

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES

Introduction

1. The Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances (SC - see Appendix 1 for participants) met virtually on 5 February and in person and online on 26--27 February to pursue its agenda, and elected Monica Bugghi (IFAD) as rapporteur.

The SC held a joint session with the Standing Committee on General Service Questions. SC also took part in a joint session on the review of the UN compensation package on 28 February 2024 to have a broader discussion about the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) comprehensive review of the compensation package, its implications for staff, and the membership and the terms of reference (TOR) of a dedicated task force to address that topic. In addition, the SC's Permanent Technical Committee met on 25 February 2024.

Activities in 2023

2. The Standing Committee discussed the actions taken to implement the decisions of the 76th session of the FICSA Council on professional salaries and allowances. It was particularly pleased that the longstanding problem with the education grant in the Montréal duty station had been resolved. That case had demonstrated the effectiveness of FICSA intervention. Concerned staff were advised to ensure to seek consistent treatment, share with their staff associations/unions any issue they might face and highlight the effective role that the FICSA Executive Committee could play.
3. On matters related to constitution and TOR of local survey committees (LSCs), the SC acknowledged the usefulness of the guidelines provided by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) for setting up LSCs and appreciated the emphasized flexibility for each duty station to tailor the LSC according to their needs. The SC was also reminded of the necessity for staff associations/unions that have planned upcoming cost-of-living (COL) surveys to liaise with their administration for inclusion in their LSCs and active participation in related work.
4. The Standing Committee stressed the need for the FICSA Executive Committee to continue to assist and support the work of LSCs in preparation of any round of COL survey. In particular, it discussed the need to develop a TOR document that could be used as a baseline to increase consistency between the different duty stations. Such a document would help to define the roles and responsibilities of the LSC members, increase transparency and clarify the process to adopt in case of disputes or concerns.

5. Further, “Ask the FICSA Expert” sessions continued to be held to revitalize the SC’s Permanent Technical Committee (PTC); sessions had been held on “Salaries of Professional staff” and “Review of the Post Adjustment Operational Rules” in December 2023 and February 2024, respectively.

Recommendation

- **The Standing Committee recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee, in conjunction with the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances, should develop model terms of reference for local survey committees (LSCs) based on the ICSC guidelines, and share them with staff associations/unions prior to the roll out of future cost-of-living (COL) surveys to Professional staff.**
- **In relation to the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) comprehensive assessment and review of the compensation package for staff in the Professional and higher categories, the SC recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee should consider time-zone differences when organizing online training sessions for Professional staff and explore the feasibility of organizing additional sessions in different languages and for staff in the same time zone.**

ICSC comprehensive review of compensation package and FICSA task force

6. The Standing Committee received an update on the ICSC comprehensive review of the compensation package and stressed the need for FICSA to continue monitoring closely its development, promptly informing FICSA members of any important events and ensuring that a FICSA representative was present at the meetings of the UN bodies and/or ICSC working groups doing work related to that review.
7. FICSA recognized the imperative to proactively address the review. In light of the multifaceted nature of the review and its potential implications for the welfare of UN staff, FICSA deemed it necessary to establish a dedicated task force to contribute substantively to the discourse surrounding the ICSC's review, ultimately safeguarding the rights and interests of international civil servants under the umbrella of FICSA, with a well-defined structure and clear schedule.

Recommendation

- **The Standing Committee recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee should ensure that the Chair or a designated member of the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances is present during the virtual meetings of the Task Force on the Compensation Review, and update the Task Force’s budget and terms of reference to reflect the meeting modality.**

UN General Assembly decisions on ICSC recommendations

8. The Standing Committee stressed the importance of being informed about the ICSC recommendations, which helped to shape the dynamics and effectiveness of the international workforce. Indeed, the ICSC recommendations had implications for the competitiveness and attractiveness of international careers to top talent. The delegates were briefed on the legal implication of ICSC recommendations depending on whether they fall under article 10 or article 11 of the ICSC [Statute](#).

Latest updates

Education grant

9. The Standing Committee discussed several issues related to entitlement to the education grant for Professional staff: the enrolment of children aged 5 years if they were born the day after the academic year started. Country offices were subject to different national laws and school years and such

variations should not affect this entitlement. The Standing Committee suggested to propose a change in the policy to accommodate every child reaching 5 years during the academic year. That would be discussed in the context of the compensation review. It was noted that regular cuts in benefits and entitlements, including the education grant, require tailored defensive action in response to preserve the education grant and other expatriate entitlements. In decentralized organizations with a mobility policy, expatriate benefits such as education grant were essential to ensure that staff maintained ties with their countries of origin and could be mobile with their families. Participants agreed that organizational policies should not implement measures below the ceilings set by the ICSC.

Recommendation

- **The Standing Committee recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee should collect from the membership policies related to the criteria for eligibility for the education grant and present the results of its analysis for further discussion by the FICSA Executive Committee and the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances prior to the 78th FICSA Council.**

FICSA training

10. In-person and online training organized by FICSA played an important role in informing staff members about the compensation package. Those activities fostered trust in staff associations and enhanced staff knowledge about their benefits and entitlements and the importance of staff responding to the questionnaires during the survey rounds.
11. To increase the staff participation to FICSA training and widen their understanding, it was important to consider time-zone differences when organizing such sessions, even though recordings of all sessions were usually available on the FICSA website.

Recommendation

- **In relation to the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) comprehensive assessment and review of the compensation package for staff in the Professional and higher categories, the Standing Committee recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee should consider time-zone differences when organizing online training sessions for Professional staff and explore the feasibility of organizing additional sessions in different languages and for staff in the same time zone.**

Inter-agency mobility framework

12. The Standing Committee discussed the possibility of exploring a revision of provisions currently in place in the existing inter-agency mobility framework to ensure the retention of acquired rights to facilitate career development and exchanges among organizations.

Recommendation

- **The Standing Committee recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee should continue to reinforce to the Human Resources (HR) Network and the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM), that, in order for inter-agency mobility to be effective, the inter-agency mobility framework agreement should include the retention of acquired rights, and facilitate career development and exchanges among organizations.**

Implementation of the ICSC recommendations by UN organizations

13. Delegates highlighted the importance of the timely implementation of ICSC recommendations and the need for staff associations/unions to follow up on them in case of delays. They also emphasized the importance of relaying these recommendations to staff members as soon as they were issued by ICSC.

The immediate application of recommendations depended on their eventual budget implications; staff associations were called on to inform staff on the effect of changes implemented by ICSC.

Key roles of staff associations/unions

14. The Standing Committee encouraged delegates to explore any way to increase the awareness and understanding of staff members about the key roles that staff associations/unions could play and their potential involvement. Those included regular meetings with staff representatives, participation in FICSA webinars and the creation of interactive staff association/union websites.

Nomination of officers and core-group members

15. The following were nominated as SC officers:
 - Houcine Mhadhbi (IAEA) and Leolinda Dieme (UPU) as Co-Chairs
 - James Howlett (WHO/WPRO) as Vice-Chair.
16. The following were nominated as members of the core group:
 - Mariia Mikheieva (IAEA), Fola Odulana (IMO) Evelyn Siula (UNAIDS).

Appendix 1. Participants

Staff association/union

AP-in-FAO	Florence Tartanac, Vanda Ferreira Dos Santos
IAEA	Anthony Alozie, Houcine Mhadhbi, Mariia Mikheieva
ICAO	Javier Sanchez
IFAD	Monica Buggi
SCBD	Véronique Allain
UNAIDS	Evelyn Siula
UNIDO	Steven Eales
UNESCO	Viviana Zaccaria, Denis Pitzalis, Philippe Pypaert, Simone Grego
UNRWA	Diab El-Tabari
UPU	Birahim Fall, Leolinda Dieme, Gustavo Damy
PAHO/WHO	Pilar Ramon Pardo, Glenda Moreira Lopez
WHO/HQ	Jérôme Zanga Foe
WHO/AFRO	Harris Benito Koubemba Mona, Sitembekile Nyengera, Prisca Blanche Ndongo-Mombo
WHO/EMRO	Fares Kady
WHO/EURO	Ine Mortelemans
WHO/SEARO	Shah Alam
WHO/WPRO	James Howlett,
WMO	Andres Orias Bleichner

Members with Associate Status

CERN Catherine Regelbrugge

Members with Consultative Status

EMBL Maria Cerezo

Members with Observer Status

FUNSA Guinea Virginie Beavogui