

**REMARKS BY MR. LARBI DJACTA
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CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (ICSC)
UNITED NATIONS**

ON

**THE OCCASION OF THE 77th SESSION OF THE FEDERATION
OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS'
ASSOCIATION (FICSA) COUNCIL**

26 February 2024 / UPU, Bern

**President, distinguished members of the Council,
Dear colleagues and participants,**

I am truly honored to participate in this meeting of the FICSA Council. I really appreciate the chance to discuss with you today and to address, through the federation, nearly 40,000 of your colleagues around the world.

In my capacity as the Chair of the Commission, I am fully aware of the many provisions in the Commission's Statute and the Rules of Procedure requiring us to consult with staff federations regarding the most important aspects of our work. However, it requires more than just legal provisions to ensure that we meet our objectives.

I would like therefore, to convey the Commission's gratitude, for the continued constructive role FICSA plays in all the aspects of the Commission's work.

The Commission considers its partnership with staff federations, including FICSA, to be amongst our most important. We greatly value working alongside you in our shared efforts to ensure that the conditions of service for staff are consistent and equitable across the different organizations, and that organizations part of the common system are able to attract and retain talented staff who can carry out their important work effectively and efficiently.

Accomplishing the mandate and fulfilling the objectives of the Commission has never been easy, but it is today I believe more difficult than ever.

The unprecedented health challenge presented by the COVID-19 pandemic threatened the long-term livelihoods and wellbeing of millions, including in the international civil service. The pandemic changed the way we work, overall pointing towards exciting innovations in the world of work. To overcome the practical challenges, we have all adapted our ways of interacting and working with each other and introduced new approaches, simpler and more effective processes.

Not necessarily this new work environment emerging during post-pandemic is easier to manage and deal with efficiently. In the aftermath of Covid-19 pandemic, we found ourselves in even more challenging circumstances that require, I believe, a more collaborative, focused and values-based approach and collaboration in preserving a single, unified, and coherent United Nations common system.

In addition, in the post-Covid-19 period, the world of work seems to be moving at a faster pace. Climate change, potentially disruptive technologies, political events, and their socio-economic effects, all add to a further sense of uncertainty. As a result, the traditional model of an international civil service career is being tested in an unprecedented way. Organizations that do not adapt in the face of such changes risk losing considerable talent, and ultimately their relevance.

I am confident, however, that the fundamental and institutional values that define and underpin civil services across the globe will not change and human resources will continue to constitute the greatest asset of all organizations part of the common system. The need for people of the highest integrity and impartiality, with a commitment to serve the public interests will remain the bedrock upon which to build the international civil service of the future.

Global Staff Survey on the Common System compensation package

As you are aware, in October 2023, the ICSC launched a Global Staff Survey on the Common System compensation package, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 77/256 B. The survey was open to all staff members of the UN common system organizations, in all categories and duty stations, from 4 October until 5 November 2023. The close collaboration with the organizations and staff federations, and a robust communication and outreach strategy led to a solid 27% response rate or over 35,000 responses, significantly exceeding the target of 30,000 responses set by the Commission. The 21% response rate of the 2019 survey has also been exceeded with over 12,000 more responses (in 2019 there were 23,107 responses, or 21% response rate). The results of the global staff survey will serve as an important guidance for ensuring the comprehensive and holistic nature of the compensation review.

Annual report of the Commission for 2023

Let me now turn to the 2023 annual report of the Commission, and its consideration by the General Assembly during the main part of its 78th session. As you may be aware, following extensive deliberations, the Assembly decided to take no action on the Commission's report.

The decision of the General Assembly to take *no action* on the Commission's 2023 annual report has varying effects on items under the Commission's purview. Items falling under article 10 of the ICSC Statute that

are subject to Assembly's approval, including the adjustment of the base/floor salary scale; and adjustment of the children's and secondary dependants' allowances – have to be revisited by the Assembly at a later date.

In contrast, decisions taken by the Commission on items falling under article 11(b) of the Statute, including adjustment to the levels of the hardship allowance, mobility incentive and danger pay, and maintaining the level of the security evacuation allowance - should be implemented and are effective beginning 1 January 2024 as indicated in its annual report.

With respect to all other items contained in the Commission's annual report - the comprehensive review of the compensation package, post adjustment, and all other subjects, the work will proceed as agreed by the Commission, in accordance with its Statute and the work programme as contained in Annex I of its 2023 annual report.

Review of the Jurisdictional set-up of the United Nations common system

In addition, as you may be aware, the General Assembly also decided to take no action on the review process of the jurisdictional set-up of the United Nations common system, which brought the review to a conclusion. According to the Secretary-General, "Maintaining the *status quo* carries significant risks for the cohesion and consistency of the United Nations common system. The possibility of divergent jurisprudence in the future cannot be excluded, for instance, with respect to the Commission's assessment and review of the compensation system.

Amendments to the ICSC Statute

Finally, as you are aware, in its resolution (77/256-A) of 30 December 2022, the General Assembly amended Articles 10 and 11 of the ICSC Statute. It is with great satisfaction to inform that there are now only a very few organizations that have not yet notified the Secretary-General in writing on their acceptance of the amendments. It is critical for a coherent and unified UN common system that the few remaining organizations accept as soon as practicable the amendments to the ICSC Statute.

Upcoming Activities

As you can imagine, the Commission work program for the upcoming period is going to be extremely busy. To name just a few subjects, obviously, the ongoing

comprehensive review of the Professional compensation package will dominate the ICSC agenda for the next two years. Three working groups have been established. Working Group 1 has recently completed its first meeting. I am happy to report that the findings of *the* Group have been generally encouraging. And we are grateful to the FICSA representatives [*the Federation's President, Ms. Tanya Quinn-Maguire, and Mr. Steven Geoffrey Eales*] for their constructive contributions. The Commission will review the Working Group's report at its 97th session which is starting next week in New York. This will be a progress report, with some items to be revisited at the Groups further meetings later this year. Between the ICSC sessions – in late May, the two other working groups will meet and consider the two clusters of items where, some believe, overlaps may exist. One group will consider dependency-related benefits, including the education grant, and the other will deal with the field-related entitlements.

The Commission will also consider its work on the Standards of Conduct. In April, there will be a meeting on this subject of another working group, which will hopefully, finalize the standards and report to the Commission in July.

The Commission will also review the implementation by the organizations of the new formula of the parental leave provisions, report on the status of the pilot of payments in lieu of settling-in grant in D and E duty stations and will continue its work on the post adjustment system.

Additionally, at every one of its upcoming sessions, the ICSC will be reviewing the results of GS salary surveys conducted under the revised survey methodology [*Jamaica in Spring '24; then Rome – summer '24; then Montreal and Paris in '25*].

As you see, as lot of the work will happen in working groups and we are looking forward to continuing our fruitful interaction with FICSA and other stakeholders in these meetings to the benefit of the common system.

I would like to thank you again for this opportunity to address you today. I wish you a successful and productive FICSA Council.
