



Federation of International  
Civil Servants' Associations

# PARTICIPATION OF THE FEDERATION IN ICSC MEETINGS (DURING 2022) FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF HARDSHIP DUTY- STATIONS AWAY FROM HEADQUARTERS

*Presentation to 76<sup>th</sup> FICSA Council*

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## BACKGROUND

The ICSC-established Tripartite Working Group (TWG), met in June (virtually for 21 duty stations) and in November 2022 (in person) for the review of the Asia & Pacific Region (105 duty stations). The purpose of the hardship classification process is to rate duty stations around the world where internationally-recruited staff are present for one year or longer. All field duty stations are rated from A to E.

## **BACKGROUND (CONT'D)**

One questionnaire is sent to the duty station's RC or CT who is responsible to organize that a WHO Rep. or a UN examining physician fills out the health section of the questionnaire and a Field Security Advisor (for security and safety section) takes care of the safety and security portion. HR staff and International staff (and their spouses) of all UN agencies in the duty station are asked to complete the questionnaire for the other factors.

## BACKGROUND – CONT'D

Six hardship factors are assessed:

- Climate (CLI)
- Housing (HOU)
- Isolation (ISO)
- Local conditions (LOC)
- Health (HEA): assessed by WHO or UN MED SERV
- Security & safety (SECU): assessed by UNDSS

### EXAMPLES OF DUTY STATIONS BY HARDSHIP CATEGORY

<b>H</b>	New York, Geneva, London, Vienna, Rome
<b>A</b>	Abu Dhabi, Algiers, Baku, Kigali, Mexico City
<b>B</b>	Addis Ababa, Colombo, Kampala, Lusaka, Maputo
<b>C</b>	Caracas, Djibouti, Dili, Harare, Juba
<b>D</b>	Bangui,, Ndjamena, Port-Au-Prince, Port Moresby
<b>E</b>	Baghdad, Damascus, Kabul, Mogadishu, Pyongyang

## MID-YEAR REVIEW MEETING, JUNE 2022, VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION

- 4 duty stations in **Burundi** had to re-submit the questionnaires (from the Africa Review in late 2020) for lack of health-related accurate information. This successfully happened and the TWG rated D for health-care and services available to UN staff. Obviously, the conditions of living and working were rated as rather difficult;
- **Beirut, Lebanon:** for the past 2-3 years, deterioration was noted in the health facilities in Beirut and in the entire country with numerous power cuts (difficult operations of hospitals and other health care facilities) and lack of medicine in general or, if available, with expired dates; high prices of medication, non-generic medication available if paid in USD currency. Strong exodus of medical professionals (difficult to consult medical specialists).

## **MID-YEAR REVIEW MEETING, JUNE 2022, VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION**

The Staff Federations and UN Organizations continued pushing for improvements in the health-portion of the hardship questionnaires. No progress was made since the June 2020 meeting with the UN Medical Directors' Network to improve the overall capacity at the disposal of the UN Division of Healthcare Management and Occupational Safety.

IT improvements, tools and funds-allocation still needed and pending. The WHO Rep. confirmed that WHO authorities were alerted again of these difficulties; FICSA and others will continue pushing for further strengthening of this side of data gathering.

## ANNUAL REVIEW MEETING, NY, NOVEMBER 2022

- Review of 105 duty stations in the Asia & Pacific region;
- 100% of the questionnaires returned to the ICSC and properly filled out, providing the right amount of information, a big improvement overall !
- Only 1 duty station in this Region was a bit more difficult to assess, **Suva – Fiji**. Although a UN Hub, the geographical isolation level makes it difficult to live there and the health care system is far from being optimal and trustworthy with medical equipments not fully functional and medical diagnosis not being reliable. Overall rating of B.

## ANNUAL REVIEW MEETING, NY, NOVEMBER 2022

- **New Delhi, India**, was not problematic this time around: the TWG participants did not need to be convinced about the level of air pollution; the overall hardship assessment did not lead to intense discussions compared to the previous reviews held in 2019 and 2016.
- 5 duty stations in **Lebanon (Al Qoubaiyat/Kobayat, Beirut, Tripoli, Tyre, Zahle)** were put on an out-of-cycle list in June 2022 (the ICSC Sec. intended to undertake a fact-finding mission in Sept. 2022). But this did not materialize. UNISERV and FICSA representatives (rather annoyed and disappointed) insisted for a temporary classification until the ICSC visits the region in early 2023. Still these duty stations were not reviewed properly in 2022.

## ANNUAL REVIEW MEETING, NY, NOVEMBER 2022

- The current hardship classification of the 5 duty stations in **Lebanon (Al Qoubaiyat/Kobayat, Beirut, Tripoli, Tyre, Zahle)** is as follows until June 2023 (several members of the TWG were skeptical that the capital city would be rated less than smaller cities in the country, the 5 duty stations would all merit an overall C)):

LEBANON	Al Qoubaiyat (Kobayat)	B	Middle East	Review postponed to 2023 Mid-Year Review to allow for
LEBANON	Beirut	C	Middle East	fact-finding mission. The
LEBANON	Tripoli	B	Middle East	TWG reiterated the
LEBANON	Tyre (Sur)	C	Middle East	importance of a fact-finding mission taking place in early
LEBANON	Zahle	B	Middle East	2023

## ANNUAL REVIEW MEETING, NY, NOVEMBER 2022

4 capital cities duty stations had their overall hardship classifications changed (2 in the A & P region and 2 as out-of-cycle submissions):

- **Tarawa, Kiribati**, changed from C to D (health and LOC ratings went downwards. Internet only via satellite access, no public recreational parks, local language is a barrier, poor health facilities, etc.);
- **Niamey, Niger**, changed from C to E due to the security assessed at D (recent conflicts in the area) and a change in the health rating which triggered and overall E;
- **Colombo, Sri Lanka** changed from B to C due to the deterioration of the overall local living conditions;
- **Sao Tome, Sao Tome & Principe**; isolation factor went downwards, impact on the health rating. Overall classification changed from B to D.

## **ANNUAL REVIEW MEETING, NY, NOVEMBER 2022**

At the November meeting, both the medical and security briefings made by the specific two colleagues were far from being very informative (both UNDSS and UNDHMOSH staff members were sick with COVID-19 and they still had to connect remotely to give their briefing as there was nobody else to replace them !). This was very concerning and annoying for all TWG participants as these two elements of the hardship questionnaires have to be properly evaluated by the right specialists. FICSA will keep monitoring the situation and reiterating its concerns.

## **REVIEW OF NON-FAMILY DUTY STATIONS (NFDS)**

A list of 269 duty stations with family restrictions was presented to the participants, as recommended by UNDSS for being eligible for non-family designation.

- **MYANMAR:** confirmed family restrictions for all duty stations in the country;
- **NIAMEY, NIGER:** considering the “D” security rating given to the duty station, evacuation of family members not issued yet, but situation was being monitored by UNDSS and the ICSC. Families allowed for now.
- **UKRAINE:** all duty stations in Ukraine were confirmed as NFDS, reevaluation every three months.

## REVIEW OF NON-FAMILY DUTY STATIONS (NFDS)

- Process and procedures for designation of NFDS and promulgation of danger pay are not automatic and they are distinct.
- The recommendation of danger pay by the USG of UNDSS and approved by the ICSC Chairman for a particular duty station is a separate process.
- For a duty station not to be designated as NFDS, UNDSS needs to find out information from the DO and the UN SMT in the country regarding family restrictions, and then advise the ICSC Chairman.

## REVIEW OF NON-FAMILY DUTY STATIONS (NFDS)

- For Danger Pay locations, the ICSC Secretariat publishes a summary of these locations on their website, at <https://icsc.un.org/Home/GetDataFile/7316> , that includes the narrative as received by UNDSS.
- **The level of Danger Pay for both categories of staff will be reviewed by the Commission in 2023;** this is part of the programme of work of the ICSC.
- A global list of 632 **Danger Pay duty stations /locations** and duty stations with family restrictions was compiled. This global list is a working document and guide to ensure close coordination and streamlining of efforts between the ICSC Secretariat and the UN organizations with staff deployed away from HQs.

## **REVIEW OF NON-FAMILY DUTY STATIONS (NFDS) AND SPECIAL CASES:**

**Special “E” duty stations** (not designated as NFDS because SEC at A or B level, but other 5 factors (health, housing, climate, local conditions, isolation) rated at the D or E level. For these duty stations, the UNGA approved in 2018, only for E duty stations first on a pilot-phase basis, a payment of USD 15,000 in lieu of instalment of dependants. At the 92<sup>nd</sup> ICSC session (2021), the pilot phase was considered successful and a useful tool for workforce planning and it was agreed to **expand this status to a list of special “D” duty stations**. As at 1 Jan. 2023, there were 19 “special E” duty stations and 36 “special D” duty stations, list available at <https://icsc.un.org/Home/GetDataFile/7399>

## CONCLUSION ASIA & PACIFIC REGION – CLASSIFICATION MEETING

- It is meant to be an inter-agency exercise with one single questionnaire to be filled out by the RC (for final certification and comments), the WHO Rep or UN examining physician (health section), the Field Security Advisor (security and safety section) and international staff of all agencies (and their spouses if available).
- Better local coordination of this exercise is still needed, together with awareness-raising actions. More efforts still necessary for better health data collection; the review of the health data questionnaires should not be undertaken by one single P-staff from the UN Division of Healthcare Management and Occupational Safety, with no help and no means.
- The postponement of the classification review for the 5 duty stations in Lebanon was very disappointing because until the actual fact-finding mission by the ICSC in the first quarter of 2023, the UN staff serving in these duty stations were surely not compensated properly for the hardship they had to face.
- The next round of hardship classification exercise will be devoted to the **Africa Region** with questionnaires being sent to the Region in **July 2023** and the review of the hardship ratings happening in November **2023**.

**THANK YOU !**



**FICSA**  
explained



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