FICSA/C/74/PSA/CRP.1
Provisional agenda item 11(d)
2 x 2.5 hours

Session 1: 17 December 2020 @ 12h30 Geneva Time (Teams)
Session 2: 18 December 2020 @ 12h30 Geneva Time (Teams)

STANDING COMMITTEE ON CONDITIONS OF SERVICE IN THE FIELD

Provisional Agenda

Chair: Cosimo Melpignano

Vice-Chair: Vito Musa

Vice-Chair: Line Kaspersen

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Election of the rapporteur

3. *Activities undertaken during 2020*

    a. *June 2020 - Mid-year review of a selected list of hardship duty stations*

    b. *July 2020 - Special Health Discussions*

    c. *Dec 2020 - Annual Review of the ICSC Working Group for the classification of field duty stations according to the conditions of life and work for the Africa Region*

    d. *Brief summary of the 32nd IASMN Session*

4. *Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) Framework for UN personnel in a COVID-19 context Intervention of Dr. Nazar Al-Dabbagh, Chief of Medical Services in FAO*

5. *ICSC Mobility Framework 2020 with emphasis on hardship duty stations*

6. Nomination of Standing Committee officers and core group members

7. AoB

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FICSA COUNCIL

Standing Committee on Conditions of Service in the Field

74th **SESSION**
VIRTUAL

Agenda Item 3: Summary Sheet
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FICSA /C/74/FIELD/PA/3

☐ **For Discussion**	☒ **For Information**	☐ **For Decision**
Name of submitting member(s) & organization (s)	Véronique ALLAIN, SCBD & FICSA EXCOM Member for Field and Regional Issues	
Issue (title)	Report from the FICSA ExCom and the Field SC on the activity undertaken during 2020: • Jun 2020 - Mid-year review of a selected list of hardship duty stations • Jul 2020 - Special Health Discussions • Dec 2020 - Annual Review of the ICSC Working Group for the classification of field duty stations according to the conditions of life and work for the Africa Region • Brief summary of the 32nd IASMN Session	
Issue description (including reach: global versus local)	The ICSC Tripartite Working Group (TWG) met virtually to classify 18 field duty stations (Mid-year review of a selected list of hardship duty stations). The ICSC Secretariat warned about the impacts of COVID-19 and informed that the questionnaires were sent out before the impacts of the pandemic could be assessed properly. The TWG participants refrained from applying a blanket COVID-19 hardship rate but rather decided to think about the situation further. Clearly, in countries where the UN is deployed, local living conditions and health system would be particularly affected, without mentioning the repercussions on the overall security and safety that a pandemic could easily trigger. The ICSC called for a Special Meeting on Strengthening the Capacity of Data Collection Process for the Health Factor, in July 2020, virtually, and it focused around two aspects: 1. How to strengthen the overall capacity of the data collection process for the health factor under the ICSC's hardship classification process. 2. How to capture the impact of COVID-19 on the conditions of work and life in the field duty stations as it relates to health. The annual meeting for the review of the hardship levels for the Africa Region was scheduled for a virtual session in December 2020; feedback will be provided to the participants in the FICSA 74th Council when the SC FIELD meets. It will be	

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<tr><td></td><td>the occasion to see how much the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts will have been reflected in the questionnaires submitted to the ICSC.

In the 32nd session of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN), the participants approved important documents and established several new working groups of other collaborative groups:

A new Strategic Communications Working Group was established.
The IASMN endorsed the draft guidelines on Disability Considerations in Security Risk Management.
An update on the ETA (electronic travel advisory) application was provided and based on feedback from members, it was recommended that the proposed guidelines for the Agencies, Funds and Programmes of the UN be put on hold for the time being and to convene a smaller group to discuss the application's future

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<tr><td>Background documentation</td><td>

<u>FICSA/CIRC/1332,</u> Report from attendance of the ICSC Tripartite Working Group meeting established for the mid-year review of field duty stations according to the condition of life and work, Virtual meeting, 9- 11 June 2020.
IASMN 32nd session, final report, June 2020. Note for the file, V. ALLAIN, attendance of the special meeting called by the ICSC on strengthening the capacity of the data collection process for the health factor, July 2020.
Report from attendance of the ICSC Tripartite Working Group meeting established for the annual review of field duty stations according to the condition of life and work in Africa, Virtual meeting, December 2020.

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<tr><td>Action(s) requested from Standing Committee participants</td><td>The item is included in the agenda with a view to inform the members of the SC on the activities undertaken by the SC during 2020.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">FOR THE CHAIR(S) TO COMPLETE, IF APPLICABLE:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Next step(s)/specific action(s)</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Deadline</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Resources required</td><td>
☐ Specialist/Consultant
☐ Legal Adviser
☐ SC Chair/Vice-Chair
☐ Core group member(s)
☐ FICSA Secretariat
☐ FICSA ExCom (Compensation, Field, Treasurer, Other)
☐ Volunteer/Intern
☐ Other
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<tr><td>Deliverable</td><td>
☐ Literature review
☐ Paper/Article
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	☐ Background paper with options ☐ Legal article/review/opinion ☐ Talking points for high-level fora/forum – Advocacy ☐ Comparative study ☐ Good practices ☐ Recommendations/ guideline for SAs/unions
Issue for high level fora	☐ International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) ☐ High-Level Committee for Management (HLCM) ☐ HR Network ☐ Joint Pension Board ☐ UN General Assembly ☐ Inter-Agency Security and Management Network (IASMN) ☐ Other

FICSA COUNCIL

Standing Committee on Conditions of Service in the Field

74th SESSION
VIRTUAL

Agenda Item 4: Summary Sheet
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FICSA /C/74/PSA/PA/4

☒ **For Discussion**	☐ **For Information**	☐ **For Decision**
Name of submitting member(s) & organization (s)	Line Kaspersen, FAO	
Issue (title)	Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) Framework for UN personnel in a COVID context	
Issue description (including reach: global versus local)	Intervention of Dr. Nazar Al-Dabbagh, Chief of Medical Services in FAO to explain the progress on the medical evacuation task force.	
	Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) has become highly relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic where staff, for some for the first time, have become aware of the possibility that they may need medical evacuation services for themselves or their dependents under a scenario where international travel and the availability of flights has become a challenge.	
	All United Nations entities around the world have been, and are still, facing unprecedented difficulties in the availability of health services, closed borders and ports, and other logistical constraints. It may also be the first time that staff take the time to familiarize themselves with the medical evacuation destinations and alternative stations, in case the services (like ICU units) are not available or fully occupied. In 2020, for the first time in many years, the MEDEVAC stations list was updated and the topic of UN hospitals has been discussed globally.	
	As the COVID pandemic continues to soar all over the world, and may continue to do so for quite some time, combined with global economic recession and pressure on Government expenditure, taking a more systematic look at the MEDEVAC system is seen to be prudent a step for the FIELD Standing Committee.	
	This has prompted the need for a discussion as to whether the MEDEVAC system is: 1) fully up to standard both to be able to serve the needs and be implemented in a flexible and efficient (timely) manner; 2) fully adopted across the board by all FICSA members; and 3) sufficiently communicated to staff for them to know their entitlements and the procedures, in case it becomes needed.	
	1. Assessment of the MEDEVAC system	
	A MEDEVAC system in general exists within the UN system and is governed by the UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM-WIDE TASK FORCE ON MEDICAL EVACUATIONS. It has	

| | been common practice for the UN Secretariat to issue specific MEDEVAC related guidance for global pandemics; this was done during the Ebola crisis, and on 22 May 2020, specific guidance was issued in relation to COVID 19, supplementing the already issued Exceptional WHO COVID-19 MEDEVAC Protocol. The guideline includes, amongst others: appointment of coordinators; deployment of 9 hospitals/clinics, although not yet operational; as well as refining the process and descriptions of the medical conditions which would require MEDEVAC (estimating that maximum 5% of cases may require MEDEVAC). At the same time, the Division of Healthcare Management and Occupational Safety and Health (DHMOSH) updated the list of MEDEVAC locations for the first time in 2020. The overall framework seems largely satisfactory, however, given the unprecedented challenges faced, and the need to safeguard the MEDEVAC system and the health and safety of UN personnel and their dependants, it will be important to evaluate the implementation of the framework during 2020 and beyond, to inform any reforms which may need to be taken.

2. Degree of adoption and whether the guidance is being followed (e.g. in agency specific COVID HR guidance)

While the general MEDEVAC framework is in place, it is up to each agency to ensure that the framework is being followed and implemented, both during regular times and during pandemics or other crisis situations. Limited information is available about this to date, from most specialized UN agencies in particular.

3. Communication.

One important element of a MEDEVAC framework is the comfort it brings to staff members, deployed especially in hardship duty stations, of knowing that in case of any medical emergency they can be airlifted to an adequate medical facility. While it may not be a requirement for all staff to know the details of the MEDEDVAC system, it is important for them to know that a system is in place and, at the country level, to know where to go and who to contact. There is an abundance of information available and navigating it and making sense of it, is not easy. A certain degree of anxiety has been observed by FISCA members, not always knowing how the issue is being handled and if the required systems (e.g. COVID coordinators, their degree of training, diplomatic agreements in place related to the use of airspace for evacuation, issues related to visa, etc.) and not being sure what will happen in case they fall seriously ill, both in relation to the COVID-19 infections, but also in case of other fatal illness, the treatment for which may be overshadowed by the ongoing pandemic.

In conclusion, it is seen as prudent to assess the success and fitness of the MEDEVAC system considering the current and on-going pandemic, for the health and safety of all UN staff. Members of the Standing Committee are requested to provide their views on the relevance of this discussion, share experiences from their own agencies and propose as way forward. |
| **Background documentation** | UN Guidance on the COVID-19 MEDEVAC: https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/covid-19-medevac

Emergency WHO protocol on MEDEVAC: https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-04/Procedure%20for%20Medevac%20and%20Associated%20Guidance%209%20April.pdf

Overall MEDEVAC framework: |

	https://cms.emergency.unhcr.org/documents/11982/48687/UNHCR,+MEDEVAC+Procedures/b5d0df8d-1ca7-4d52-9fce-47de6b819f21 Detailed guidance to countries, including in Annex the list of MEDEVAC locations published by DHMOSH: https://info.undp.org/gssu/Documents/Communication%20Materials/2020.03.19_Procedure%20for%20Medevac%20and%20Associated%20Guidance.pdf
Action(s) requested from Standing Committee participants	The information above is presented for information to members. The view of members on the way forward is requested, e.g. what are the prudent steps for us as FICSA to take to ensure that the UN is dealing with the MEDEVAC issues in an efficient and complete way. Options include: 1) The recruitment of a specialized medical consultant to review the adequacy of the MEDEVAC system in the light of current or future pandemics. 2) Request the MEDEVAC Task Force to provide an update of the success and adequacy of the activities carried out during the on-going COVID-19 pandemic and assess how to prepare for the future. 3) Undertake a systematic review of the degree of implementation of the MEDEVAC framework across FISCA member agencies. 4) Conduct a survey across members of our associations to assess their knowledge and perceived satisfaction with the information known to them. 5) Take no further action. 6) Other options.
**FOR THE CHAIR(S) TO COMPLETE, IF APPLICABLE:**
Next step(s)/specific action(s)	
Deadline	
Resources required	☐ Specialist/Consultant ☐ Legal Adviser ☐ SC Chair/Vice-Chair ☐ Core group member(s) ☐ FICSA Secretariat ☐ FICSA ExCom (Compensation, Field, Treasurer, Other) ☐ Volunteer/Intern ☐ Other
Deliverable	☐ Literature review ☐ Paper/Article ☐ Background paper with options ☐ Legal article/review/opinion ☐ Talking points for high-level fora/forum – Advocacy ☐ Comparative study ☐ Good practices ☐ Recommendations/ guideline for SAs/unions

Issue for high level fora	☐ International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) ☐ High-Level Committee for Management (HLCM) ☐ HR Network ☐ Joint Pension Board ☐ UN General Assembly ☐ Inter-Agency Security and Management Network (IASMN) ☐ Other

FICSA COUNCIL

Standing Committee on Professional salaries and allowances

74ᵗʰ **SESSION**
VIRTUAL

Agenda Item 5: Summary Sheet
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FICSA /C/74/FIELD/PA/5

☒ For Discussion	☒ For Information	☐ For Decision
Name of submitting member(s) & organization (s)	Cosimo Melpignano, UNGSC	
Issue (title)	ICSC Mobility Framework 2020 with emphasis on hardship duty stations	
Issue description (including reach: global versus local)	Staff mobility is a key element for the United Nations to develop its activities and programmes properly and to adapt its wide range of operations to a constantly changing global environment.	

It is also a critical factor for staff, since it has a major influence on their professional and private lives.

Indeed, mobility is a multidimensional issue and we cannot narrow it within the parameters of few aspects. However, we can certainly expect that to be considered as a viable policy it should contemplate both organizational and staff requirements.

Many staff members are not fully convinced about the effectiveness of the current mobility policy as many variables remain unsolved and, mainly, it does not fully address staff requests in many aspects.

Further, it seems like a comprehensive and strategic plan is not in place, including inter-agency mobility, with measurable objectives as type and volume of staff movement, indicators measuring policy implementation as well as geographical targets and, even more, specific targeted locations. For example, there seems to be no ICSC level guidance on duration of stay in hardship duty stations, leaving the implementation of adequate frameworks up to each individual agency.

The FICSA SC on the Conditions of Service in the Field considers this last point as fundamental for the wellbeing of staff as many concerns were raised by colleagues deployed in hardship duty stations related to the improvement of (a) work/life conditions and (b) the implementation of the mobility policy as a mean to share the burden among staff in very challenging field locations.

Background documentation	ICSC, 2020 A guide to the mobility and hardship scheme and related arrangements https://icsc.un.org/Resources/HRPD/Booklets/MOBILITYENG.pdf Joint Inspection Unit, 2006 Staff Mobility in the United Nations JIU/REP/2006/7 https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_document_files/products/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2006_7_English.pdf Joint Inspection Unit, 2010 Inter-agency staff mobility and work/life balance in the organizations of the United Nations system JIU/REP/2010/8 https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_document_files/products/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2010_8_English.pdf Joint Inspection Unit, 2019 Review of staff exchange and similar inter-agency mobility measures in United Nations system organizations JIU/REP/2019/8 https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2019_8_english.pdf
Action(s) requested from Standing Committee participants	The item is included in the agenda with a view to raise awareness about the issue and to stimulate discussions among the FICSA membership on the concerns as spawned by field staff. Further, the SC wishes to ascertain which mechanisms are in place, within FICSA member organizations, designed to implement a mobility policy across functions, departments and duty stations. An additional analysis may look at the harmonization of practices within the United Nations System, if any, to facilitate inter-agency mobility.
FOR THE CHAIR(S) TO COMPLETE, IF APPLICABLE:	
Next step(s)/specific action(s)	To ask FICSA membership to provide the FICSA Secretariat and the SC with their mobility policy, if any, before the SC sessions. And to ask the FICSA Membership how effectively this policy is implemented.
Deadline	A message to FICSA membership could be sent asap
Resources required	☐ Specialist/Consultant ☐ Legal Adviser ☐ SC Chair/Vice-Chair ☐ Core group member(s) ☐ FICSA Secretariat ☐ FICSA ExCom (Compensation, Field, Treasurer, Other) ☐ Volunteer/Intern

	☐ Other
Deliverable	☐ Literature review ☐ Paper/Article ☐ Background paper with options ☐ Legal article/review/opinion ☐ Talking points for high-level fora/forum – Advocacy ☐ Comparative study ☐ Good practices ☐ Recommendations/ guideline for SAs/unions
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