

**REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
SOCIAL SECURITY/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**Introduction**

1. The Standing Committee on Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety (SOCSEC – see Appendix 1 for participants) met virtually several times to address its agenda and held a joint session with the Standing Committee on Staff-Management Relations to discuss one topic. It adopted an agenda and elected its rapporteur. Annex III provides details on what the recommendation(s) should contain.

**Agenda item 3: Activities undertaken in 2023**

2. SOCSEC has implemented all the [previous year's recommendations](#).

Report on activities undertaken during 2023 – SOCSEC/OHS recommendations from 76th FICSA Council

*FICSA/C/76/D17: The FICSA Executive Committee should: encourage staff representatives to ensure that their administrations are implementing the CEB UN Disability Inclusion Strategy within their agencies/organizations and advocate in all fora the need to ensure reasonable accommodation and the necessary support for staff with disabilities incurred before or during their service. [FICSA Communication 19-23](#)*

**Conclusion**

3. A survey has been launched by FICSA, the replies can be found on the website of FICSA at this [link](#): the majority of the agencies reported that they have a disability and inclusion strategy.

**Recommendation**

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should advocate in the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) to urge UN organizations to make funds available for the implementation of the UN strategy on disability inclusion.**
4. *FICSA/C/76/D18: The FICSA Executive Committee should continue to raise in all fora the concerns identified by members about discrepancies by members in or inequitable access to benefits offered to staff with children living with disabilities.*

**Conclusion**

5. Last year's decision addressed the disparity in disability allowances between P and GS staff. GS staff, recruited locally, have benefits included in their salary, while P staff have benefits separated and detailed as salary plus benefits. Both groups have disability benefits, but the calculation method differs. We've informed the ICSC chair that rectifying these inconsistencies is a top priority and we're committed to it. The discrepancies largely stem from variations in local legislation. Regarding

compensation for GS staff with disabled children, adjustments should be considered. In some countries, for example, parents receive time off and compensation for disabled children, not factored into Methodology 1. Aligning compensation with internationally recruited staff may be appropriate.

### **Recommendation**

- **The FICSA Executive Committee in conjunction with the officers of the Standing Committee on Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety, should:**
- **continue to raise in all fora the members' concerns about discrepancies in or inequitable access to benefits offered to staff with children living with disabilities; and**
- **develop, circulate and deliberate among FICSA members a white paper addressing equitable access to benefits for staff living with children with disabilities, in all duty stations, emphasizing it as a universal entitlement.**

***FICSA/C/76/D19:** The SMR and SOCSEC SCs recommended that the FICSA Secretariat should contact core group members of both Standing Committees to request participation in the Joint Working Group that would address both misconduct, harassment, and abuse of authority to improve staff mental health and well-being.*

### **Conclusion**

6. SMR and SOCSEC SCs have developed a matrix and advocacy toolkit that the chair of SMR SC presented during the session.

### **Recommendation**

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should organize a joint session of the standing committees on Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety and Staff/Management Relations to finalize the toolkit of best practices on harassment, sexual harassment, and abuse of power, with a view to the final result being posted on the FICSA website.**

***FICSA/C/76/D20:** The FICSA ExCom should send a reminder to staff-representative bodies to send their list of best practices (including implementation and monitoring), lessons learned and challenges in the context of the return-to-work following COVID-19, with a view to evaluating benchmarks for policies on flexible working arrangements (FWA).*

### **Conclusion**

7. The recommendation has been sent, and the outcome of the action is that a Survey concluded at the end of January and posted on the FICSA website: [FWA FICSA](#).
8. Flexible working arrangements are a critical issue for many organizations. One of the key elements of the survey is that we must look at flexible working as a way of modernizing the UN. The majority of staff in the organizations have concerns and are fighting for better conditions for flexible working, but the atmosphere is still very fluid and we still have got member states and heads of agencies trying to muddy the waters. In FAO there has been a pilot. Different organizations apply different policies. We must keep in mind that no legislation in the UN System says that flexible working arrangements are a right. Staff must work with their administrations on that, FICSA will publish on its website the policies of the different agencies for this purpose.
9. A joint session was held with a presentation of the results of the survey and the JIU report summary with recommendations with the aim to bring it to the administrations.
10. We must consider many elements: political, environmental, perceptions, costs, the opinion of some member states, impact on post-adjustment, and compliance. We must be very careful of what we

are pushing for at the level of the organizations and know what we really want and not one size fits all. FWA should be available, there should not be a competition between Field and HQ, and everyone should understand that it must be compatible with the duties of the position. It should be considered in the work-life balance issue as one of the tools that enables work-life balance. It has to be **consistently** applied, the discussion should be happening and let's try to build on the work already done in the past in FICSA since 2015.

HLCM is the body to address, they have guidelines in FWA and FICSA EXCOM have been very involved in their development.

11. Recommendation 2023 **FICSA/C/76/ D21**: *The FICSA Secretariat should advocate to Staff Representatives that they should seek election to the boards of their organizations' staff pension fund, to participate in and report on their work. And*
12. Recommendation 2023 **FICSA/C/76/ D22**: The FICSA Executive Committee should make every effort to regain access to the participants' representatives' group of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board.

### **Conclusion**

13. The above recommendation has been completed, see [FICSA Communication 13/23](#) pag.22-23.

### **Recommendation**

- **The Standing Committee recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee should continue to actively participate in the Participant's group of the UN Joint Staff Pension Board.**

### **Agenda item 6: Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) related issues, including Mental Health & Well-being:**

- a. Update on the work of the OHS Forum and FICSA participation in the last 12 months.
  - b. 2024 and beyond version of the UN Mental Health Strategy
14. The FICSA General Secretary has given an update on the work of the OHS Forum, with emphasis on how that work might trickle down at the organizational level.
  15. FICSA Communication [29/23](#); FICSA Circular [1376](#); JIU Report on the Review of Mental Health and Well-being Policies and Practices in United Nations system organizations: [JIU/REP/2023/4](#)
  16. The SOCSEC Acting Chair has given an update on the latest version of the UN System Strategy on Mental Health and Wellbeing: 2024 ([UN Strategy on Mental Health and Wellbeing: 2024 ad Beyond](#)) that has been presented in plenary.

### **Agenda item 7: Social Security-related issues**

- a. Health insurance, including after-service health insurance (ASHI)
  - a. JIU Report (if available) – if not available, discussion on whether SOCSEC should regroup on work around a FICSA survey on this topic ref.: [SOCSEC SC Report 76<sup>th</sup>](#) (article 6)
  - b. Cooperation with FAFICS on topics of common interest, e.g.: ASHI
  - c. Pension
    - a. Presentation and Q and A from the UNJSPF (timing TBC)
    - b. Open discussion on pension issues from the perspective of participants
17. Along with an increase in the life expectancy of retirees, the rising cost of healthcare is putting a great deal of pressure on the life-long benefits available to UN personnel and their dependents.
18. FICSA has enjoyed positive cooperation with FAFICS over the years, particularly on the topics of After-Service Health insurance and the UNJSPF. FAFICS has requested renewed cooperation with FICSA specifically on the topic of ASHI. It should be noted that FICSA was an active participant in the SG's working group on ASHI up to the publication of the SG report on the topic in 2019. In recent years, the ASHI Liability (over 40 billion USD) lies almost exclusively with the UN Secretariat, and most of the specialized agencies have resolved what was essentially an error in accounting on behalf of the administrations. The issue is “dormant” at the level of the 5th Committee, but it is very likely to reoccur. The FICSA President, who served on the ASHI working group, is available for this discussion.

### Conclusion

19. The huge issue is the high cost of after-service health insurance. CTBTO and other organizations need to be represented outside the scope, it has been invited to create a working group in CTBTO to collaborate within a comprehensive health programme and to understand how the rest of the common system works and why CTBTO or other organizations should be there, should negotiate within each organization to apply the same conditions as the rest of the common system, or go to the CSSIO and ask them to have their members share. An Excel sheet is on the FICSA website that can be filled with information about pension funds, it can be a useful tool.

### Recommendation

- **Once the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report on staff health insurance is released, the FICSA Executive Committee should inform staff associations about the recommendations of the JIU, to enable them to be included in discussions with their organizations; and the Executive Committee should follow up in all related fora.**

### Other business

20. Alessandra Marcorio UNGSS sought advice and support wherever possible because of a decision by the Health and Life Insurance Section to reimburse G staff enrolled in the UN EMP through their salaries rather than by direct bank transfer, a change that took effect in January 2023. This decision is causing delays, breaches of privacy and other inconveniences for staff.

### Conclusion

21. SocSec recommends that ExCom engage as soon as possible with UNGSC to ask and reinstate the global practice for GS staff of direct reimbursement for medical insurance claims.
22. **Disability inclusion presentation: awareness and visibility.** To enhance workplace inclusivity, we must prioritize improving disability measures, encompassing both physical accommodations within buildings and adopting a holistic approach. This ensures that individuals with disabilities, as well as their family members, are granted equitable opportunities to contribute effectively, by eliminating not only physical barriers but also addressing cultural obstacles.

## **Recommendation**

- The FICSA Executive Committee, in consultation with the Standing Committee on Social Security/Occupational Health, should advocate and emphasize to all fora the need to enhance benefits for all UN staff with disabilities, regardless of their contractual status, in respect of the implementation of the UN strategy on disability inclusion.

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

The following delegates were nominated as Standing Committee officers:

- Paola Monroy (CTBTO Vienna) as Chair
- Sotirios Markopoulos (CTBTO Vienna) as Vice-Chair
- Michelle Delinde (CTBTO Vienna) as Vice-Chair

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

- Cristina Pierini (ITCILO Turin)
- Susan Murray (FAO/WFP UGSS Rome)

## **Appendix 1. Participants**

### **Staff association/union**

AP-in-FAO	Farid El Haffar, Wadzanai Garwe
FAO/WFP-UGSS	Marc Brown, Susan Murray
IAEA	Anthony Alozie, Monica Wanjiku Hepp
ICAO	Helena Debussy, Javier Sanchez
ILOTG	Cristina Pierini, Zakaria Elghormi
IMO	Shereen Barry, Fola Odulana
PAHO/WHO	Pilar Ramon Pardo
UNAIDS	Evelyn Siula, Tlotliso Monaheng
UNIDO	Osadolor Akpata,
UNESCO	Amani El-Sheikh, Federica Delconte
UNGSC	Alessandra Marcorio, Cosimo Lunedi, Salvatore Brunori
UPU	Oksana Nobile, Stéphane Vuillemin
WHO/HQ	Neddy Mafunga, Jérôme Zanga Foe
WHO/AFRO	Sitembekile Nyengera, Christian Tounta
WHO/EURO	Oleksandr Martynenko, Anita Stefin
WHO/SEARO	Ravinder Kumar
WHO/WPRO	Modesto Beligan VI

### **Members with Associate Status**

CERN	Catherine Regelbrugge, Joel Lahaye, Isabelle Mardirossian
CTBTO	Khalil Madhoun, Michelle Delinde

### **Members with Consultative Status**

AMFIE	Svend Booth
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### **Members with Observer Status**

FUNSA Guinea	Virginie Beavogui
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