



**75th FICSA Council
INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)
Vienna, 25–29 April 2022**

**REPORT OF THE 75TH SESSION
OF THE FICSA COUNCIL**



Building back

Geneva, 13 June 2022

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations of the names of the organizations whose staff are represented by FICSA members are not given here, but spelled out in the participants list, Annex 11 to the report of the Council.

ACPAQ	Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions
ASHI	After-service health insurance
CCISUA	Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System
CEB	Chief Executives Board for Coordination
COL surveys	Cost-of-living surveys
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
ETA	Emergency Telecommunication Application
FW	Flexible work
GS staff	General Service staff
HLCM	High-Level Committee on Management
HQ	Headquarters
HR Network	Human Resources Network
IASMN	Inter-Agency Security Management Network
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
ILOAT	ILO Administrative Tribunal
LGBTQI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (one's sexual or gender identity) and intersex
LSC	Local survey committee (related to Professional staff salaries)
LSSCs	Local salary survey committees (related to locally recruited staff salaries)
MEDEVAC	Medical evacuation
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
OSLA	Office of Staff Legal Assistance
IP staff	International Professional staff
Q&A session	Question-and-answer session
TWG	Tripartite Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNAT	UN Appeals Tribunal
UNDT	UN Dispute Tribunal
UNICC	UN International Computing Centre
UNISERV	United Nations International Civil Servants Federation

UNJSPB UN Joint Staff Pension Fund Board
UNJSPF UN Joint Staff Pension Fund

Terms for FICSA structures

ExCom Executive Committee

Standing committees

FIELD Standing Committee on Field Issues
GSQ Standing Committee on General Service Questions
HRM Standing Committee on Human Resources Management
LEG Standing Committee on Legal Questions
PBAS Standing Committee on Programme Budget, Administration and Strategy
PSA Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances
SMR Standing Committee on Staff-Management Relations
SocSec/OHS Standing Committee on Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety

Permanent technical committees to standing committees

PTC/GSQ Permanent Technical Committee of the Standing Committee on General Service Questions
PTC/PSA Permanent Technical Committee of the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances

Opening of the Council session

Welcomes

1. FICSA President Tanya Quinn-Maguire (UNAIDS) welcomed both experienced and new delegates to the hybrid 75th session of the FICSA Council. Meeting face to face with so many delegates was very welcome, especially after two years of virtual meetings. She also welcomed the many delegates participating virtually. FICSA celebrated its seventieth anniversary in 2022, and delegates were minded that they stood on the shoulders of the United Nations (UN) staff representatives who had preceded them.
2. Welcoming the delegates in a [video message](#), UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres congratulated FICSA on its seventieth anniversary. Staff had faced big tests in recent years; nevertheless, their commitment had enabled the UN to rise to all challenges. Shared goals and values would enable UN organizations and staff to adapt to meet future needs, with changes agreed in consultation with staff at all levels. He looked forward to continued cooperation with FICSA in the years ahead.
3. Imed Zabaar, IAEA Staff Association President, and host of the 2022 FICSA Council, opened the 75th Council by welcoming the ICSC chair and other honoured guests in attendance. Despite the restrictions imposed by coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the IAEA Staff Association was happy to host the Council, and pledged its continued commitment to FICSA. It looked back with pride to past achievements, including IAEA's staunch support for the proposed cost-sharing agreement for the release of FICSA officers from their regular duties, in a long relationship with FICSA dating from 1958. He thanked the IAEA administration and staff who had made the Council possible.
4. IAEA Deputy Director-General for Management Margaret Doane welcomed the delegates to the Council, and the celebration of FICSA's seventieth anniversary, on behalf of IAEA Director-General Rafael Mariano Grossi, who could not be present. FICSA had played a large role in staff development in the UN system, enabling it to translate the ideals of the UN Charter into reality. FICSA's work on conditions of service helped the UN attract high-quality staff. She welcomed the return of UN organizations to regular operations in the wake of COVID, and praised the close cooperation between the IAEA administration and Staff Association, which had been instrumental in the development and adoption of key policies to foster an inclusive and respectful working environment. She looked forward to further continuous cooperation with FICSA in the currently fluid environment in which the UN sought to serve Member States and work with new donors to maximize the impact of its work.

Address by the FICSA President

5. The FICSA President was glad to see the slow return to more normal conditions after two years of working from home owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, although she recognized the effects of that period on the mental health and general well-being of the staff of the UN Common System. While global crises came and went, staff continued to work in extreme and dangerous situations to deliver on the mandates of UN organizations to serve people the world over. Before proceeding, the President invited all delegates to observe a moment of silence to honour the memory of all their

colleagues who had lost their lives while serving the UN and its specialized agencies, and to present condolences to their family members.

6. The in-person attendance of most delegates created a golden opportunity for them to build back their collective competencies and capacities as staff representatives across the organizations. The FICSA President urged all delegates to take advantage of the opportunities for training by FICSA experts – on legal issues, building staff resilience, job classification and pension-related issues – and networking offered by the Council: building competencies and creating support networks among staff were the core of FICSA’s work. The best way for all delegates to celebrate FICSA’s seventieth anniversary was to work to ensure its continued relevance and fitness for its purpose to support the next generation of staff representatives and staff across the UN Common System as a whole.
7. The Council would make many important decisions in plenary, including the election of officers to the FICSA Executive Committee (ExCom) (see Annex 1). Delegates would do their most important work, however, in the standing committees that provided policy advice to ExCom on the many issues addressed by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM), the Human Resources (HR) Network and other key interagency bodies in which FICSA actively participated.
8. The President concluded her address by thanking the people whose hard work enabled the 75th Council to take place – the IAEA staff association, administration and support staff, the FICA Secretariat and the IAEA polling officers, Ahmad Mazrui and Lydia Moser – and welcomed the highlight of the Council’s opening session: the opportunity to interact with FICSA’s main interlocutor, ICSC.

Address by the ICSC Chair and question-and-answer (Q&A) session

9. Attending the opening session as guests, ICSC Chair Larbi Djacta addressed the Council and, with ICSC’s Chief of the Cost-of-Living Division, Ibrahim Yansaneh, answered questions submitted by FICSA members before the session. The full statement of the ICSC Chair is available [here](#).
10. The ICSC Chair valued ICSC’s constructive relationship with staff representatives and staff at large. ICSC had concluded its 93rd session, where it highlighted the UN General Assembly’s approval of all recommendations submitted by in ICSC’s 2021 report. In addition, [UN General Assembly resolution 76/240](#) had assigned ICSC much new work, which would affect its programme over the next few years. The Chair called on all staff representatives and UN organizations’ HR managers to work with ICSC to deliver on the Assembly’s requests.
11. ICSC’s upcoming activities included meetings of its working groups on the review methodology for local staff salary surveys, and parental leave. The agenda for ICSC’s 94th session in July included setting up a working group to examine how to improve language in the current [Standards of Conduct for International Civil Servants](#), particularly in relation to discrimination, along with discussing such topics as the [Framework for Human Resources Management](#), [standards of accommodation of air travel](#), the recruitment incentive, multilingualism and the definition of headquarters (HQ) duty stations.

12. The current round of cost-of-living (COL) surveys had been conducted successfully, mainly owing to the excellent cooperation among all stakeholders. The Chair hoped that the collaborative process would continue through data analysis to the implementation of the results. The Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions (ACPAQ) would review the analysis and results of the surveys and make recommendations to ICSC in mid-June. If ICSC approved ACPAQ's recommendations at its July session, the results would be implemented as of 1 August 2022. The ICSC Chair concluded his address by assuring staff representatives of ICSC's desire to preserve equity among common-system organizations; achieving that goal required FICSA members to assist with their professionalism, open communication and trust.
13. The FICSA President reiterated FICSA's commitment to cooperation with ICSC.

Q&A

14. Delegates began by asking clusters of detailed questions on three topics: the comprehensive assessment and review of the compensation package for UN's staff, requested by [resolution 76/240](#); the baseline COL surveys, which had been completed for HQ duty stations; and the current review of the methodology for the General Service (GS) local salary survey. The ICSC Chair and Chief of the Cost-of-Living Division committed to supplying written answers to all the questions posed. Annex 2 gives the questions asked and the answers given at the 75th Council in full.

ICSC review of compensation package

15. A delegate asked about ICSC's preliminary plans and timeline for the review of the compensation package, whether ICSC would use the lessons learned from the 2015 comprehensive review and how ICSC could ensure consistent implementation of the compensation package to guarantee coherence and stability of the UN Common System.
16. The ICSC Chair replied that the General Assembly's request had the effect of providing a framework for work that ICSC was already doing; it would continue to complete its tasks with the methodology already agreed. The review might take five years to complete but that was not a hard deadline. The resolution did not aim to reduce the compensation package; the ICSC Chair asked staff and their representatives to increase their engagement with surveys and other data requests and to commit to participating in these processes. Methodologies based on solid information would work properly. Dealing with organizations that were not implementing the current system required both flexibility and incentives for implementation, although harmonized implementation, as decided by the General Assembly, would benefit the Common System and its constituent organizations.
17. The FICSA President suggested that ICSC's communication campaign clearly identify the kind of staff participation that it needed.

COL surveys

18. As the baseline survey for HQ duty stations had been completed, what would be the next steps in the process? When would the results be implemented and when would the surveys for the rest of the duty stations on that round begin? As the 2016 round of surveys was continuing, what operational rules and methodology would be used?

19. The ICSC Chair noted that the survey process had been underway for three years and surveys of HQ duty stations had already been made. In addition, COL surveys were part of the solution to the unfortunate situation of two post-adjustment multipliers being used in Geneva, Switzerland, which the General Assembly had asked ICSC to remedy.
20. The Chief of the Cost-of-Living Division called the surveys of HQ duty stations a resounding success, owing to efforts of local survey committees (LSCs) working in very difficult conditions. ICSC had collected much high-quality information on prices and expenditures. The next step was data analysis on a production scale. ICSC expected to be in a good position for data processing by the end of the first week of May 2022, although specific attention would have to be given to accounting for external factors such as the pandemic, and to do cross-validation. Delegations of experts from various duty stations, including independent experts nominated by the LSCs, would work with the ICSC Secretariat to review the data immediately afterwards. The experts would report to LSCs and to ACPAQ, which would meet on 6–13 June. ACPAQ would subsequently make recommendations to the ICSC session in July.
21. After approving the results of HQ surveys, ICSC would turn to surveys for other duty stations from September to December 2022. ICSC's website showed the schedule. Duty stations surveyed in the 2016 round were still under the 2016 operational rules, but special measures from 2020 were also in place to prevent reductions in net take-home pay and grant warranted increases. ICSC continued to monitor and address the survey process for field duty stations as needed.

Review of the methodology for the GS local salary survey

22. A speaker asked a range of questions about local salary surveys, interim adjustments in salaries and whether, in view of the delays in completing salary surveys during the pandemic, ICSC was coordinating with other bodies, such as the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) to ensure timely completion of the surveys and reflection of any changes in the labour market.
23. ICSC always aimed to respond positively to requests and comments from local salary survey committees (LSSCs) in duty stations. It was important to consider conditions following the pandemic. ICSC aimed to apply interim measures equally to all staff in field duty stations, while protections were built in for HQ duty stations where inflation and currency fluctuations were more stable. Special measures would be discontinued when the pandemic had ended. As to timelines for local salary surveys, ICSC was working closely with staff representatives to improve the methodology, which had to reflect the reality of the market. Transparency was a priority to ensure buy-in to decisions. Again, increased staff participation in surveys was needed to supply the data that formed the basis of decisions.
24. A delegate inquired about ICSC's response to the high inflation in many duty stations. Did it foresee applying operational rules to adjust GS salaries that were similar to those in place for international Professional (IP) staff?
25. The ICSC Chair replied that ICSC used established methodologies. For salary adjustments for IP staff, the methodology required that ICSC track inflation and currency fluctuations for both HQ and field duty stations, using the information to

adjust the post adjustment. There had been salary increases in all Group 1 duty stations in February 2022, for example. Such adjustments were made three times a year for the field and annually in February for Group 1. ICSC employed special measures on a monthly basis for duty stations in countries with very high inflation and depreciation of local currency.

26. ICSC preferred to supply written responses to the next two queries, which addressed cases in which a GS salary survey resulted in a minor increase to net salary, but a decrease in gross pensionable income, and the measures foreseen in the local salary survey methodology to assist during crises, particularly when comparators increasingly refused to provide data (see Annex 2).
27. Speakers then asked whether the participation of IP staff in COL and housing surveys should be mandatory, and what minimum level of participation in cost-of-living surveys was required.
28. The ICSC Chair replied that ICSC had no power to do enforce participation. Staff needed to understand and meet the need to take part. Better communication by all parties would help.
29. The Chief of the Cost-of-Living Division added that forcing responses was against the principles of good statistics. Accurate data from staff on expenditures and prices in stores that staff use were essential. The ICSC Secretariat worked with staff in various duty stations to help them respond. ACPAQ determined target response levels to get a representative sample for HQ stations; the rule of thumb for field stations was about 70%. Smaller samples needed testing for representativeness. Surveys had to be repeated when data samples were too small.

Additional topics

30. A delegate asked, in view of the importance of jurisprudence, whether the existence of two jurisdictions – those of the ILO Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) and the UN Administrative Tribunal (UNAT) – in Geneva were a problem. The ICSC Chair wondered, with due respect to the ILOAT judgement, why ICSC had been competent to decide the post-adjustment multiplier in 2010 but not in 2016. He hoped that all stakeholders would work together to use the results of the current survey to solve the problem.
31. A speaker noted that the comparators used in local salary surveys in Africa were usually located outside capital cities, and the results of the surveys had been a decrease in UN salaries in 2019. The ICSC Chair replied that, where comparators were located outside the capitals, ICSC was exploring opportunities to buy and use external data, once it could show that they would meet various criteria. ICSC was also considering ways to enhance the powers of the LSSCs to improve the process. Discussion of the problem would continue, as fixing it was important.
32. The FICSA President suggested that the Standing Committee on Legal Questions contribute any further questions or comments needed on the jurisdictional set-up, and that delegates discuss questions about particular duty stations individually with the Chief of the Cost-of-Living Division. FICSA should be copied on all communications, so it could raise issues of wider relevance.

33. A delegate asked how ICSC took account of the views of all stakeholders – executive heads, staff federations and Member States in governing bodies – to ensure the coherence of the UN Common System.
34. The answer was that ICSC tried to maximize stakeholder participation by opening its meetings to all. This openness ensured that all stakeholder voices considered in decision-making. While ICSC was often asked to ensure the enforcement of the General Assembly decisions based on its recommendations, organizations were responsible for implementing ICSC’s decisions, which always aimed to benefit staff and preserve the UN Common System. ICSC’s power came through cooperation, and persuasion.
35. A speaker asked what LSSC chairs and responsible agencies should do to request administrative reviews of ICSC and OHRM’s decisions on the application of special measures. The ICSC Chair answered that ICSC always supported enquiries from duty stations, and he did not recommend resorting to legal appeals.
36. The final question focused on how the different means of determining danger pay for IP and GS staff reflected the value of treating all staff equally. The ICSC Chair said he shared that concern, and the question was now on ICSC’s agenda.

Statement by HLCM Chair

37. Addressing the Council by video link (full statement [here](#)), HLCM Chair Catherine Pollard noted that the pressures caused by the unprecedented public health challenge of COVID-19, exacerbated by new crises such as the war on Ukraine, had increased the importance of collaboration between UN organizations’ administrations and staff. As the long-term impact of that combination of events put at risk decades of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, all stakeholders needed to continue to work to improve the system in which they worked. The permanent quest to rethink work modalities, build back better and adapt to new situations should be a joint effort.
38. Against the background of current crises, Member States expected the UN to continue to deliver on its mandates, meet ever growing needs and continue to provide strong support. That meant intensified scrutiny of UN organizations’ efficiency and effectiveness. The HLCM Chair credited the personnel of the UN system for the successes achieved in meeting Member States’ expectations.
39. HLCM’s role was to enable greater effectiveness and efficiency while ensuring the well-being of personnel. Its various mechanisms – from the interagency Task Force on the Future of Work for the UN Workforce and the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Forum to the HR Network, the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) and the UN Medical Directors – had all worked hard to coordinate and align policy frameworks to enable business continuity and crisis response. In view of the worrying signs of mental health challenges, stress and burnout among UN staff, the HR Network and UN Medical Directors had increasingly focused on the need for long-term psychosocial and wellbeing support, and FICSA had contributed significantly to their efforts.
40. The Chair outlined HLCM’s forthcoming work, including the Task Force’s three key areas of work, and efforts to prevent of sexual harassment and racism. First, after

developing deliverables concentrating on workplace and management culture, the Task Force expected to finalize documents on the right to disconnect and work–life harmony in the coming months, in collaboration with the staff federations.

41. Second, the Task Force discussions on the review of UN contractual modalities, conducted in conjunction with the parallel ICSC working group on the contractual framework, had led to the conclusion that no contractual modality could deliver the desired agility and flexibility for both staff members and organizations alike. Those discussions would therefore continue in the framework of the upcoming ICSC comprehensive review of the compensation system, in which FICSA’s constructive and open collaboration would be welcome.
42. The Task Force’s third area of work was the pilot-testing of the UN Digital ID, which was meant to facilitate interagency cooperation and joint administration, and to enable interagency mobility for staff from an administrative perspective. HLCM planned to conclude the Task Force in autumn 2022, and continue discussions in the three areas in ICSC, the HR Network and the project team for the UN Digital ID.
43. Further, HLCM had made substantial progress through the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) [Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment](#), which had generated a model policy, the Clear Check database increasingly used by most UN entities, a guide for managers, a code of conduct for UN events and a new manual for investigations. Next, the Task Force would concentrate on raising all personnel’s awareness of the tools available to them, inducing management and personnel to shift towards a partnership approach and showing a clear path to ensure the sustainability of the UN system’s efforts to address sexual harassment. To address racism and discrimination, HLCM agreed to work more closely with experts on those issues and diversity in general, much like the approach taken to the initial stages of the work on sexual harassment.
44. Thanking the Chair for her statement, the FICSA President noted that, while hybrid meetings were probably the way forward, face-to-face interaction remained essential, particularly for networking. FICSA much appreciated the frank and open communication with HLCM, particularly on crises such as the war on Ukraine, and hoped HLCM would take part in future Councils. The current Council would address such topics as the future of work. Members were frustrated by the variations in the forms and policies on flexible working arrangements (FWA). FICSA wanted to contribute by sharing its recommendations and requests on mental health and work–life balance. The President asked the Chair to ensure that democratically elected staff representatives took part in every stage of discussions on sexual harassment and racism.
45. The HLCM Chair replied that her work involved partnership with the three staff federations, each of which had its own constituency. She welcomed FICSA’s inputs on, for example, FWA and the future of work, pledged that HLCM would step up its efforts on mental health and noted that working with a wider range of stakeholders would be particularly useful in tackling racism.

Statement from UN GLOBE

46. UN GLOBE Treasurer Anna Giudice (IOM) congratulated FICSA on its seventieth anniversary and reminded the Council that UN GLOBE, established in 1997 to advocate equality for and to oppose discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (one's sexual or gender identity) and intersex (LGBTQI) staff in the UN Common System, had chapters with coordinators in over 30 agencies, funds and programmes and duty stations and requests to establish chapters in over 10 more duty stations. The important partnership with FICSA and other staff federations had helped UN GLOBE's Board and coordinators to ensure greater inclusion of issues that affect LGBTQI staff in many policy processes across the system. Her full statement can be accessed [here](#).
47. The memorandum of understanding ([MoU](#)) signed by FICSA and UN GLOBE in March 2020 expressed the partners' commitment to working together to actively defend and advocate for LGBTQI UN staff, encourage diversity across organizations with FICSA members and combat discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in the workplace. They had agreed to work together to promote a more inclusive culture for LGBTQI staff in the UN workplaces and to convey the views of such staff to management and relevant high-level bodies, with FICSA consulting UN GLOBE as required.
48. UN GLOBE sought FICSA's support in pursuing five priorities:
 - a. advancing rights and equity for LGBTQI staff in efforts to advance staff rights in general, for example, in the area of parental leave;
 - b. taking account of LGBTQI staff's special concerns and risks in the implementation of policies on mobility, to ensure that all staff in the same duty station have equal conditions of service, and considering the rights of LGBTQI staff when classifying family and hardship duty stations;
 - c. including trans and gender-non-conforming staff, which required using inclusive language and moving away from binary language, recognizing self-identified name, gender and pronouns, respecting staff's privacy and confidentiality, and focusing particularly on mobility, access to gender-affirming health care and protection against discrimination and harassment;
 - d. ensuring safety and security, and access to medical care for LGBTQI staff, particularly for transgender and gender-non-conforming staff, as described in UN GLOBE's comprehensive [Recommendations for an inclusive workplace for trans and gender non-conforming staff members, dependents, and other stakeholders of the UN System](#); and
 - e. advocating for UN GLOBE coordinators to have staff capacity assigned by the UN system.
49. The UN GLOBE Treasurer invited Council members to reach out UN GLOBE if they wished to establish a new chapter in their organizations.
50. The FICSA President welcomed the UN GLOBE statement, noting that cooperation started long before the signing of the MoU, which had led to concerted efforts towards the recognition of same sex and domestic partners by the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF). In addition, UN GLOBE had provided valuable support to FICSA in establishing its position on parental leave.

Election of Council officers, adoption of the agenda and credentials

51. As officers for the 75th session, the Council elected Rola Khreis (IAEA) as Chair of the Council, and Jakob Skoet (AP-in-FAO) and Hamidou Bague (WHO/AFRO), as the first and second vice-chairs, respectively. The Council also approved the appointment of Mary Stewart Burgher as rapporteur, and that of Ahmad Mazrui and Lydia Moser (IAEA) as its polling officers.
52. The Council adopted its [agenda](#) as presented (Annex 1).
53. FICSA General Secretary Cosimo Melpignano (UNGSC) noted that, out of 31 full members, 24 were physically present at the Council; three attended virtually and four (IARC, ITLOS, UNRWA and UNWTO) were absent. The list of participants comprises Annex 11. The FICSA General Secretary also welcomed the presence of five consultative members – AMFIE, EBRD, EMBL, FAFICS and UNFCU – and one observer – FUNSA Guinea.
54. The General Secretary led the Council in welcoming two new full members: ITLOS (Hamburg) and UNICTF (Valencia) to FICSA.

Report of the Executive Committee for 2021–2022 (February 2021–April 2022)

55. The FICSA President thanked all ExCom officers and the FICSA Secretariat for their support. As described in its [report](#), ExCom had prioritized meetings with members in the past year, meeting 57 times with full members in various configurations and five times with heads of delegations. Some innovations due to COVID, such as virtual meetings, would continue.
56. ExCom had also represented FICSA members in a variety of arenas: at formal, high-level meetings with ICSC, HLCM, the UN Joint Staff Pension Board (UNJSPB) and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. ExCom had taken part in three ICSC sessions and the meetings of its working groups on salary survey methodologies, parental leave, the contractual framework and review of field duty stations. It hoped a final agreement would be reached on parental leave in 2022, although discussions on the contractual framework remained difficult. ExCom had observer status at HLCM, and was pressing for a more active role. It actively participated in the participants representatives group of UNJSPB and was an observer at its meetings. The FICSA President called on members to find out the names and views of those represented them on that body.
57. ExCom engaged with the HR Network on issues related to staff safety, particularly in areas embroiled in armed conflict. The OHS Forum and the Mental Health Strategy Implementation Board had focused on mental health. FICSA was building its expertise in security issues with a view to increasing capacity and participation at IASMN sessions.
58. Efforts to complete an agreement on cost-sharing to release FICSA officers from their regular duties had taken up a great deal of time. HLCM had insisted on unanimous agreement on that issue, and 29 of 31 members had agreed. While no final decision had been made when the President gave her report, the Council was delighted to

receive a letter from HLCM before the close of its deliberations, declaring that agreement had been reached and the cost-sharing arrangement would soon be implemented.

59. Finally, ExCom was taking part in the review of the jurisdictional setup of the UN Common System, to be addressed by the Standing Committee on Legal Issues, and had cooperative agreements with the two sister staff federations, FICSA lawyers, UN Globe, the ILO training Centre and the UN International Computing Centre (UNICC).

FICSA cooperation with the other staff federations

60. The 75th Council addressed FICSA's relations with the two other staff federations that were parties to the 2020 [agreement](#) – (the Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System – CCISSUA – and the United Nations International Civil Servants Federation – UNISERV – in two plenary sessions. In plenary, the FICSA President reported on continued work with CCISUA and UNISERV, including close cooperation on the ICSC working groups on parental leave and contractual framework, and the preparation of a joint statement on the classification of duty stations. She urged ExCom to continue fostering collegial relations with both federations where possible.

61. In reply, speakers noted that the lack of a united front weakened staff federations' positions in relation to ICSC and HLCM, and congratulated ExCom on its achievements in strengthening relationships with HLCM, which showed why FICSA membership gave good value for money. Another delegate had heard of examples of retaliation against and intimidation of staff representatives, and suggested exploring ways to counteract it.

62. FICSA had alerted members to an additional [message](#) from the Representative of the Secretary General for Investment of the Assets of the UNJSPF/Chief, Office of Investment Management (OIM) on 17 March. FICSA's position on the issue was shared by FAFICS and UNISERV, and the majority of the participants representatives on UNJSPB.

[Presentation](#) of the Office of Investment Management of the UNJSPF

63. Making a presentation to the Council over video link, the Chief, OIM, Pedro Guazo, reported that OIM's long-term objective was an annualized 3.5% real rate of return on UNJSPF's investments. The rate had been 4.26% as of 31 December 2021. Each of OIM's three teams – risk management and compliance, investments and operations – had made important steps in pursuing that goal. In nominal terms, OIM had achieved amazing returns in recent years. UNJSPF had increased in value by 26% since 2019. The current total value was around US\$ 85 billion, and total liabilities as of 2019 were US\$ 65 billion.

64. OIM's strategy for 2022 comprised action:

- to support the UN Secretary-General's three central priorities: helping countries to recover from the pandemic and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, building sustained momentum to implement the Paris Agreement on Climate Change;

- fully to implement new asset allocation and benchmarks between March and May 2022; and
 - to continue consolidating OIM’s Cultural Transformation Plan in partnership with UN staff
65. Benchmarking would be applied to both equities and fixed-income, which had historically underperformed. OIM had told the General Assembly in 2021 that improving performance to meet the long-term objective required three things: changing the benchmark, increasing the staff of OIM from 8 to 12 (currently being recruited) and allowing the team to use all their tools at their disposal, which included the use of external managers for a short time to manage 18% of portfolio (US\$16 billion – 65% of the fixed-income portfolio) in order to close the gap in returns. External managers had been used for such purposes for decades.
66. Unfortunately, what the Chief, OIM called “an organized misinformation campaign” had charged that the use of external managers was the first step in the total outsourcing of UNJSPF investment. It was not; it was merely one tactic to ensure that UNJSPF met its goals. The Chief, OIM thanked FICSA, FAFICS and UNISERV for their support in counteracting the misinformation. UNJSPF was probably in its strongest position ever in both financial and management terms. As explained in the recent [message](#) from Chief, OIM, the investment program would be delayed from 1 June to 1 September 2022, to ensure all stakeholders’ confidence in it. In the meantime, UNJSPB would hold a series of eight live information sessions, of 30 minutes each, which would be recorded for easier access.
67. The FICSA President noted that participants representatives on UNJSPB were confident about the proposal, and FICSA shared their confidence. She invited delegates to ask questions and follow up in writing if they wished.
68. Delegates asked what the maximum drawdown from the past had been, how assets were allocated between traditional and non-traditional assets and what using external managers to manage a portion of the portfolio meant in practical terms. A speaker expressed concern about the damage to UNJSPF’s reputation done by the current rumours, urged UNJSPB to keep issuing information bulletins and praised the 2021 return on investment as a great achievement.
69. The Chief invited all delegates to go to UNJSPB’s [website](#), where they could to see the changes in the value of investments over the past 30 years. UNJSPB publicly listed the value of each part of portfolio every Monday afternoon, and gave the latest information available on every topic. He invited delegates to contact him for any further information or directions. The plan to use external managers temporarily to handle the fixed-income part of portfolio was not outsourcing. There would be no job losses or permanent changes in management.
70. In response to a further question, the Chief, OIM explained that the Risk and Compliance Committee would oversee the plan in the same way as all the others. UNJSPB had full access to and control over all assets, no matter who managed them. The accounts were presented in accordance with recognized accounting principles and meeting the highest standards used. The accounts were also audited.

Election of Executive Committee officers and regional representatives for 2022–2023 (April 2022–February 2023)

71. The Council Chairperson announced the nominations received (in alphabetical order) for election to the Executive Committee for 2022–2023 (see [FICSA/C/75/5.Rev1](#)). In plenary, the candidates briefly outlined the strengths that they could bring to the offices that they sought, and their priorities for the coming year. Table 1 lists the candidates for the Executive Committee and Regional Representative positions, and those who were elected.

Table 1. Candidates for the Executive Committee and Regional Representative positions, and those elected

Offices	Candidates (organizations)	Those elected (organizations)
President	Tanya Quinn-Maguire (UNAIDS)	Tanya Quinn-Maguire (UNAIDS)
Treasurer	Jerome Zanga Foe (WHO/HQ)	Jerome Zanga Foe (WHO/HQ)
Member for Compensation Issues	No candidate	No candidate
Member for Regional and Field Issues	Anthony Karanja Ndinguri (ICAO)	Anthony Karanja Ndinguri (ICAO)
Regional Representative for Africa	Harris Benito Koubemba Mona (WHO/AFRO)	Harris Benito Koubemba Mona (WHO/AFRO)
Regional Representative for Americas	Véronique Allain (SCBD)	Véronique Allain (SCBD)

Approval of the decisions from the reports and the election of chairs and vice-chairs of FICSA standing committees

72. Before and during the 75th Council, all delegates took part in FICSA’s eight standing committees on Legal Questions, Human Resources Management, Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety, Conditions in the Field, General Service Questions, Professional Salaries and Allowances, Staff–Management Relations; and Programme Budget, Administration and Strategy. The last of these was a newly established standing committee formed by combining two ad-hoc committees, (on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, and Strategic Development), as per the recommendations of the FICSA functional review. There was some debate as to whether strategy and budget/administration should be discussed in a joint committee, While some argued that that might dilute the strategic focus, others thought that strategy could not be decided independent of consideration of the budget and FICSA’s capacity for implementation. It was decided that the new standing committee would be pilot-tested for one year.

73. In addition to meeting individually, two standing committees held a joint session on FWA, post-COVID working culture and the future of the UN workplace.

74. All committees debated relevant issues on their agendas, including discussing the actions taken to implement the [decisions](#) of the 74th FICSA Council; and made recommendations on those issues and drafted reports for the Council to consider. Comprising annexes 3–10, these reports list each committee’s membership, describe its deliberations, give its recommendations and list the elected officers and core-group membership for 2022.
75. As was customary, a member of each committee presented its report, recommendations and future membership to all delegates in the Council’s final plenary session. The Council took note of the committee reports, discussed and amended the recommendations submitted as necessary, and then adopted them as the decisions presented here. The Council also approved the chairs and vice-chairs nominated by the standing committees for the period 2022–2023.

Legal Questions

76. The Standing Committee on Legal Questions addressed and made recommendations on a range of topics. For example, it reviewed and analysed the proposals by the Working Group of the United Nations Legal Advisers Networks on the Review of the Jurisdictional Setup of the United Nations Common System. It suggested establishing a FICSA working group for members whose organizations had moved from the jurisdiction of ILOAT to that of UNAT, and reviewed the latest updates on teleworking, protecting staff representatives against retaliation and harassment, and the need to update the FICSA [Statutes](#) to reflect the HLCM cost-sharing agreement. The Standing Committee’s full report comprises Annex 3.

Decisions

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should continue to keep members informed, to encourage them to engage in dialogue with their respective administrations about the jurisdictional review and to report to the Executive Committee.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should:**
 - a. **establish at the earliest opportunity a working group of member organizations that had recently transferred jurisdiction from the ILO Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) to the UN Administrative Tribunal (UNAT) to monitor procedures, respect for the consultative process and other relevant rules, and to provide support to staff representatives; and**
 - b. **maintain close contact with ICAO, sharing lessons learned and the outcome of its negotiations with Office of Staff Legal Assistance (OSLA), comparing its case with those of other agencies that moved from ILOAT to UNAT, so that the appeals of its members within the two-tiered system would be admissible to UNAT.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should issue a statement making all administrations aware of the need to avoid discrimination, retaliation and harassment against staff association representatives; and to protect their rights to career development and to proper release conditions while carrying out their functions, reminding participating organizations of UN administrative instruction [ST/AI/293](#) of 15 July 1982 on facilities to be provided to staff**

representatives, which was one example of how staff representation should be considered.

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should start as soon as possible to amend Article 6 of the [FICSA Statutes](#), through a postal vote in accordance with Article 25, to specify that new applicants for full membership of FICSA must possess agreement from their organization to participate in the HLCM cost-sharing agreement to cover the cost of releasing the FICSA President and General Secretary from their regular duties.**

Human Resources Management

77. The Standing Committee on Human Resources Management tackled a range of important topics. After reviewing the proposals of the Task Force on the Future of Work for the UN Workforce to move to agile working contracts, it continued to support the existing contractual framework (fixed-term/temporary/continuous contracts) as fit for purpose. It discussed ways to tackle concerns about the working conditions of contracted personnel, whether consultants, agency workers, experts or others, and urged FICSA members to exchange information on developments in determining the post-COVID working culture to ensure harmonization was achieved across the UN system. The Standing Committee's full report comprises Annex 4.

Decisions

- **FICSA should maintain its position with regard to the contractual framework.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should establish a technical committee on contractual personnel issues on a pilot basis for the 76th session of the FICSA Council, with a view to converting it to a permanent technical committee should its value be sustainable beyond the pilot phase.**

Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety

78. The Standing Committee considered the efforts made to implement the [UN Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy](#) and identified key elements in implementation. It reviewed concerns about the handling of investment in UNJSPF, and debated the next steps to take in surveying the various medical insurance plans of UN organizations. The Standing Committee discussed the efforts made to implement the [UN Disability Inclusion Strategy](#), reviewed the discussions of the OHS Forum, and listed organizations' efforts to support staff's wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic and special problems related to it. The Standing Committee's full report comprises Annex 5.

Decisions

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should continue active participation in the UN Mental Health and Well-Being Implementation Board, and share the guidelines for the implementation of the [UN Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy](#) with the FICSA membership once finalized.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should bring any concerns of FICSA members to the attention of the leadership of the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF), including the Chief Executive Officer or the Representative of the Secretary-General for the investment of assets.**

- **The FICSA Secretariat should inform members about the [UN Disability and Inclusion Strategy](#), and encourage staff representatives to learn about it and become involved in efforts in their organizations to develop strategies that would lead to the inclusion of staff living with all forms of disability.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should continue to participate in and follow the progress of the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Forum’s discussions and share with FICSA members the Forum’s final recommendations to the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM).**
- **FICSA members should verify the implementation of the [OHS framework](#) within their organizations, including the establishment of advisory bodies for consultation/negotiation with management.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should continue to gather information from the FICSA membership on lessons learnt and problems experienced in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including on cost-related issues.**

Conditions of Service in the Field

79. In addition to reviewing the actions taken to follow up on the decisions of the 74th FICSA Council, the Standing Committee on Conditions of Service in the Field discussed the agendas of recent meetings of IASMN, pointed out continuing problems with the process for classifying duty stations according to their level of hardship, and identified elements of the post-pandemic working environment that needed to be watched to ensure that the UN fulfilled its duty of care to staff in the field. The Standing Committee’s full report comprises Annex 6.

Decisions

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should:**
 - a. **continue being actively involved in the sessions of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) to be held until the 2023 FICSA Council; and**
 - b. **take the necessary steps to make available on the FICSA website, for easy access to all members, the policies of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) on road safety, the physical security for UN premises, aviation safety and fire safety.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should request that staff representatives be considered to play a support role for affected staff members and their families involved in a hostage-incident-management situation.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should:**
 - a. **alert all stakeholders (International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), UN organizations and other staff federations) to the importance of the hardship-classification exercise at all levels, in sessions of ICSC, the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM), the Human Resources (HR) Network, and the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Forum;**
 - b. **work with other staff federations to build the knowledge of all categories of staff posted in the field and regions, and to raise their awareness of the importance of**

providing as much data as possible in the hardship questionnaires, to accurately capture the local living conditions; and

- c. in its efforts to raise awareness, spell out how to initiate, where necessary, the review of ICSC decisions on hardship classification.**
- The FICSA Executive Committee should:**
 - a. monitor the situation to prevent the establishment of a two-tier system in which staff based in headquarters were free to work remotely while staff in smaller duty stations in the field had to work from their offices;**
 - b. engage with the regional representatives to advocate good collaboration and communication between on-site and remote-working staff; and**
 - c. continue advocating the duty of care to provide a safe working environment for all staff and preserve their health and well-being.**

General Service Questions

80. The Standing Committee on General Service Questions stressed the importance of training the members of local salary-survey committees in the methodology to be used well before a survey started. It identified challenges, developments and best practices in GS staff recruitment and stressed the benefits of being part of the [Inter-Organization Agreement concerning Transfer, Secondment or loan of Staff among the Organizations applying the UN Common System of Salaries and Allowances](#). It adopted the recommendation made by the Permanent Technical Committee of the Standing Committee on General Service Questions (PTC/GSQ). The Standing Committee's full report comprises Annex 7.

Decisions

- The FICSA Executive Committee should allocate funds in the amount of CHF 20,000 from the FICSA Training Fund, if needed, to update its training materials on GS salary-survey methodologies and organize the training of trainers as soon as the new methodology was finalized.**
- In view of the upcoming comprehensive review of the UN compensation package by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), the FICSA Executive Committee should continue monitoring ICSC reviews regarding the GS compensation package and keep FICSA membership duly informed.**
- The FICSA Executive Committee should ask FICSA members to share their recruitment policies, which would allow the core group members of the Standing Committee on General Service Questions to identify best practices on recruitment to share with FICSA membership, and actively encourage representatives of staff associations to take part as early as possible in the selection process and, as appropriate, in their organizations.**

Professional Salaries and Allowances

81. The Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances discussed the continuing difficulties with the Education Grant reimbursement policy in relation to the costs of schools in Montreal, Canada, and ICSC's upcoming comprehensive review of the UN compensation package. It highlighted the need to develop the capacity of FICSA

members to engage meaningfully in the implementation of COL surveys across all duty stations and organizations, and noted the lack of compensation for P staff who worked and travelled outside core working hours, during weekends and on holidays. The Standing Committee called for the revitalization of its Permanent Technical Committee (PSA/PTC); its full report comprises Annex 8.

Decisions

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should:**
 - a. **write to the heads of UN organizations in Montreal and their headquarters, requesting that all mandatory expenses required for a child’s full-time school attendance be fully considered and reimbursed in accordance with the Education Grant scheme as per [ST/AI/2018/1/Rev.1](#), section 3.1(b) and as per UNAT Judgment 2022-UNAT-1221; and**
 - b. **collect information from member organizations on the implementation of new sliding scale for the Education Grant and follow up at the ICSC session if necessary.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should:**
 - a. **develop a tabular-format summary of the changes made to the compensation package in the previous review, to serve as reference for the upcoming review (refer to [FICSA/C/75/PSA/CRP.01](#)), including a summary of the changes that have negatively or positively affected professional staff; and**
 - b. **continue to strengthen FICSA’s technical competence in compensation-package methodologies, through training given to Executive Committee, members of the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances and staff representatives; and by revitalizing the Standing Committee’s Permanent Technical Committee (PSA/PTC), to enable FICSA to effectively engage in the ICSC compensation-package review processes.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should:**
 - a. **continue to request that ICSC train local salary committees in preparation for the COL surveys planned for 2022–2023;**
 - b. **organize training sessions on the new COL methodology and operational rules for all FICSA members;**
 - c. **include at least two experts, if required, to accompany the FICSA delegation to the next ACPAQ meeting to review ICSC’s data analysis for the headquarters COL survey; and**
 - d. **monitor the rollout of future COL surveys, to ensure that agreed survey feasibility criteria are met.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should:**
 - a. **propose in relevant fora that measures should be put in place to ensure respect for established working hours, whether staff work from their usual workplaces or remotely;**

- b. collect information from member organizations on the rules and practices regarding additional compensation provided to P staff when they travelled during holidays and weekends, had to work long hours during the week or had to work during the weekend; and**
- c. once the analysis is ready, raise that matter in relevant fora to ensure that P staff were compensated for extra hours.**
- The FICSA Executive Committee should, with the support of the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances, arrange a training session for colleagues who would be interested in joining PSA/PTC.**

Staff–Management Relations

82. The Standing Committee on Staff–Management Relations investigated the facilities and support that organizations provided to staff associations/unions, reviewed the progress of the cost-sharing agreement to release FICSA officers from their regular duties and sought ways to protect staff’s right to 60 days of accrued leave on separation. It stressed the need for all staff representatives to take proactive steps to keep informed about the financial status of their organizations, and sought information on how organizations handled any kind of harassment. Further, it stressed the need for a cooperation or recognition agreement to formalize the arrangement between a staff association/union and its organization/management, and expressed concern about the variations in the handling of overtime between organizations and between categories of staff. The Standing Committee’s full report comprises Annex 9.

Decisions

- The FICSA Secretariat should make the form created by the Standing Committee on Staff–Management Relations on arrangements for staff associations (facilities and support provided to staff associations by organizations) available on the website to all FICSA members to complete before each FICSA Council.**
- The FICSA Secretariat should post the official cost-sharing agreement for release of FICSA officers on the [website](#).**
- FICSA members should encourage staff representatives to educate themselves and build capacity on staff benefits and entitlements, through training or briefings, to become better able to advocate, protect and defend those benefits and entitlements within their organizations.**
- The FICSA Executive Committee should request members to share lists of actions, mechanisms, processes and best practices in how organizations address any kind of harassment.**

The FICSA Executive Committee should:

- a. update the database of the MoUs/cooperation or recognition agreements between staff associations/unions and organizations collected from its membership;**
- b. urge members to inform FICSA of any changes to existing agreements, so that they could be included in the database; and**

- c. **recommend members to use the standard template or model document of an agreement as a resource.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should collect all policies related to overtime from the FICSA membership, so that the core group of the Standing Committee on Staff–Management Relations could carry out necessary analysis and discuss at the 2023 Council.**

Joint session on flexible work

83. The standing committees on Staff–Management Relations and Human Resources Management held a joint session to establish a baseline, and to address both the challenges of and best practices in the development, negotiation and implementation of policies on flexible work in organizations. The participants reviewed the main points of CEB’s [Model Policy on Flexible Work](#), which was not universally applicable, and shared both negative and positive experiences with flexible work in their organizations, listed key factors to consider in negotiations with management on a policy on flexible work and identified challenges in applying such policies. The full report of the joint sessions can be found as an appendix to annexes 4 and 9.

Decisions

- **The FICSA Secretariat should create a database of policies on flexible work from information supplied by the membership.**
- **The FICSA membership should monitor and collect the perceived positive and negative aspects of the application of those policies in their organizations and share their experiences at a joint SMR/HRM session at the 77th FICSA Council in 2024.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should communicate to the senior management of member organizations the urgency of developing and adopting policies on flexible work.**
- **The FICSA Secretariat should note the need for a joint session of the standing committees on Human Resources Management and Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety at the 76th FICSA Council in 2023, to address the mental health issues related to flexible work.**

Programme Budget, Administration and Strategy

84. The full report of the new Standing Committee on Programme Budget, Administration and Strategy comprises Annex 11. The Standing Committee’s creation was one of the recommendations of FICSA’s functional review: the previous ad hoc committees on Strategic Development and Administrative and Budgetary Matters were combined into a single standing committee that would work throughout the year. That arrangement was pilot-tested at the 75th FICSA Council, to enable it to evaluate the merger at the end of the session and decide whether to continue or split it into two committees as before.

Strategic development

85. The Standing Committee reviewed the steps taken to implement the [FICSA Communication Strategy](#), and welcomed its recent social-media initiative. It supported

the addition of social-media communications to FICSA’s work, although some members expressed concerns about the costs, target audiences and messaging.

86. Responding to the FICSA President’s request for guidance on how to craft a strategic approach to relations with sister staff federations, in order to continue to enhance cooperation, the Standing Committee praised ExCom’s positive approach and agreed that FICSA needed to maintain actions to preserve the tripartite agreement among the three staff federations.

Administrative and budgetary matters

87. The Standing Committee considered the independent reviewer’s report of the FICSA financial statements for 2020 ([FICSA/C/75/PBAS/1](#)); the Treasurer’s report for 2021 ([FICSA/C/75/PBAS/2](#)); reports on the status of the Termination Indemnity and Installation Fund, Legal Defence Fund, Staff Development Fund, Reserve and Training Fund ([FICSA/C/75/PBAS/3](#)); and the contributions received from member associations/unions, associate members and consultative bodies up to 31 December 2021 ([FICSA/C/75/PBAS/5](#)). The use of reserve funds had enabled FICSA to keep its dues collection lower than would otherwise have been the case for several years, but that practice could not continue indefinitely. FICSA therefore needed to maintain the reserves while avoiding excessive increases in dues, and the budget needed to include adjustments for pricing.

88. The Standing Committee presented to the Council the proposed budget and the scale of contributions for 2022 (documents [FFICSA/C/75/PBAS/4](#) and [FICSA/C/75/PBAS/6](#); see also Appendix 2 and 3 to Annex 11, respectively). The proposed budget for 2022 (see Table 2 below) was calculated at CHF 499,500, similar to the 2020 budget level (CHF 482,285). The 2021 budget (CHF 431,180) had been exceptional, as a result of the pandemic and its impact on international travel. In 2022, amounts for all three chapters were increased from those for 2021. The increase for 2022 was in line with discussions during the 74th Council, which foresaw that the budget would return to 2020 levels upon resumption of face-to-face meetings and workshops (Appendix 2).

89. The Standing Committee also discussed other possible revenue streams for FICSA, in addition to membership dues. Delegates suggested that FICSA explore options for both securing new funding sources and asking members to contribute to an Extrabudgetary Fund, whether earmarked or not, in funds or in kind.

Draft programme and budget 2021–2022 and membership contributions to FICSA for 2022

90. The Council took note of the proposed budget, and adopted the budget shown in Table 2 (see also Appendix 2 to Annex 11) and the scale of contributions (see Appendix 3 to Annex 11).

Table 2. Summary of the proposed FICSA budget for 2022, with changes from the budget for 2021

Chapter	Title	Amounts (CHF)
1	FICSA representation	84,000 (increase of 30,400)
2	FICSA Council and ExCom	36,000 (increase of 30,000)

3	FICSA Administration	379,500 (increase of 7,920)
Total		499,500

91. Because expected revenue for 2022 was lower than the budget total, creating a gap of CHF 139,500, the FICSA Treasurer had proposed that CHF 113,779 be taken from the unspent balance from 2021 (CHF 49,779) and from the funds balance (CHF 64,000) to keep membership dues at similar levels to 2021, with a slight organic increase of 4%. The Council approved that proposal and the use of CHF 25,000 to cover the cost of discounts offered for early payment of dues, which was reflected in the budget.

Decisions

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should continue its social-media communications initiative as a one-year project, during which it would:**
 - a. **define its terms of reference and clarify its target groups, messages and campaigns; the place of that work within FICSA’s priorities; and key performance indicators;**
 - b. **seek volunteers in FICSA member organizations to take on or assist with the social-media function; and**
 - c. **report on its effectiveness and way forward to the 76th Council.**
- **With regard to relations with sister staff federations, the FICSA Executive Committee should:**
 - a. **request FICSA heads of delegations to review and evaluate the [CCISUA/FICSA/UNISERV Cooperation Agreement](#), and send their specific proposals to strengthen the agreement, if any, to ExCom by the end of the third quarter of 2022; and**
 - b. **before the 76th FICSA Council, arrange a meeting among the leadership teams of the three federations, along with heads of delegations of FICSA member organizations, to evaluate the relationship and decide how to move forward together.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should invite the auditor to address future Councils virtually.**
- **The FICSA Treasurer should, with the Heads of Delegations:**
 - a. **conduct an analysis on the use of the reserve fund, forecast changes in levels of dues, and provide proposals on the ways forward for consideration by the FICSA membership; and**
 - b. **develop proposals for resource mobilization.**
- **The 75th FICSA Council should approve the draft Programme Budget for 2022 in the amount of CHF 499,500.**
- **The 75th FICSA Council should approve the Scale of Contributions for 2022.**

Date and place of the next Council session

92. The General Secretary announced the date and venue for the 76th Council session: 6–10 February 2023 at the UNICTF premises in Valencia, Spain.

Other business and the closing of the session

93. As the Council had no further business, The FICSA General Secretary praised the FICSA family for its strength and cohesiveness, and extended his thanks to the officers of all the standing committees.

94. The FICSA President thanked the General Secretary, the members of the Executive Committee and the Secretariat for their work, including efforts to prepare for the session; the Chairperson for her hard work; the delegates for all their efforts, particularly in the standing committees, and the FICSA trainers helping to “build back”. Securing the cost-sharing agreement was a suitable way to celebrate FICSA’s seventieth anniversary. With permission of the Chairperson, she then closed the 75th session of the FICSA Council.

Annex 1. Plenary Programme for the 75th FICSA Council

1. Opening of the session
2. Credentials
3. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chairs and approval of the appointment of the Rapporteur
4. Adoption of the agenda
5. Organization of the Council's work
6. Constitutional matters
7. Questions relating to membership status in FICSA (changes in membership)
8. Report of the Executive Committee for 2021–2022 (February 2021–February 2022)
9. FICSA cooperation with the other staff federations
10. Election of the Executive Committee officers and regional representatives for 2022–2023 (April 2022–February 2023)
11. Approval of the session report
 - (a) Legal Questions
 - (b) Human Resources Management
 - (c) Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety
 - (d) Conditions of Service in the Field
 - (e) General Service Questions (including PTC/GSQ)
 - (f) Professional Salaries and Allowances
 - (g) Staff/Management Relations
12. Programme Budget, Administrative Committee (PBAC)
 - (a) Draft programme and budget 2022 – 2023
 - (b) The scale of membership contributions to FICSA for 2022
14. Election of Standing Committee officers for 2022–2023 (April 2022–February 2023)
15. Date and place of the next Council session
16. Other business
17. Closing of the session

Annex 2. Discussion with ICSC: written questions and answers

*The questions asked by delegates in the discussion are numbered and given in black text; the answers from ICSC Chair Larbi Djacta and Chief of ICSC's Cost-of-Living Division Ibrahim Yansaneh are given in **blue**.*

1. The UN General Assembly Resolution 76/240 requested the ICSC to undertake a comprehensive assessment and review of the compensation package on a five-year cycle.
 - a. What are the ICSC's preliminary plans and timeline?
 - b. Will you share with us the lessons learnt from the 2015 comprehensive review and take this into account in the future survey?
 - c. We have seen that organizations and duty stations have interpreted and implemented the ICSC compensation package differently. How do you ensure that the ICSC compensation package is implemented consistently to ensure coherence and stability of the UN Common System?

Indeed, there were a couple of replies that were out of the general line but generally, the organizations expressed similar views about the comprehensive package and concluded that the goals of the review were met overall.

There is no question that the package is implemented consistently – we do not have any evidence that this is not the case. To make sure this continues to be the case, we will continue to stay in close contact with the organizations and the staff and keep their feedback under review.

2. We take note that the baseline cost-of-living survey for headquarters duty stations was completed.
 - a. Can you inform us of the next steps?

The next steps are as follows:

- (i) Processing of survey data for all nine baseline cost-of-living surveys at HQ locations; multi-level reviews and cross-validation (**by end of first week of May 2022**);
 - (ii) Desk reviews of the secretariat's analysis of the data by independent expert representing each HQ duty station (**25 April–27 May 2022**);
 - (iii) 43rd session of ACPAQ to review the results of the surveys (**6–13 June 2022**);
 - (iv) ACPAQ's recommendations are submitted for the ICSC's consideration (**July 2022**); and
 - (v) Implementation of the survey results (**to be determined**).
- b. What is the timeline and process to implement the results?

Along with the approval, by the ICSC, of the recommendations of ACPAQ regarding the survey results, will be a decision regarding the date of implementation of the survey results. It has been tentatively set to **1 August 2022**.

- c. When will the cost-of-living survey for the rest of the duty stations on this round of surveys begin?

The 2021 round of surveys will be rolled out to the rest of the duty stations as soon as the results of the surveys at headquarters duty stations are approved by the Commission in July 2022. Surveys for most of the group I duty stations will be scheduled in the autumn of 2022. The schedule for group II duty stations is already finalized and on the ICSC website. The surveys will be conducted under the methodology approved by the Commission for the 2021 round of surveys, but with some aspects adapted to the specific circumstances of field duty stations.

- d. We take note that the 2016 round of surveys is ongoing, will staff benefit from the revised Operational Rules and Cost of Living methodology that was approved recently in the 91st ICSC Session?

The revised operational rules will be applied only for surveys conducted under the 2021 round. Therefore, staff will not benefit from these operational rules for any survey conducted under the 2016 round. However, it should be noted that the special measures that have been in operation since May 2020, offer an even better salary protection mechanism than the revised operational rules.

3. The review of the General Service Local Salary Survey methodology is underway, and the seventh meeting will take place in May.

- a. What is the timeline of this review?

The WG has made a lot of progress, with most of the major concerns covered. There are still pending issues and some that may need to be revisited in the light of the recent decision on the external data pilot project. We hope to finalize the review as soon as possible (hopefully, report to the GA this fall) but some flexibility may have to be applied to the timeline depending on the progress which the next meeting of the WG achieves.

- b. While this review is underway, there are no Comprehensive Salary Surveys at Headquarters duty stations. How do you ensure the Interim Adjustments are done systematically and automatically as stipulated in the methodology?

The HQ interim adjustment mechanism is established at the time of a comprehensive survey. It is a well-set arrangement which has worked well, and we are not aware of any problems with it.

- c. Why are the Headquarters and non-headquarters duty station treated inequitably in terms of interim adjustments, i.e., it is automated at headquarters but not in non-headquarters?

“Inequitably” is not the right word. “Differently” would better describe the situation. Without going into much detail, these differences are justified by varied situations on the local markets. In both cases, HQ and field interim adjustments are supposed to be done as frequently as the local practice provides.

Interim adjustments at HQ locations are conducted based on indexation. This method, decided at the time of the comprehensive survey, does not require the participation of the LSSC [local salary survey committee] for its execution. Once the index or a combination of indices, proposed by the LSSC, are approved, the annual interim adjustments can be executed and updated scales are announced by the responsible agency. In contrast, at most of non-HQ locations, mini-surveys have been selected as the method for

implementing interim adjustments. This method produces the most precise results, but it is also the most labour intensive and requires the active participation of the LSSC.

- d. How do you ensure salary of staff in non-headquarters duty stations were adjusted accordingly throughout the pandemic, followed by the crises in Europe.

Again, rather than shifting this responsibility to the responsible agency, the LSSCs should ensure that mini-surveys are done as expeditiously and as accurately as possible. Generally, it is the responsibility of the LSSC to keep the responsible agency informed of the evolving situation.

During the last couple of years, due to the restrictions related to the COVID pandemic, interim adjustments at many non-HQ locations were conducted based on indexation. Flexibility to change the modality of interim adjustments in between comprehensive surveys was approved by the Chair of the Commission.

It should also be mentioned that the Commission has already approved the application of special measures with immediate effect, which relaxed the thresholds for their implementation. It should be borne in mind, however, that special measures are not intended to fully insulate staff from local conditions but, rather, provide temporary relief in extraordinary situations.

- e. We see added transparency in the Cost-of-Living Surveys for International Professionals, i.e., using observers on the LSC, the ability of LSCs to appoint independent experts to review the data etc. Can we expect a similar degree of transparency for the Local Salary Surveys as well?

Local salary surveys are one of the most transparent processes in the system, where both the organizations and staff representatives participate in every step of the exercise. In contrast with the main information required to conduct a cost-of-living survey, i.e. prices of goods and services, salary surveys are conducted based on salary information collected from employers. Given the confidentiality of the employer data, the use of observers, consultants and independent experts is out of the question – the methodology is quite clear about this. Members of LSSCs have access to all survey information and they execute written confidentiality pledges.

- f. We have seen many delays in completion of Interim or Comprehensive Salary Surveys during the pandemic. Is the ICSC coordinating with the OHRM [UN Office of Human Resources Management] and Steering Committee to ensure completion of the surveys in a timely manner, to correspond to changes in the labour market after the pandemic?

ICSC participates in the HQ Steering Committee to ensure consistent implementation of the methodology. Yes, indeed, some surveys are delayed but mainly because some information needed to complete the survey is missing. The new process is likely to speed up the process. But in any case, all positive changes to the salary scales are implemented retroactively, while negative adjustment are only done prospectively.

- 4. As the global economy has not yet fully recovered from the pandemic, the effects of the war in Ukraine will propagate far and wide, adding to price pressures and exacerbating significant policy challenges. In this context, the war will slow economic growth and increase inflation which has become a clear and present danger for many

countries.

Could you please explain how the ICSC is addressing the issue of high inflation in many duty stations including European Duty Stations. We understand that the Commission has established operational rules to adjust the salary of Staff in the Professional category. However, the salary of staff in the GS categories are adjusted annually through the interim adjustments. Does the ICSC foresee similar measures for staff in the GS categories to mitigate the impact of high inflation in Europe?

GS salaries are adjusted either by indexation or mini-surveys. Salaries at those duty stations who decided to use indexation at the time of their last comprehensive survey, will be adjusted based on the movement of the selected index or combination of indices. In most cases, it will be the movement of a [consumer price index] the basis for the following interim adjustments. For these duty stations, the impact of inflation will be captured directly into the interim adjustments.

At locations where the LSSC proposed the use of mini-surveys as the basis for interim adjustments, salary movement from retained employers will be used to adjust GS salaries in between comprehensive surveys. It must be noted that employees at those retained employers, selected by the LSSC, face the same economic conditions experienced by GS staff. Retained employers, in order to maintain their competitive level in the labour market, often update their salaries or implement ad-hoc measures to partially protect the purchasing power of their employees. By conducting mini-surveys or implementing special measures, the salaries of GS staff maintain their competitive level at the duty station.

As for Professional staff salaries, inflation is accounted for with the use of consumer price indices (CPIs), along with exchange-rate movements, in the adjustment of the post adjustment index (PAI) on a monthly basis. For extreme cases of inflation, such as Lebanon, there is an existing operational rule (the One Month Rule), that has been applied, resulting in an increase in the post-adjustment multiplier (PAM) from the 40s about two years ago to the 90s today! Furthermore, rising inflation in many European countries is the primary reason why the PAMs of all group I duty stations increased between 1.3% (Geneva) to 6.7% (Romania), following their statutory post adjustment classification reviews in February 2022.

5. Is it normal for the result of a GS salary survey to have a small increase to net salary, but a decrease for gross pensionable? If the survey was approved and retroactively applied to the effective date of the survey, what would be the implication of such a situation on the staff member's Pension contributions that had already been paid by the Organization? Will the Pension Fund have to refund the excess contribution back to the Organization or Staff Member?

The situation referred to in the question is rare. A decrease in the gross pensionable level may occur as a result of an increase in the non-pensionable component (NPC) or due to a change in the common scale of staff assessment (CSSA). Neither of the two situations is common. The NPC is updated every comprehensive survey based on the information collected from retained comparators, due to the buffer of 10% in its implementation (the first 10% difference between non-pensionable compensation compared and total compensation is disregarded), variations to the NPC are not common. In the case of the CSSA, it last was updated in 2018 for implementation in 2019. The revised CSSA could produce lower gross pensionable amounts at higher income levels.

In some rare cases, survey results may not be high enough to offset the effects of variations in NPC or CSSA producing the effect described in your question. In such situations, the responsible agency coordinates with the LSSC and local organizations the most appropriate way to implement such survey results. Retroactive increases of salaries are always preferred.

6. What measures or special measures exist in the Local Salary Survey methodology that can assist during this pandemic and economic crises situation where comparators are refusing, more than ever, to participate in comprehensive salary surveys and provide data for the survey. Can salaries be adjusted through indexation or other similar methods?

Salaries can be adjusted by indexation if such has been the modality for interim adjustments proposed by the LSSC at the time of the last comprehensive survey. Exceptionally, the modality for interim adjustments may change if it has been documented that the originally selected modality can no longer be followed. Interim adjustments are suspended six months prior to a comprehensive survey. Comprehensive surveys may be deferred at the request of the LSSC if the request is endorsed by the responsible agency and approved by the Chair of the Commission.

Moreover, the employer refusal can now be handled through the pilot application of external salary data, i.e. employer interview can now be replaced or supplemented by the use of external data.

7. Since the ICSC requires participation of international professional staff to ensure that reliable data is captured in cost of living and housing surveys, why not make the survey mandatory?

The approved guidelines and procedures call for staff participation in expenditure surveys to be voluntary, in line with the fundamental principles and best practices of official statistics. Under this circumstance, the best approach is for all stakeholders to implement the communication strategies and tools designed for the purpose of improving staff participation in surveys. The key is to convince staff of the direct connection between the information they provide, and the outcomes generated by the data they provide. The measurement of the cost of living in a duty station is as accurate as the data collected from staff, retail outlets, and other sources at the duty station. Such a communication strategy and collaborative engagement of local survey committees led to high response rates from the baselines cost-of-living surveys at headquarters locations in October and November 2022, notwithstanding the fact that most of these duty stations are complex in the sense that they host multiple organizations in multiple location. They should therefore work for the rest of the covered duty stations, which are much less complex.

8. What is the minimum threshold of internationally recruited staff who must partake in the ICSC cost-of-living surveys for it to be utilized?

The ICSC's broad guidelines call for a minimum of 70% response rates to its comprehensive cost-of-living surveys for the data generated to be considered of sufficient reliability to be utilized for the compilation of the post adjustment index. However, the ICSC makes extra efforts to analyse data from surveys even when the minimum threshold for the response rate is not achieved. These include bias analysis to ensure that the respondent sample is representative of the target population. When the response rate is so

low that the respondent sample is clearly not representative of the target population, the survey is cancelled and rescheduled.

9. Specialized agencies and other non-UN international organizations have their own Governing Bodies, that may decide not to implement ICSC and UN General Assembly recommendations. How does the ICSC ensure that all stakeholders, executive heads, staff federations, member states in different governing bodies are consulted in formulating its recommendations, and that it takes into account all views and the circumstances/mandate of each organization, to ensure the coherence of the UN Common System?
10. Is there a way to request for an administrative review of ICSC and OHRM's decisions regarding application of Special Measures such as converting local salary payments into USD without resorting to legal appeals at tribunals and other litigious process? Can you describe the process, for example the LSSC Chair and Responsible Agency should write to the ICSC and OHRM with facts as required in the Local Salary Survey Methodology to support such a request, and/or request for a fact-finding mission at the duty station?

It is a common misconception that ICSC is responsible for the application of special measures. Special measures are implemented only at duty stations surveyed under Methodology II; therefore, it is the responsible agency that decides on the approval of special measures.

A request for introducing a special measure is usually initiated by the LSSC which writes to the responsible agency and provides the supporting facts and documentation justifying a special measure. Facts leading to the implementation of special measures are normally presented to the Headquarters Steering Committee for consideration to ensure that they are in line with the guidelines of the methodology. Taking into account that special measures are implemented based on confidential information collected by the LSSC from retained comparators, care should be exercised in the dissemination of such information.

Annex 3. [Report of the Standing Committee on Legal Questions](#)

Annex 4. [Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Management](#)

Appendix 2. [Report of the Joint Session on Flexible Work](#)

Annex 5. [Report of the Standing Committee on Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety](#)

Annex 6. [Report of the Standing Committee on Field Issues](#)

Annex 7. [Report of the Standing Committee on General Service Questions](#)

Annex 8. [Report of the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances](#)

Annex. 9. [Report of the Standing Committee on Staff–Management Relations](#)

Annex 10. [Report of the Standing Committee on Programme Budget, Administration and Strategy](#)

Annex 11. [Council participants](#)
