

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES

Introduction

1. The Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances (PSA – see Appendix 1 for participants) met on 10 and 11 December 2020 to address its [agenda](#), and took part in the joint session of FICSA standing committees. It adopted its agenda and elected Juan José Coy Girón (AP-in-FAO) as Rapporteur.

2. PSA’s work did not include considering a report from the Permanent Technical Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances (PTC/PSA) because PTC had not met, owing to the ongoing ICSC reviews of the operational rules on post adjustment. PTC would meet after ICSC approved new rules, to update members and subsequently gather feedback on experience with implementation of the rules.

ICSC discussions on the post-adjustment methodology

3. The key decisions from the 90th session of ICSC comprised approval of:

- the recommendations from the working group on operational rules to maintain the current gap-closure measure of 3% and changing the calculation of personal transitional allowance (PTA) according to the so-called “consistent PTA approach”;
- a twelve-month review rule for Group I duty stations;
- a four-month review and ten-point rules for Group II duty stations.

4. A FICSA ExCom member and the ILO Statistician presented the review of the post-adjustment operational rules. The reinstatement of a gap-closure measure at 3% was an important achievement, as it had been supposed to be a temporary measure when put into place in 2017. FICSA had worked with statisticians on simulations of the gap-closure measures, which showed that the 3% measure based on the new formulation yielded better results than the previous 5% measure based on the old formulation. The gap-closure measure would help to ensure predictability of post-adjustment multipliers and staff salaries.

5. In the ensuing discussion, participants raised three concerns. The first was the need to ensure that the cost-of-living survey was based on a robust methodology. FICSA considered the interests of all duty stations in discussions on the operational rules, after closely reviewing simulations. The 3% gap-closure measure was likely to be the best fit for both Group I and Group II duty stations.

6. Second was a question about the sensitivity of the post-adjustment calculations to fluctuations in exchange rates, rather than local consumer prices. Fluctuations in post-adjustment based on currency exchange were due to comparisons with New York prices, based on complex prices, to ensure a standard quality of life across duty stations.

7. Third, had ICSC made an official communication on the issue of two post-adjustment multipliers being used in Geneva? Although ICSC had not yet made an official communication, the situation was expected to end once the new methodology was approved and implemented.

8. PSA agreed on the need to ensure that all its members were familiar with the new post-adjustment methodology, once approved. In addition, the members took a survey through Mentimeter to identify their key concerns on Professional (P) salaries and allowances over the past year, and their familiarity with matters discussed by PSA. The responses showed that most members were concerned about the fairness and transparency of ICSC decision-making on post-adjustment methodologies and staff salaries, and the use of New York as a comparator for duty stations globally with different contexts. Over half responded that they had little or no familiarity with PSA issues, highlighting the need for training.

Recommendation

9. PSA recommended that the FICSA ExCom should:

- (a) prepare, preferably in a tabular format, a document highlighting the differences between the old and the new operational rules adopted by the ICSC at its 90th session;**
- (b) organize training in the methodology and operational rules for post-adjustment calculation for interested PSA members and share with them the example simulations available;**
- (c) encourage FICSA member organizations to actively participate in and provide input to cost-of-living surveys and the handling of related matters.**

Implementation of recommendations on eligibility for P-staff positions

10. At the 73rd Council, PSA had recommended that FICSA urge the Human Resources (HR) Network and heads of agencies to apply ICSC standards for job classification and qualification requirements. FICSA had written to ICSC requesting further information on organizations' compliance with these standards. The response stated that, while organizations used the codes, there might be variation in how the information is stored and linked with other HR systems. Further updates would be available once ICSC conducted its next review, which seemed to cover only General Service (GS) positions.

11. Participants agreed with FICSA's proposed way forward:

- (a) to wait for ICSC to publish more information after its next review, to gain a better understanding of compliance and then raise issues with the HR Network; and
- (b) to request that ICSC conduct a similar review for international P positions.

Agile contracts and benefits and entitlements during remote working

12. Discussing that issue on its own and in a joint session with other FICSA standing committees, PSA concluded that agile contracts had the potential for severe negative effects on staff members and agreed on the need for FICSA to reject any proposal made by ICSC in that regard.

Recommendations

13. PSA recommended that the FICSA ExCom should participate in the discussions of the ICSC Tripartite Working Group (TWG) and the HR Network, remain vigilant, actively keep the membership informed of the proceedings of ICSC and the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) on this matter and seek input from members on any type of proposed contracts that affect staff benefits.

14. PSA recommended that the FICSA ExCom should reject any proposal made by ICSC or HLCM that would negatively affect the conditions of employment and relevant benefits, entitlements and allowances of staff.

Other business

15. The Chair provided updates on various items, including the following.

- (a) ICSC had organized a 2019 global survey to solicit staff's views on compensation and performance management. While a detailed analysis was yet to be made, the initial results showed that staff were concerned about lack of career opportunities and support for interagency mobility.
- (b) The 2018 Noblemaire study (identifying the highest-paid national civil service and reference checking with other international organizations) had retained the United States federal civil service as a comparator and found that OECD and the World Bank were ahead of the UN common system by 28–37%. ICSC had agreed to report to the UN General Assembly that those data should be viewed as supplementary to the Noblemaire study.
- (c) ICSC had agreed to recommend to the UN General Assembly an adjustment of the unified base/floor salary scale for the P and higher categories of 1.9%, to be implemented through the standard no-loss/no-gain consolidation method.
- (d) The recruitment incentive was an incentive payment for recruitment of experts in highly specialized fields when organizations were unable to attract suitably qualified staff. Three years after implementation of the incentive, the ICSC had found that only one organization had made such payments. Another review was proposed after two further years.
- (e) ICSC had proposed an increase in the ceiling of the education grant to the UN General Assembly, but no decision had yet been made.

Recommendations

16. PSA recommended that the FICSA ExCom should advise member organizations in Montréal on how to obtain a fair education grant for all staff members in that duty station.

17. PSA recommended that the FICSA ExCom should provide information to member organizations on the status of the changes to the education grant proposed by ICSC.

Nomination of PSA officers and core group members

18. The following delegates were nominated as Standing Committee officers:

- Santhosh Thanjavur Prakasam (UNFCCC) as Chair
- Priya Mannava (WHO/WPRO) as Vice-Chair
- Andrea Palazzi (UNAIDS) as Vice-Chair
- Juan José Coy Girón (AP-in-FAO) as Rapporteur

19. All PSA members were nominated as members of the core group.

Appendix 1. Participants

Chair	Santhosh Thanjavur Prakasam (UNFCCC)
Vice-Chair	Priya Mannava (WHO/WPRO)
Vice-Chair	Andrea Palazzi (UNAIDS)
Rapporteur	Juan José Coy Girón (AP-in-FAO)
FICSA President	Tanya Quinn-Maguire (UNAIDS)
FICSA General Secretary	Evelyn Kortum (WHO/HQ)
FICSA ExCom members	Veronique Allain (SCBD), Brett Fitzgerald (WIPO), Kay Miller (WHO/EURO), Imed Zabaar (IAEA)
FICSA Regional Representative	Anthony Ndinguri (ICAO)
Staff association/union	
AP-in-FAO	Ny You
FAO/WFP-UGSS	Dina Franchi
IAEA	Frank Campbell, Borona Shehu, Diego Telleria
ICAO	Sanya Dehinde, Andrew Brown
IMO	Shereen Barry, Juan Lyu
SCBD	Lisa Pedicelli, Tanya Mc Gregor
UNFCCC	Mary Jean Abrazado, Ambretta Perrino
UNIDO	Osadolor Akpata, Laura Reynaldo, Steve Eales
UNGSC	Cosimo Lunedì, Cosimo Melpignano
UPU	Birahim Fall
UNWTO	Juliana Contreras, Peter Janech
WHO/AFRO	Hamidou Bague
WHO/EURO	Shahin Huseynov
WHO/HQ	Gemma Vestal
WHO/SEARO	Ritesh Singh
WHO/WPRO	Huajing Liang
WMO	Jalil Housni
Members with associate status	
CTBTO	Michelle Delinde, Glenda Wolstenholme
IOM	Deborah Fanin
ITER	Sophie Miras
OPCW	Alberto Fernandez
Association with consultative status	

EMBL

Maria Cerezo

Guest

ILO

Kieran Walsh, Statistician
