

## REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FIELD ISSUES

### Introduction

1. The Standing Committee on Field Issues (see Appendix 1 for participants) met three times to address its agenda, and held a joint session with the standing committees on Human Resources Management and Legal Questions on flexible working arrangements (FWA). It also conducted a training on the classification of hardship duty stations.
2. The Standing Committee began its discussions with the acknowledgement that all of the relevant recommendations of the 76<sup>th</sup> session of the FICSA Council had been implemented, and thanked the FICSA membership for the productive year of work.

### Update on classification of hardship duty stations

3. The Standing Committee reviewed the outcomes of the midterm and annual reviews of the classification of hardship duty stations that had taken place in June and November 2023, respectively. The Chair of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) had approved all the recommendations of the Tripartite Working Group (TWG) on that topic. The SC acknowledged the importance of the classification, FICSA's engagement in ICSC meetings and discussed several issues of concern.

### Recommendation

- **In collaboration with the Standing Committee on Conditions of Service in the Field, the FICSA Executive Committee should continue building the FICSA membership's capacity, awareness and knowledge of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) Tripartite Working Group (TWG) classification of hardship duty stations during 2024.**

### 39<sup>th</sup> session of Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN)

4. The Standing Committee updated the participants on the outcomes of 39<sup>th</sup> IASMN session which took place in February 2024 in Madrid. While FICSA participated in IASMN sessions in the capacity of observer and was not allowed to make formal interventions, FICSA engaged with IASMN members in an informal environment. Ongoing work of IASMN included: managing hostage situations, developing a joint roster of security offices, and updating and sharing among IASMN members the "red list of countries". The SC acknowledged the importance of FICSA's engagement with IASMN on safety and security issues, and discussed several issues and a proposal to take forward.

## **Recommendation**

- **In collaboration with the Standing Committee on Conditions of Service in the Field, the FICSA Executive Committee should continue to work with the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) to increase FICSA members' awareness and knowledge of safety and security issues in 2024.**

## **Update on ICSC methodology for hardship classification**

5. The Standing Committee updated the participants about topics to be discussed during the meeting of ICSC Working Group 3 on field issues in the context of the ongoing review of the compensation package. The topics included: review of methodologies used for the hardship classification and the payment of, for example, relevant benefits, mobility incentives and danger pay. The SC acknowledged the importance of the Working Group's work, highlighted the importance of FICSA's participation in its activities and discussed several issues and a proposal.

## **Recommendation**

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should alert the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) Tripartite Working Group (TWG) to ensure that issues related to access to education are one of the elements to be considered in the current methodology used in the classification of hardship duty stations.**

## **Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA) in the UN common system**

6. The Standing Committee organized a joint session with the standing committees on Human Resources Management and Legal Questions, to examine the most recent report from the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on FWA in the UN common system ([JIU/REP/2023/6](#)). They highlighted the critical importance of FICSA continuing to work on the matter.

## **Recommendation**

- **In collaboration with the standing committees on Conditions of Service in the Field, Human Resources Management and Legal Questions, the FICSA Executive Committee should prepare and present to 78th FICSA Council a draft strategy paper to educate and advocate flexible working arrangements (FWA) to FICSA membership, based on the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report on FWA ([JIU/REP/2023/6](#)), and other pertinent information sources.**

## **Latest updates from FICSA members**

7. Participants gave feedback on issues relating to benefits and entitlements of locally recruited staff who served during emergencies. The discussion focused on differences in danger pay and evacuation practices. The SC acknowledged the importance of FICSA's continuing advocacy work with ICSC to highlight the differences in the treatment of internationally and locally recruited staff members in emergencies.

## **Recommendation**

- **In collaboration with the Standing Committee on Conditions of Service in the Field, the FICSA Executive Committee should continue engaging with ICSC on differences in the allowances**

that are available to internationally versus locally recruited staff members, particularly in the context of emergencies, to work towards equitable treatment of all staff, regardless of their contract category. Specifically, the FICSA Executive Committee should advocate for an amendment to the methodology that determines the level of danger pay for locally recruited staff, to ensure that the midpoint takes account of all locally recruited staff, including national professional officers (NPOs).

### **Problems with visas for staff working in the United States of America**

8. The Standing Committee concluded its work with a discussion of the difficulty for retirees of securing G-4 visas and green cards that had resulted from recent changes in legislation in the United States.

### **Recommendation**

- **In consultation with the Standing Committee on Conditions of Service in the Field, the FICSA Executive Committee should collaborate with all relevant stakeholders to bring to the attention of ICSC and all relevant entities, including the US State Department, ongoing issues with G-4 visas and green cards for retirees in the United States of America.**

### **Nomination of officers and core group members**

9. The following participants in the SC were nominated as members of the core group:

- Marc Brown (FAO/WFP-UGSS) as Chair
- Fares Kady (WHO/EMRO) as Vice-Chair

10. The following participants were nominated as members of the core group:

- Muhammad Irshad Anwer Name (FUNSA Pakistan)
- Glenda Moreira-Lopez (PAHO/WHO)

## **Appendix 1. Participants**

### **Officers**

Chair	Oleksandr Martynenko (WHO/EURO)
Vice-Chair and Rapporteur	Marc Brown (FAO/WFP-UGSS)
FICSA ExCom member	Véronique Allain (SCBD)

### **Staff association/union**

AP-in-FAO	Vanda Ferreira Santos, Wadzanai Garwe
FAO/WFP-UGSS	Luca Vecchia, Susan Murray
UNAIDS	Evelyn Siula
UNIDO	Madge Nikolovska-Jilke
UNESCO	Philippe Pypaert
UNRWA	Diab El Tabari
WHO/PAHO	Glenda Moreira Lopez
WHO/AFRO	Sitembekile Nyengera, Christian Tounta
WHO/EMRO	Fares Kady
WHO/SEARO	Alam Shah
WHO/WPRO	James Howlett

### **Members with Associate Status**

CERN	Isabelle Mardirossian
OPCW	Mohammad Mehedi Hasan Khan

### **Members with Observer Status**

FUNSA Guinea	Virginie Beavogui, Bangaly Kaba
FUNSA Pakistan	Muhammad Irshad Anwer, Adbur Rehman

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