

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FIELD ISSUES

Introduction

1. The Standing Committee on Field Issues (FIELD – see Annex I for participants) met three times, including one virtual session held before the Council, to address its agenda. Tanya Quinn-Maguire, former FICSA President, was appointed as rapporteur.

Summary of the 41st session of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network

2. The FICSA President summarized the 41st session of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN), on which FICSA had observer status. The FICSA President highlighted several key points in her report:
 - a. loss of funding to the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS)
 - b. higher risk to the United Nations (UN)
 - c. use of national professional officers (NPOs) as security officers.
3. UNDSS had suffered a 55% reduction in funding, primarily owing to decreased contributions from the United States of America. This resulted in topics being discussed with a focus on cost containment, rather than prioritization of the safety of staff. For example, the discussion related to the residential security allowance had included suggestions that staff abused the allowance, and that a restricted application of the allowance should become the norm. There was a disconnect from the One UN approach as specialized agencies that rely on the IASMN for the coordination of security issues were cutting their security in the current cost-containment climate but not allocating any funding to UNDSS to support implementation of security measures for the staff of their organizations.
4. At the same time as the intense focus on cost containment, the UN was at a much higher risk of attack than previously, particularly due to the increased threat of drone strikes.
5. IASMN had discussed the concept of allowing NPOs to be recruited as security officers, again in the context of cost containment. FICSA and its sister federations had made the point that security officers had traditionally been classified as Professional (P) staff. The FICSA President was concerned that the proposal would result in increased workloads with lower pay for NPOs. More concerning, NPOs, as locally recruited staff, are not eligible for evacuation in emergency situations, which could leave those staff stranded and possibly vulnerable to coercion by Member States. Further, mobility opportunities are limited for that category of staff unless models like WHO's – which allows international movement after two years – are adopted.

6. That discussion had also included a proposal to recruit and train more female security officers, although they would be recruited as NPOs and would not enjoy equal professional opportunities to those enjoyed by their male counterparts. In a time of deteriorating conditions, the proposal was presented as being in the interest of gender parity, while it would in fact result in employing women as a cheaper form of labour.
7. The FICSA President was concerned that, with the heightened focus on cost containment, proposals such as providing security support from hubs rather than at each duty station could severely risk the safety of staff, particular in some of the most dangerous and volatile duty stations.
8. In the ensuing discussion, a delegate raised additional concerns related to insurance: for example, staff traveling without all the proper security support could ultimately cost their organizations more in terms of liability. Another delegate questioned the role of UNDSS, citing an incident in which UNDSS allegedly provided instructions to staff members that they were safe to leave their homes to go to work during a three-day drone strike, and the staff association had to intervene to insist that staff work from home until the strike was over.

Conclusion

- **FIELD concluded that the apparent focus on cost containment over the safety of staff was a cause for grave concern.**

Recommendation

- **With grave concern about the impact of cost containment measures on the safety of staff, FIELD recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee, in consultation with the Standing Committee on Field Issues, to draft a resolution from the FICSA Council addressed to the UN Secretary-General and the executive heads of all FICSA member organizations and highlighting concerns about the apparent prioritization of cost-containment measures over staff safety and requesting that all executive heads urgently ensure that adequate resources are allocated to ensure the safety and security of all staff, particularly those in high risk and volatile duty stations.**

International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) Technical Working Group on Hardship Classification

9. The FICSA Executive Committee Member for Field Issues described his participation in the ICSC Technical Working Group on Hardship Classification. ICSC had completed its annual exercise to review the hardship classification of duty stations. ICSC rotates the review by region. Once the Working Group decides on and the ICSC Chair confirms a classification, that duty station is not reviewed for another three years.
10. The 2025 exercise had focused on the Asia-Pacific region and had seen an unusually high level of compliance, with all duty stations submitting their questionnaires and only three being partially completed. There had been no real surprises, except that Baghdad had been upgraded to category B, while traditionally it had been classified as D or C at best. The previous review of the classification of Baghdad had also returned a B classification, but the ICSC Chair had maintained the classification at C for transitional reasons. Following the most recent exercise, it was confirmed that Baghdad would now be officially classified as a B duty station. While the ICSC Chair makes the final, binding decision on the classification of a duty station, UN Resident Coordination of the duty station could challenge a decision by submitting a formal request, through the Resident Coordinator, accompanied by substantiated arguments on why the ICSC should revise the decision.
11. Both the FICSA Executive Committee Member for Field Issues and the FICSA President emphasized the critical importance of properly completing the questionnaire, as the review process depends

heavily on their content, and incomplete or generic responses can undermine the process. FICSA provides support on that issue, including guidance on how to complete the questionnaire. In addition, the [FICSA website](#) contains recordings of information sessions on the topic in three languages. Members with specific questions were invited to contact the FICSA Secretariat, which would make every effort to meet their needs, including the organization of information sessions at the local or regional level if necessary.

12. In addition, the FICSA Executive Committee was considering the development of training for the FICSA regional representatives on ICSC's classification of duty stations, to ensure that institutional knowledge is retained and passed on for future members of the Executive Committee and FICSA.

Recommendation

- **FIELD recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee should:**
 - **prepare training for the FICSA regional representatives on the topic of the classification of hardship duty stations, with emphasis on how to complete the questionnaire; and**
 - **continue to support and build the capacity of the FICSA membership at large on that topic.**

Family hubs

13. The FICSA Executive Committee Member for Field Issues described recent discussions of the concept of a so-called family hub for non-family duty stations, even though FIELD did not yet need to address the issue. In 2025, ICSC launched an initiative to explore options for staff to maintain contact with their families when assigned to a non-family duty station. The concept of a family hub proposed that a staff member would be able to choose between the continuation of current arrangements (the family in recognized place of residence while the staff member works at the non-family duty station) or relocating the family to a designated hub near the duty station.
14. The family hub concept raised a number of questions about administrative complexities and the effects on staff's entitlements, benefits, privileges and immunities. The fact that, under that proposal, the staff member could be physically based in the non-family duty station while administered from the duty station of the family hub would affect benefits and allowances such as post adjustment, eligibility for rest and recuperation, and mobility allowances, as well as accelerated home leave. In addition, the proposal would imply the necessity for the renegotiation of host agreements, and potential confusion about residence cards and reassignment processes. Additional issues still under discussion included security and insurance arrangements, and the need for clarity on the locations of the family hubs.
15. The impression was that the family hub concept was being sold as promoting family-friendly conditions while possible cost savings in terms of entitlements and benefits appeared to be the real goal. In addition, there was concern the initiative might eventually lead to the removal of the non-family service allowance. The FICSA Executive Committee Member for Field issues and the FICSA President emphasized that, once a concept is introduced, affected staff must be fully informed of all pertinent details. FICSA was committed to providing comprehensive information for staff and urged staff members to review of all terms with care before choosing between the two options.

Residency for retirees

16. The issue of residency for retirees had been covered by a recent "[Ask the FICSA Expert](#)" session and it had been agreed that FICSA could do nothing more than on the issue of G4 visas in the United States.

Federations of United Nations Staff Associations (FUNSAs)

17. While FICSA's review and enhancement of the modality, function and statutes of FUNSA within FICSA (document [FICSA/C/78/Field/CRP.01](#)) had been presented to FIELD during the 78th session of the FICSA

Council, there had been no follow-up, due to the exceptional circumstances of the past 12 months. The review's main recommendations included amending the statutes. It was hoped that the recommendations in the review document would go some way toward addressing concerns about the lack of staff representation at field duty stations. As the review was considered comprehensive and complete, FIELD needed to decide on the way forward.

18. FIELD agreed to recommend that FICSA adopt and implement the review's recommendations (document [FICSA/C/78/Field/CRP.01](#)).

Recommendation

- **FIELD recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee should take the necessary steps to implement the recommendations contained in the review of the modality, function, and statutes of FUNSA within FICSA (document [FICSA/C/78/Field/CRP.01](#)), including the proposed amendments to the [FUNSA model statutes](#).**

Nomination of officers and core group members

19. The following delegates were nominated as officers:

- Illias Animon (AP-in-FAO) as Chair
- Wallaa El Moawen (WHO EMRO) and Tlotliso Monaheng (UNAIDS) as vice-chairs.

20. The following delegates were nominated as members of the core group:

- Muhammad Irshad Anwer (FUNSA Pakistan)
- Rosa Ferreira (FUNSA Guinee Bissau)
- Tinasha Mariga (FUNSA Zimbabwe)
- Taha Abbas Mirza (FUNSA Pakistan)
- Qazi Saif Ur Rehman (FUNSA Pakistan)
- Ritesh Singh (WHO SEARO).

Appendix 1. Participants

Staff association/union

AP in FAO	Sophie Treinen
IFAD	Monica Buggi
PAHO/WHO	Glenda Lopez
UNAIDS	Tlotliso Monaheng
UNESCO	Federica Delconte
UNRWA	Diab El Tabari
UNIDO	Suleyman Yilmaz
WHO/AFRO	Christian Tounta
WHO/EMRO	Wallaa El-Moawen, Mina Nagy
WHO/EURO	Oleksandr Martynenko
WHO/SEARO	Ritesh Singh
WHO/WPRO	James Howlett

Members with Associate Status

CTBTO	Joseph Nemer
Green Climate Fund	Maria Camila Lopez Gil

Federation with Observers Status

FUNSA Guinea Bissau	Rosa Ferreira
FUNSA Liberia	Amos Boyah Kawreh
FUNSA Pakistan	Muhammad Irshad Anwer, Tahar Abbas Mirza, Qazi Saif Ur Rehman
FUNSA Zimbabwe	Tinashe Mariga, Tina Sibanda
