy Secretary-General or, in the absence of the Deputy-Secretary General, by another official of the Secretariat designated in accordance with paragraph 2.

2. In the absence of both the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General, authority shall fall to another official of the Secretariat in the following order:
   - A member of the Senior Management expressly authorised by the Secretary-General in writing and communicated to all staff;
   - Most senior official (according to grade) present expressly authorised by the Secretary-General in writing and communicated to all staff.

3. In case of absence of the Secretary-General, including when the post of Secretary-General is vacant, the Deputy Secretary-General delegates authority in accordance with paragraph 2.
Rule 1.3

INTERNAL STRUCTURE

(a) The functions of the Heads of Unit are those foreseen in these Rules and Regulations for the immediate supervisor.

(b) In case of absence, conflict of interest or impediment of a Head of Unit, the powers and functions conferred on him or her by these Rules and Regulations or any other internal rules of the organisation shall be carried out by another official of his or her Unit expressly authorised by him or her in writing and communicated to all officials in the Unit and Senior Management.

(c) The Senior Management is composed of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the General Counsel, and the Heads of Units.
REGULATION 4

RIGHTS OF ASSOCIATION

a) Officials shall be entitled to exercise the right to establish and be members of the Staff Committee, provided that the number of officials employed at the Secretariat is no less than 20.

b) The professional interests of the officials shall be represented exclusively by the Staff Committee or, in the absence of the Staff Committee, in accordance with Rule 4.5.

c) The professional interests of the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General shall not be represented by the Staff Committee.

d) The members of the Senior Management, as defined in Rule 1.3 (a), shall not be entitled to vote for the members of the Staff Committee, elected as the members of the Staff Committee, or consulted through the Staff Committee or directly in all cases under Rule 4.1.

e) Officials shall be entitled to join trade unions or professional organisations for international civil servants. Such bodies may not defend the professional interests of the officials and shall have no institutional value within the Secretariat.
Rule 4.1

STAFF CONSULTATIONS

(a) Before making decisions affecting the position of a particular category, of all categories or of a specific group of officials of the Secretariat, the Secretary-General shall consult the Staff Committee in accordance with Rule 4.4 (a) (i).

(b) In the absence of the Staff Committee, as envisaged in Regulation 4 a), before making decisions affecting the position of a particular category, of all categories or of a specific group of officials of the Secretariat, the Secretary-General shall consult the officials directly in accordance with Rule 4.5.
Rule 4.2

STAFF COMMITTEE

(a) The Staff Committee shall be constituted in accordance with Regulation 4 to represent the various categories of staff in their dealings with the Secretary-General.

(b) The main objectives of Staff Committee shall be:

(i) to promote co-operation between the Secretariat and the staff as a whole;

(ii) to protect the professional interests of the staff,

(iii) to improve the practical conditions of life for the staff and to strengthen the links between the staff of different nationality.

(c) In pursuance of these objectives it shall carry out the duties specified in Rule 4.4.

(d) The Staff Committee shall pursue its objectives without undertaking any activities of a political or purely national character.
Rule 4.3

CONSTITUTION OF THE STAFF COMMITTEE

(a) The Staff Committee shall be deemed by the Secretary-General to be representative of the staff as a whole and of the various categories of officials.

(b) The Staff Committee shall be constituted in accordance with Regulation 4 a), its Rules of Procedure and in such a way as to reflect representation of each category of staff, subject to limitations of Regulation 4 d).

(c) The Staff Committee shall be elected by secret ballot. Its term of office shall be one year.
Rule 4.3 (a) - CONSTITUTION OF THE STAFF COMMITTEE

Staff Circular

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE STAFF COMMITTEE

1. Language

1.1 The working language of the Staff Committee (hereinafter referred to as Committee) shall be English.

1.2 Agendas, Summary Records and other Committee documents shall be issued in English.

2. Composition of the Committee

2.1 The Committee shall represent the staff in their dealings with the Secretary-General.

2.2 The Committee may also represent in relevant specific matters the interest of any other persons working in the Secretariat.

2.3 The composition of the Committee shall reflect the composition of various categories of officials in accordance with Regulation 11 a) and the size of the Secretariat. The Committee comprise three full members: one representing the A category, one representing B/C categories plus one member from any category elected by all staff, who shall be the Chairperson.

2.4 For avoidance of doubt, each member of staff shall have one vote for candidates representing his/her own category and one vote for the Chairperson, subject to limitations of Regulation 4 d).

2.5 At the first meeting, the representative of each category shall put forward a list of officials to represent the staff in the bodies set up in accordance with Staff Regulations and Staff Rules. The Staff Committee shall approve the list and transmit it to the Secretary-General.

3. Organisation

3.1 The Committee shall be convened on the initiative of its Chairperson or at the request of one of its members.
3.2 The Committee may be called upon by any official to consider any question falling within its terms as contained in Rule 4.4.

3.3 The Committee may be also convened at the request of the Secretary-General in accordance with Rule 4.4 (a). In such a case the Secretary-General shall communicate to the Chairperson of the Committee a draft Agenda or a subject to be discussed. Should a matter require an expeditious action, the Committee may give its opinion three days after receiving the relevant communication from the Secretary-General.

4. Frequency of meetings

The Committee shall meet when convened in accordance with paragraph 3 above.

5. Quorum

5.1 Two full members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.

5.2 Decisions shall be taken by a simple majority.

5.3 No question concerning a given category or an official of a given category shall be examined unless a representative of that category is present.

6. Agenda

6.1 A draft Agenda shall be drawn up by the Chairperson of the Committee and shall also reflect cases referred to in paragraph 3.3.

6.2 The draft Agenda shall be distributed to all members of the Committee in sufficient time before its meetings and three days before its meetings called up by the Secretary-General.

6.3 Once finalised, the Agenda can be distributed to all staff members before the meeting.

6.4 The Committee shall adopt the Agenda at the beginning of the meeting.

7. Summary Record

7.1 A Summary Record shall be kept of all Committee meetings.

7.2 The Summary Record shall be kept in a concise form. However, any member may, if he or she so requests, have his or her views on a particular subject incorporated verbatim in the Summary Record.
7.3 One copy of the Summary Record of each meeting, together with the approved Agenda, shall be kept as a permanent record of the Committee’s proceedings.

7.4 The Summary Record of a meeting shall be adopted at the following meeting of the Committee and then distributed to the Committee members and staff members. Based on the subject matter, the Chairperson of the Committee may decide that a relevant Summary Record should be given to the Secretary-General.

8. **Relations with the Secretary-General**

8.1 Whenever it considers it necessary, the Committee may submit a note to the Secretary-General. Moreover, the Chairperson of the Committee may request meetings between the Committee and the Secretary-General or his or her representative.

8.2 The Committee shall be provided with any documentation necessary for the examination of issues within its competence. Any person in a position to furnish information on issues examined may be invited to attend meetings of the Committee.

9. **Relations with the Charter Conference and the Budget Committee**

Whenever it considers it necessary, as a means of protecting staff interests, the Committee may address notes to the Chairpersons of the Charter Conference and/or the Budget Committee.

10. **Staff meetings**

The Committee may arrange staff meetings for one or more categories of officials. The Secretary-General shall be informed of such meetings and may be invited to participate.

11. **Elections during the Committee’s term of office**

In the event of long lasting absence of one of its full members, the Committee may nominate an Elections Committee comprising of at least two officials to organise elections among the officials belonging to that member’s category in order to appoint a representative to complete the absent member’s term of office. In the event of long-lasting absence of the Chairperson, the Elections Committee will organise elections among officials regardless of category.
12. **Amendments of Staff Regulations and Staff Rules**

The Committee may take the initiative of proposing amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules; these shall be examined in meetings between the Secretary-General and the Committee.

13. **Relations with Trade Unions and Professional Organisations for International Civil Servants**

13.1 The Committee recognises the right of any official to be a member of a trade union or a professional organisation for international civil servants.

13.2 The Committee may co-operate with any relevant trade union or a professional organisation for international civil servants for the purposes of achieving the objectives set out in Rule 4.2. For the avoidance of doubt, such bodies may not defend the professional interests of the officials and shall have no institutional value within the Secretariat.
Rule 4.3 (b) - CONSTITUTION OF THE STAFF COMMITTEE

Staff Circular

As of [date], in the absence of 20 officials employed at the Secretariats, in accordance with Regulation 4 a), the Staff Committee shall not be established.
Rule 4.4

FUNCTIONS OF THE STAFF COMMITTEE

(a) In pursuance of the main objectives specified in Rule 4.2, the Staff Committee:

(i) shall be bound to give its opinion on proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations or Staff Rules and administrative action proposed by the Secretary-General in furtherance of the Staff Regulations or Staff Rules. It may bring to the attention of the Secretary-General any matter affecting the interests of the staff. The Secretary-General shall likewise refer to the Staff Committee any question of a general nature affecting the interests of the staff or arising out of the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, including questions arising out of any case which may have general application. In all cases under this paragraph, the Staff Committee shall state its opinion on a matter within 30 days of notice thereof, except that by mutual agreement a shorter or longer period may be decided upon in exceptional cases;

(ii) shall nominate the staff representatives on any body where staff representation is provided for under the Staff Regulations or Staff Rules;

(iii) may, with the agreement of the Secretary-General, set up or participate in the management and control of any service consistent with the objectives of the Staff Committee;

(iv) shall co-operate with the Secretary-General in improving the collective conditions of work and living of the staff and shall submit to him or her proposals which it deems appropriate for this purpose;

(v) may, at the invitation of the Chairperson of the Budget Committee, send one or more representatives to attend that Committee’s meetings.

(b) The functions undertaken by members of the Staff Committee and by the officials nominated by the Committee to the bodies set up under these Rules and Regulations or by the Secretariat shall be deemed to be part of their normal service. The fact of performing such functions shall in no way be prejudicial to the person concerned and in general superiors shall facilitate release of officials for these purposes.
Rule 4.5

STAFF CONSULTATIONS IN THE ABSENCE OF THE STAFF COMMITTEE

(a) In the absence of the Staff Committee, as envisaged in Regulation 4 a), the Secretary-General shall be bound to consult officials at the Secretariat collectively on:

(i) proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations or Staff Rules;

(ii) administrative action proposed by the Secretary-General in furtherance of the Staff Regulations or Staff Rules; and

(iii) any question of a general nature affecting the interests of the staff or arising out of the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, including questions arising out of any case which may have general application,

(b) In all cases referred to in paragraph (a), all officials, subject to limitations of Regulation 4 d), shall be provided with an opportunity to state their opinions on a matter within 30 days of notice thereof, except that by an agreement of a simple majority of officials a shorter or longer period may be decided upon in exceptional cases. The officials shall submit their opinions via the Head of Unit in charge of Administration and Finance. The officials shall also be entitled to submit their opinions to the Secretary-General directly with copy to the Head of Unit in charge of Administration and Finance. The Head of Unit in charge of Administration and Finance shall transmit all the opinions submitted to the Secretary-General at the end of a consultation period.

(c) In the course of the staff consultation referred to in paragraph (b) or for any other purpose of general nature concerning the staff, the Secretary-General may call for staff meetings.

(d) In all cases other than that referred to in paragraph (b), all officials shall be entitled to submit their opinions, observations, proposals, including proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations or Staff Rules, directly to the Secretary-General. The establishment of the Staff Committee in accordance with Regulation 4 a) shall not be construed as to limit officials’ rights under this paragraph.

(e) The fact of expressing an opinion in the course of staff consultations or in accordance with paragraph (d) shall in no way be prejudicial to the official concerned.
REGULATION 9

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Officials shall be appointed by a letter signed by the Secretary-General or his or her authorised representative. The letter of appointment shall determine the conditions of employment; it shall specify that the appointment is subject to the provisions of these Staff Regulations and of the Staff Rules including any amendments and any Staff Circulars thereunder and that disputes arising from them shall be submitted to the Advisory Board as provided for in Regulation 25 f).
Rule 22.1 - WORKING HOURS

Staff Circular

The normal Secretariat opening hours will be 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. from Monday to Friday.

Staff members can decide upon consultation with his or her immediate supervisor, and within this timeframe, their time of arrival and departure on normal working days providing that they work 7h and 40 minutes for a full day of work. Where the exigencies of the Service so require (e.g. official meetings), officials may be required to work overtime or to attend at different hours. External meetings, relating to the duties of official work and which take place outside the office, will also count as part of regular working hours as far as confirmed by Management and Coordination Meeting (MCM) or by the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General may, after consulting staff in accordance with Rule 4.1, determine suitable working hours for certain groups of officials who perform particular tasks.
TITLE VII
DISPUTES

Regulation 25

DISPUTES

a) The Secretary-General shall establish the Advisory Board.

b) Provided that the number of officials employed at the Secretariat is no less than 20, the Advisory Board shall comprise of:
   - a Chairperson outside of the Secretariat nominated by the Secretary-General and appointed by the Conference;
   - two officials of the Secretariat appointed by the Staff Committee in accordance with its Rules of Procedure; and
   - two officials of the Secretariat appointed by the Secretary-General.

c) In all other cases, the Advisory Board shall comprise of a Chairperson from outside of the Secretariat nominated by the Secretary-General and appointed by the Conference. Such Chairperson shall be assisted by the Secretary of the Advisory Board. Such Secretary shall be elected by simple majority of staff by secret ballot. The Secretary’s functions shall be limited to providing secretariat services to the Chairperson and may not encompass decision-making, including participating in deliberations or drafting the report envisaged in Rule 26(3) (a).

d) The Chairperson referred to in paragraphs b) and c) must have a proven background in labour law, international civil service law and human resources as a senior government official or official of an international organisation. The term of office of the Chairperson shall be three years and may be renewed. In case meetings of the Advisory Board take place in-person, the Chairperson shall be entitled to reimbursement of his or her travel expenses for attending such meetings as well as a subsistence allowance (as provided in Rule 18.2.4) for any day or part of a day in which he or she has an in-person meeting of the Advisory Board and has worked on a request received by the Advisory Board.

e) The members of the Advisory Board shall be completely independent and impartial in the exercise of their duties. They shall not receive any instructions nor be subject to any constraint. For the avoidance of doubt, the Secretary of the Advisory Board shall not be considered as a member of the Advisory Board. However, the Secretary shall be completely independent and impartial in the exercise of his or her duties. The Secretary may receive instructions only from the Chairperson.

f) The Advisory Board shall advise the Secretary-General, at the request of the official concerned:
i) on any individual dispute arising from a decision of the Secretary-General and which an official, former official or the duly qualified claimants to their rights consider inequitab to themselves or contrary to the terms of the appointment or to the provisions of these Staff Regulations or of applicable Staff Rules or applicable Staff Circulars;

ii) when the official considers that an administrative decision on job classification is inequitable to him or her or contrary to the provisions of these Staff Regulations or of applicable Staff Rules;

iii) when the official considers that he or she is exposed to harassment, as defined in Regulation 25-bis b)(i), by another member of the Secretariat, and has already made a communication required by Regulation 25-bis c).

g) For the avoidance of doubt, any reference to “Advisory Board” in these Rules and Regulations encompasses any composition of the Advisory Board as envisaged in paragraphs b) and c).

h) The Secretary-General shall establish, as the need arises and in accordance with the standards and practices of international organisations, administrative judicial arrangements for the resolution of individual disputes arising from a decision of the Secretary-General, which he or she has taken on his or her own authority or in application of a decision of the Conference and which officials, former officials or the duly qualified claimants to their rights consider as prejudicial to themselves, including as elements of such arrangements:

- the jurisdiction to resolve, with due regard to vested rights, all questions regarding the interpretation and application of these Staff Regulations or of any applicable Staff Rules and of the terms of appointment;

- the power to annul such decisions of the Secretary-General as are contrary to the terms of appointment of the official concerned or the provisions of these Staff Regulations or to any applicable Staff Rules; and

- the power to order the Secretariat or the Conference to redress any damage resulting from any irregularity committed by the Secretary-General.
Rule 25-bis.3

COMPLAINT TO THE ADVISORY BOARD

(a) Contrary to the informal and mediation procedure, the Advisory Board is able to record facts and to propose disciplinary measures among the ones listed in Rule 24.1 (a). Any person who feels victim of harassment is entitled to initiate a formal procedure, either immediately, without first going through the informal procedure, or in the course of or at the end of the informal procedure.

(b) Any person who feels they are the victim of sexual harassment must provide all details which might support their allegations to the Advisory Board, which will conduct an investigation. The complaint should describe the specific offensive acts, the time, location and circumstances under which they took place and any other information relevant to the case. The complaint should identify the alleged harasser/respondent as well as any witness to the acts or anyone else who may have information relevant to the complaint. The complaint should also specify whether and in which circumstances the complainant made it clear to the respondent that his/her behaviour was unwelcome and, where appropriate, any reasons that prevented the complainant from doing this. The complaint must be signed and dated by the complainant and the information provided should be as precise and concise as possible.

(c) The Advisory Board will send within five days written acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint to the respondent, who will be given the right to respond in writing to the allegations within 10 working days of receipt of the copy of the complaint.
TITLE VIII
SECRETARIAT’S ADVISORY BODY AND EXTERNAL REDRESS MECHANISM

Regulation 26

SECRETARIAT’S ADVISORY BODY AND EXTERNAL REDRESS MECHANISM

The Advisory Board is the advisory body of the Secretariat. The Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organisation is the external redress mechanism of the Secretariat.
Rule 26.1

CONSULTATION ON PERSONNEL ISSUES

(a) The Secretary-General shall consult with the Senior Management, as defined in Rule 1.3 (a), before personnel decisions are taken in accordance with Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, in particular regarding appointments, probation, promotion, advancement, disciplinary actions, termination of employment.

(b) Conclusions of the Senior Management consultations shall be recorded in writing.
Rule 26.2

THE ADVISORY BOARD

(a) Where a five-member Advisory Board is established under Regulation 25 c), the Advisory Board shall meet:

(i) within no more than ten days of receipt of a properly documented written request from the Secretary-General for consultation in respect of decisions under Regulations 10 b), 12 a) or 13 a);

(ii) within no more than 30 days of receipt of a properly documented written request from an official for its advice in respect of disputes referred to in Regulation 25 a) f) (i) and (ii).

(iii) within no more than ten days of a properly documented written request if the Advisory Board is seized by a complaint of harassment in accordance with Regulation 25-bis d)

(b) Before advice is requested in respect of disputes referred to in Regulation 25 f) (i) and (ii), the official concerned shall address the Secretary-General in writing within ten days following notification of the impugned decision, requesting that it be modified or withdrawn.

Where the Secretary-General rejects a request or fails to reply within ten days of its receipt, the official concerned shall submit a written request to the Advisory Board for advice.

The request shall be submitted to the Advisory Board for advice not later than thirty days from the notification of the rejection to modify or withdraw the impugned decision or failure to reply to such a request within ten days of its receipt.

Nevertheless, in exceptional cases and for duly justified reasons, requests lodged after the time allowed may be admitted.

(c) The composition of the Board and the Secretary of the Advisory Board, where applicable, shall be made known to all officials.

(d) The Advisory Board shall act with the maximum of dispatch consistent with a fair review of the issue before it. Normally, proceedings before the Board shall be limited to the original written presentation of the case, together with brief statements and rebuttals. The Board may also call for any additional document or information relevant to the decision and may require any official to furnish evidence orally or in writing.
(e) The official concerned shall have the right to present his or her case to the Board orally and in writing and may be assisted in this by any Secretariat official or by an external counsellor.

(f) The members of the Advisory Board and the Secretary of the Advisory Board, where applicable, shall be bound to secrecy.

(g) Persons who have attended a meeting of the Board or have been called before it as a witness shall be bound to total secrecy in respect of any facts brought to their knowledge and any opinions expressed.

(h) The official concerned shall be informed of any document or new factor produced during the Board’s investigation.
Rule 26.2 - ADVISORY BOARD COMPOSITION

Staff Circular

In accordance with Regulation 25 c), as of [date], in the absence of 20 officials employed at the Secretariats, the composition of the Advisory Board and the Secretary of the Advisory Board, are as follows:

[...].
Rule 26.3

PROCEDURE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) The Advisory Board shall adopt and submit to the Secretary-General a report containing a record of its proceedings and a summary of the matter and its advice.

(b) In cases relating to consultation in respect of Regulation 10 b) the Board shall give its advice to the Secretary-General no later than ten days after his or her request to the Board’s Chairperson. In case of a complaint in accordance with Regulation 25-bis d) the Board shall give its advice no later than ten days after receiving the reply from the respondent. In all other cases the Board shall give its advice no later than 30 days after the receiving the request for consultation or advice.

(c) The final decision in the matter, which shall be taken by the Secretary-General within 60 days after the Board has transmitted its report to him or her, shall be notified to the official concerned, who shall at the same time be sent a copy of the Board’s advice.

(d) In cases of consultation where a five-member Advisory Board is established under Regulation 25 c) and all members of the Advisory Board cannot be present at the meeting referred to in Rule 26.2 (a), the Board shall comprise the Chairperson, one member appointed by the Secretary-General and one member appointed by the Staff Committee.
Rule 26.4

APPEALS TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

(a) Once the internal means of appeal have been exhausted, officials or, where applicable, any other persons designated in Article II (6) of the Statute of the ILO Administrative Tribunal, may appeal to the Tribunal against an administrative decision which they consider as an injury to them, alleging non-observance, in substance or in form, of the terms of appointment, the Staff Regulations or Staff Rules.

(b) In accordance with the provisions of Article VII (2) of the Statute of the ILO Administrative Tribunal, the decision impugned must be a final decision of the Secretary-General, and the appeal must be filed within 90 days after the appellant was notified of that decision.
Rule 26.4 - APPEALS TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL OF
THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

Staff Circular

The ILO has agreed that the Secretariat has access to the ILO Administrative Tribunal with effect from April 24th 1998.
REGULATION 27

FINAL PROVISIONS

a) These Staff Regulations may be amended by the Conference, which shall pay due regard to the rights vested in officials at the time of the amendment.

b) These Staff Regulations shall come into force on 5 June 1996.
Rule 27.1

FINAL PROVISIONS

These Staff Rules may be amended by the Conference which shall pay due regard to the rights vested in officials at the time of the amendment.