

**REMARKS BY MR. LARBI DJACTA  
CHAIR OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
UNITED NATIONS**

**ON**

**THE OCCASION OF THE 76<sup>th</sup> COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION  
OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS'  
ASSOCIATION (FICSA)**

*6 February 2023 / Valencia, Spain*

**STATEMENT OF THE CHAIR TO THE 76<sup>TH</sup> FICSA COUNCIL**  
*6 February 2023, Valencia, Spain*

**President, distinguished members of the Council,**

I am honored to be here with you today and to participate in this meeting of your Council. I thank you for your kind invitation and look forward to a productive discussion with you. I would like, at the outset, to convey the Commission's gratitude to you for the constructive role FICSA played in all aspects of the Commission's work.

I am pleased to announce that at the end of its ninety-fourth session, last summer in Paris, the Commission has set up a new parental leave framework. This framework was welcomed by the UN/General Assembly in its resolution 77/256. By the same resolution, the General Assembly approved some recommendations of the Commission as contained in the 2022 ICSC annual report and requested a lot more from the Commission which will greatly impact our program of work not only during this biennium but over the next few years. At the end of my remarks, I will be elaborating more on Parental leave.

As staff representatives, I call on you and the organizations' HR managers to intensify your collaboration as we work together to deliver the Assembly's requests; your input is always highly appreciated.

Let me at this point brief you on the upcoming activities of the Commission. Next week, we will be having the first meeting of the Working Group on the review of Human Resources Management.

During the forthcoming meeting, it is expected that the Working Group will, at the end of its first session, mainly:

- a. Develop a detailed roadmap for conducting the review, considering the views of all the stakeholders.
- b. Identify preliminary areas/gaps in the current ICSC Framework for HR Management raised by the organizations and staff federations and prioritize/agree on the final issues of focus by the Working Group.
- c. Consider any linkages to the current review of the standards of conduct which is an important element of the framework for human resources management.

A progress report of the said Working Group will be examined by the members at the next Commission's session. We will also review the progress report of the Working Group on Standards of Conduct that took place in New York, from 14 to 18 November last year and agreed on issues for review and the sequences to be followed. Second meeting of the WG to be held in Brussels from 8 to 12 May 2023.

During the spring session of the Commission, next month, we will also be discussing other items such as conditions of service in the field, the recruitment incentive, multilingualism as well as among other items.

As requested by the General Assembly, the Commission will be further discussing a detailed outline of its approach for the next comprehensive review of the compensation package, including the structure, parameters, and timeline.

## **New Parental leave framework:**

I would like to highlight some elements on parental leave.

This new parental leave policy provides extended paid time off to parents, regardless of gender, as they welcome a child into their lives. At its 2022 summer session, the Commission decided to:

- a) replace the current maternity, paternity and adoption leave provisions with a parental leave provision of 16 weeks for all parents; and
- b) provide an additional period of 10 weeks to birth mothers to meet the specific pre- and post-natal needs.

The last adjustment of maternity leave was made in 1979 (maternity leave of 16 weeks) and paternity leave was first introduced in 2004 (paternity leave of 4 weeks at family duty stations and 8 weeks at non-family duty stations). Our goal is to invest in family-friendly policies that benefit both organizations and families, as these policies ensure that staff with child-care responsibilities are supported and valued. Considering that parental leave entitlements are an important part of a compensation package that helps organizations attract and retain the best talent, it was crucial for the United Nations common system to formally adopt the best practices, as an employer of choice.

It is envisaged that the new policy will allow women to have more equitable career opportunities with men because they are not forced to suspend or abandon their careers to provide childcare. Moreover, if men are also provided a significant length of paid time off in the form of parental leave, they are more likely to take on shared

parenting responsibilities, thus relieving some of the heavy load of infant caregiving that women have traditionally carried on their own.

In the broader context of the Sustainable Development goals and in the long term, an enhanced parental leave will not only serve the UN staff members and UN organizations but will also generally contribute to the improvement of public health by allowing parents to care for their children and themselves, reducing the likelihood of physical illness and improving mental health. The enhancement of the current provisions further demonstrates the values of the United Nations common system.

**Post Adjustment issues:**

Allow me now elaborate further on another item with equal importance such as post adjustment;

On this issue, I would also like to recognize the constructive role FICSA played in all process of the development of the package of statistical methodology, procedures and guidelines, and operational rules governing the operation of the post adjustment system for the 2021 round of surveys. We now have in place a solid system that is fit for the purpose of fulfilling the founding objective of post adjustment system, that is, ensuring the equivalence of the purchasing power of staff remuneration regardless of location of assignment.

As you know, the roll-out of the 2021 round of surveys to all other duty stations is well underway, starting with group I duty stations. The first tranche of surveys, in Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Norway), was completed in November 2022. The next tranche, in six east European duty stations, is expected

to be completed by end January 2023. Next will be western Europe in February and March, Asia in April, etc. The survey round will commence in field duty stations in September 2023. All these surveys were preceded by an ICSC mission to the region, serving all duty stations either in person or remotely.

The results of all surveys conducted under the 2021 round will be implemented based on the newly modified system of operational rules which ensures higher transparency, stability, and predictability in the adjustment of net remuneration; and also under the Commission's authority, as prescribed by article 11(c) of its statute, which has been explicitly clarified by its recent "surgical" amendment.

In conclusion, I look forward to your continued cooperation as we, together, strive to improve a consolidated common system.

I wish you a fruitful and successful meeting.

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