

FICSA COUNCIL

Standing Committee on Conditions of Service in the Field

75th SESSION

Agenda Item 3: Summary Sheet

FICSA /C/75/FIELD/PA/3 - Summary of activities conducted by the FIELD SC (EXCOM Field & Chair/Vice-Chair of SC) (hardship classification process, IASMN sessions held in 2021 (33 & 34),

<input type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Information <input type="checkbox"/> For Decision	
Name of submitting member(s) & organization (s)	Véronique ALLAIN, EXCOM Member for Field and Regional Issues
Issue (title)	<p><i>Report from the FICSA ExCom and the Field SC on the activity undertaken during 2021:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Reporting back from the FICSA 74th Council;</i> b. <i>Nov-Dec 2021 - Annual Review of the ICSC Working Group for the classification of field duty stations according to the conditions of life and work for the Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) Region, the Countries in the list of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS Europe) and the Middle East Region;</i> c. <i>Brief summary of the 33rd and 34th IASMN Sessions.</i>
Issue description (including reach: global versus local)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision FICSA/C/74/D13 requested the ExCOM to launch a survey among the FICSA membership to assess the knowledge of the FICSA members about the hardship classification process and how much is known about the local living conditions at hardship duty stations. (short presentation by Véro) • Decision FICSA/74/D/14: the Federation continued being pro-active in receiving feedback from its members based in the field in order to better share these experiences with the ICSC TWG; • Decision FICSA/74/D/16: the FICSA ExCom was asked to work closely with UN GLOBE to identify key issues of concern related to the security and general living conditions of the LGBTQI UN community when deployed away from the HQ. The UN GLOBE colleagues were hard to get hold of during the year 2021 and it is only in Dec. 2021 that a meeting was finally held. • Decision FICSA/74/D/17: FICSA was encouraged to request membership in the MEDEVAC Task Force. But this was refused. • Decision FICSA/74/D/18: the FICSA ExCOM was asked to conduct a survey on the mobility policies and processes available among the FICSA membership. This did not happen because too many surveys were being launched from all parts of the UN in the year 2021. • The FICSA EXCOM Member for Field and Regional Issues was informed informally by colleagues based in duty stations away from the HQs that the website of the Federation is very informative with its e-learning tool

	<p>available at: https://ficsa.org/topics/hardship-classification-of-duty-stations.html .</p> <p>7 potential topics to be reported to the FIELD SC for IASMN 34 & 35 held in summer 2021 and Feb. 2022 (a PPT presentation will be used):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Digital ID project; security clearance procedures • Electronic Travel Advisory (eTA) • Commercial Air Travel Safety • Road Safety • Hostage Incident Management (HIM) • Manual of Physical Security for UN Common Premises (potentially renamed as “Physical Security Manual for UN Premises”) • Review of Fire Safety Policy.
Action(s) requested from Standing Committee participants	
FOR THE CHAIR(S) TO COMPLETE, IF APPLICABLE:	
Next step(s)/specific action(s)	
Resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Specialist/Consultant <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Adviser <input type="checkbox"/> SC Chair/Vice-Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Core group member(s) <input type="checkbox"/> FICSA Secretariat <input type="checkbox"/> FICSA ExCom (Compensation, Field, Treasurer, Other) <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer/Intern <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Deliverable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Literature review <input type="checkbox"/> Paper/Article <input type="checkbox"/> Background paper with options <input type="checkbox"/> Legal article/review/opinion <input type="checkbox"/> Talking points for high-level fora/forum – Advocacy <input type="checkbox"/> Comparative study <input type="checkbox"/> Good practices <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendations/ guideline for SAs/unions
Issue for high level fora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) <input type="checkbox"/> High-Level Committee for Management (HLCM) <input type="checkbox"/> HR Network <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Pension Board <input type="checkbox"/> UN General Assembly <input type="checkbox"/> Inter-Agency Security and Management Network (IASMN) <input type="checkbox"/> Other

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Agenda Item 4: Summary Sheet

FICSA /C/75/FIELD/PA/4 - Impacts of COVID-19 on staff away from HQs (health issues not COVID-9 related, administrative arrangements/decisions)

<input type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> For Information <input type="checkbox"/> For Decision	
Name of submitting member(s) & organization (s)	Véronique ALLAIN, SCBD, Excom Member for Field and Regional Issues
Issue (title)	Impacts of COVID-19 on staff away from HQs (health issues not COVID-9 related, administrative arrangements/decisions)
Issue description (including reach: global versus local)	<p>The participants in the FIELD SC will provide their experiences and stories of the COVID-19 impacts on their daily work and life. To steer the discussions, a few points to keep in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid (or not) roll out of IT equipment (secure VPN network and newly-procured laptops) to staff in offices away from HQs at the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020 ? how did that happen ? was there special attention being given to information and data security, and to learning of new tools in a short period of time ?. • Were staff able to work from home easily in order to retain their “customers” and to avoid huge backlogs ? • Cyber security ? was it a big issue with an increase in incidents ? New technological solutions were introduced and designed but did the training of staff happen to increase alertness of cyber risks ? • Training on hybrid and remote teamwork ? how is this foreseen for managers and for staff because of the many potential changes in office and organizational culture (this could help address perceived inequities due to location restrictions). • Careful to avoid a two-tier system whereby staff based in HQs are free to work remotely and the operational staff have to work according to office-based modalities in smaller duty stations; • The post pandemic is a rare opportunity to get rid of outdated pre-pandemic working methods and habits, to mainstream new working methods, to accelerate change and to make the UN organizations and their personnel more “agile”, flexible, innovative and resilient; how much of this will happen in your organization, you think ? • General shift in the interactions between managers and their staff because the teleworking modalities call for self-management skills and a reassessment of the role of managers. A meaningful revision of the performance management systems will be needed in a FWA set-up.

	<p>Engagement level of employees could be assessed by managers to evaluate the best working modalities. But how much “surveillance” is needed ?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hybrid working arrangements can be problematic in terms of quality of the collaboration between the on-site and the remote-working staff, in terms of onboarding and mentoring new colleagues. • Whether in developed countries or in the developing world, the health care systems have not been able to cope with those in need of health care not related to COVID-19 (in particular in mental health cases), bringing about an added level of stress for UN staff having to look for alternative means of medical care for themselves or their dependents. It would be interesting to get the figures of those UN staff being medically-evacuated from their non-HQ duty station, but not for COVID-19 reasons. • In terms of access to medical facilities for female P-staff, accessing and receiving healthcare services in Arab countries or in the Eastern Mediterranean Region is a challenge for foreign women, particularly those that are single. Women’s health is not seen outside of maternal health; which can be a serious challenge for single women and particularly those that are unmarried parents. Many healthcare professionals, both male and female, tend to treat single women seeking medical support with disdain and do not take their issues seriously. This causes international staff members to not seek health services while in the field and wait until they return to their home country, which of course can have dire consequences. • In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, navigating any healthcare services in a different language and culture can also have some adverse effects on staff members both male and female. Reliance on the national staff physician provided by the UN or WHO comes can also be a challenge, in particular when there is a lack of flexibility or listening to the staff member’s health concerns or cultural norms. This is particularly concerning in the area of mental health and psychosocial support that is mainly absent in most countries that are not in an emergency setting. • Welfare of staff; recognize individual circumstances of staff; importance of mental health support in particular for expatriate staff living alone; emphasis on creating a culture of recognition for managers to keep their staff engaged. • Mental health support: training for managers and leaders ? because the pandemic has brought about numerous new stressful situations for UN staff who are also parents to take care of kids without school for many months, or care for elderly family members who became isolated, vulnerable and fragile with the different waves of COVID-19. • Right to Disconnect (RTD), how will the new HLCM Model Guidelines on the RTD be introduced and implemented in the UN offices away from HQs ? encourage and support employees in finding harmony/balance between their working and their personal lives whether they are working following traditional working hours in the workplace, or working remotely or flexibly, or working in an emergency context.
<p>Background documentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Action(s) requested from Standing Committee participants	<p>Exchange of experiences, best practices, stories and lessons learnt. The recommendations emanating from this SC session will be geared to equipping the staff reps in attendance with elements to watch for the post-pandemic adjustments which will be required from all of us.</p> <p>The Standing Committee will want to capture staff's perspectives in the field, and emphasize that any policy formulated in the UN System should be done in the full spirit of fairness and transparency, and taking into account the situation in the field and not only HQ. A review could be called for of the Model CEB policy on Flexible Work from Field staff's perspectives and provide comments that FICSA ExCom can bring back to the CEB (noting that this is a model policy and each individual organization may adopt it differently).</p>
FOR THE CHAIR(S) TO COMPLETE, IF APPLICABLE:	
Next step(s)/specific action(s)	
Deadline	
Resources required	<input type="checkbox"/> Specialist/Consultant <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Adviser <input type="checkbox"/> SC Chair/Vice-Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Core group member(s) <input type="checkbox"/> FICSA Secretariat <input type="checkbox"/> FICSA ExCom (Compensation, Field, Treasurer, Other) <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer/Intern <input type="checkbox"/> Other
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Agenda Item 5: Summary Sheet

FICSA /C/75/FIELD/PA/5 - Cost-of-living (COL) surveys in different duty stations away from HQs with possible feedback from FICSA Regional Representatives and a presentation on lessons learnt by Imed (joint session with the P-staff SC)

<input type="checkbox"/> For Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> For Information <input type="checkbox"/> For Decision	
Name of submitting member(s) & organization (s)	Véronique ALLAIN, FICSA ExCom Member for Field and Regional Issues
Issue (title)	
Issue description (including reach: global versus local)	COL surveys were supposed to be conducted in 2021 in: NAIROBI, BANGKOK, KAMPALA, BAKU, BRAZZAVILLE, BELGRADE, BUENOS AIRES, DUSHANBE, MEXICO CITY, MANAGUA, ACCRA, NEW DELHI.
Background documentation	As it has proven difficult to get feedback from colleagues in the different duty stations concerned, the opportunity will be seized, in Vienna, to discuss with the ICSC representative to validate which COL surveys were undertaken. Questions will be asked regarding the COL survey processes in these duty stations.
Action(s) requested from Standing Committee participants	
FOR THE CHAIR(S) TO COMPLETE, IF APPLICABLE:	
Next step(s)/specific action(s)	
Deadline	
Resources required	<input type="checkbox"/> Specialist/Consultant <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Adviser <input type="checkbox"/> SC Chair/Vice-Chair <input type="checkbox"/> Core group member(s) <input type="checkbox"/> FICSA Secretariat <input type="checkbox"/> FICSA ExCom (Compensation, Field, Treasurer, Other) <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer/Intern <input type="checkbox"/> Other

<p>Deliverable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Literature review <input type="checkbox"/> Paper/Article <input type="checkbox"/> Background paper with options <input type="checkbox"/> Legal article/review/opinion <input type="checkbox"/> Talking points for high-level fora/forum – Advocacy <input type="checkbox"/> Comparative study <input type="checkbox"/> Good practices <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendations/ guideline for SAs/unions
<p>Issue for high level fora</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) <input type="checkbox"/> High-Level Committee for Management (HLCM) <input type="checkbox"/> HR Network <input type="checkbox"/> Joint Pension Board <input type="checkbox"/> UN General Assembly <input type="checkbox"/> Inter-Agency Security and Management Network (IASMN) <input type="checkbox"/> Other