

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON STAFF–MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

Introduction

1. The Standing Committee on Staff-Management Relations (SMR) met on 17 February 2026 (virtually) and 24-25 February (in person) to address its agenda. See Appendix 1 for participants.

Activities in 2025

2. SMR discussed the actions taken to implement [the decisions of the 78th session of the FICSA Council](#). In line with decision FICSA/C/78/D/13, SMR had developed the checklist based on survey data and the minimum requirements outlined in administrative instruction [ST/AI/93](#). In addition to the [model agreement](#) developed by FICSA, the checklist aimed to assist staff associations in drafting or reviewing their MOUs to ensure the inclusion of key elements such as financial support, a structured negotiation framework, communication rights, protection from retaliation and access to organizational data. The checklist has been annexed and is published on the FICSA website under Staff–Management MOU ([FICSA/C/78/SMR/CRP.01](#))
3. SMR was also tasked with identifying member associations without formal agreements in place and reminding them of the importance of establishing a signed memorandum of understanding or cooperation agreement. In this regard, the 2023 survey on recognition agreements was updated and circulated through [Communication 28/25](#) in October 2025.
4. Pursuant to decision FICSA/C/78/D/13, SMR requested the FICSA Executive Committee, in collaboration with sister federations, to advocate for the updating of the UN Secretariat’s administrative instruction [ST/AI/293](#) and [A/C.5/50/64](#)) concerning facilities for staff representatives, in line with the comments of the UN Secretary-General ([A/67/136/Add.1](#)). This activity remains ongoing and, taking into account prevailing circumstances, has been postponed to the following year.
5. In line with decision FICSA/C/78/D/14, the FICSA Executive Committee was requested to advocate, in meetings of the Human Resources Network and the High-Level Committee on Management, for the establishment of regular communication mechanisms between management and staff associations/unions, and for training on the guiding principles of staff–management relations as part of induction processes – Completed. The FICSA President, accompanied by an Executive Committee member, participated in HLCM breakout sessions, emphasizing the need for strengthened collaboration with staff associations, highlighting gaps in staff reduction exercises, and advocating for more systematic engagement at HLCM, ICSC and Member State levels.
6. Pursuant to decision FICSA/C/78/D/15, the FICSA Executive Committee, in collaboration with SMR, was requested to collect and consolidate Terms of Reference (ToRs) for staff representatives into a model document for publication on the FICSA website. Through [Communication 28/25](#), FICSA circulated a

survey and received 18 responses: 8 members reported having ToRs (standalone or embedded), while 10 indicated limited or no ToRs. The findings informed the discussions held under Agenda Item 5.

Terms of Reference for Staff Representatives – Requirements for Outlining Key Duties and Responsibilities

7. SMR noted the importance of well-defined Terms of Reference (ToRs) outlining the duties and responsibilities of staff representatives to ensure the effective functioning of staff association committees. While the FICSA Handbook provides guidance at the committee level, clearly defined individual roles and responsibilities were considered essential to reduce overlaps, ensure equitable workload distribution, support recruitment, provide a basis for negotiating release time and ensure continuity during leadership transitions. In this context, SMR emphasized the need for structured handover arrangements, including processes whereby outgoing members brief incoming committee members.
8. SMR reviewed the findings of a survey conducted among 19 member associations, which revealed considerable diversity in practice. The survey highlighted significant variation in both scope and level of detail. Some associations maintain comprehensive ToRs covering all posts, while others adopt more concise approaches or embedded governance arrangements within statutes or staff regulations. It was noted that such arrangements are closely aligned with each organization's Staff Regulations and Rules, reflecting differing institutional contexts.
9. SMR members agreed that, given this diversity, the development of a single model ToR would not be appropriate, as it would risk being either overly prescriptive or insufficiently adaptable. Differences in committee composition, roles and organizational requirements necessitate flexible, context-specific approaches.
10. SMR recommended that a consolidated repository of statutes and Terms of Reference (ToRs) be established to support member associations in developing and reviewing their governance frameworks. In this context, associations that have not yet submitted their ToR documents were encouraged to do so, and all associations were encouraged to review and update their ToRs periodically to ensure they remain current.

Recommendation

- **SMR recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee, in collaboration with the Standing Committee on Staff Management Relations, should collate Statutes and Terms of Reference submitted by Staff Associations and Unions committee members, and make them available in the FICSA document repository on the FICSA website.**

Governance Framework for Executive Committees

11. SMR members discussed the internal governance of staff association committees, identifying a number of key elements essential for their effective functioning. These included strategic planning, continuity and institutional memory, role clarity, decision-making processes, communication practices, and accountability mechanisms. While approaches varied across organizations, members agreed that strong governance frameworks are critical to ensuring effective representation and engagement with management.
12. With regard to strategic planning, several associations reported using structured work plans to monitor ongoing activities, including the tracking of priorities, responsibilities, timelines and deliverables. Others emphasized the importance of annual reports and presentations to general assemblies as tools to enhance transparency and accountability to their constituencies.

13. The issue of continuity and institutional memory emerged as a key concern, particularly in associations experiencing frequent turnover of committee members. Members shared a range of practices aimed at ensuring smooth transitions, including staggered election systems, whereby only part of the committee is renewed at any given time, and the use of advisory arrangements involving former committee members. Additional measures included the development of standard operating procedures for recurring tasks, the maintenance of centralized document repositories containing reports and templates, and structured handover processes, including shadowing arrangements between outgoing and incoming officers.
14. SMR also discussed governance arrangements and the allocation of roles and responsibilities within committees. Practices varied, with some associations granting flexibility to committee leadership to determine roles and allocate release time, while others operated on principles of shared responsibility, with members assuming lead roles based on expertise. The role of administrative support staff was also considered. In some associations, assistants are engaged to support committee functions, often on a contractual basis. Members emphasized the importance of maintaining clear boundaries between elected representatives and non-elected support staff, given the different nature of their roles and accountability.
15. With respect to decision-making and communication, associations reported a range of approaches, including regular meetings with management at varying intervals and the use of different formats for reporting outcomes to staff. These included concise summaries for wider dissemination and more detailed records for internal use. Communication channels such as intranet platforms, newsletters and annual reports were commonly used to keep staff informed. Some associations also conduct staff satisfaction surveys, either jointly with management or independently, as a means of gathering feedback and identifying areas for improvement.
16. SMR further noted the importance of accountability and transparency in the functioning of staff associations. Good practices included the preparation of financial reports reviewed by elected auditors prior to presentation at general assemblies, the application of multi-signatory requirements for financial transactions, and the provision of activity reports outlining issues raised with management, while ensuring that confidential matters are appropriately anonymized. Budget approval processes through general assemblies were also highlighted as an important accountability mechanism.
17. The issue of release time and backfill arrangements remained a concern across many associations. While some organizations provide for full-time release with appropriate financial arrangements to enable backfilling, others reported that release time provisions are not effectively implemented in practice, with staff representatives continuing to perform their regular duties alongside their representative functions. SMR recalled that the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) has guided on release time, including recommendations based on organizational size.
18. SMR also recalled that the existing United Nations administrative frameworks governing facilities for staff representatives, including administrative instruction [ST/AI/293](#) and [A/C.5/50/64](#) are outdated and no longer reflect current needs. The importance of continued advocacy for their revision was reiterated.

Recommendation

- **SMR recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee in collaboration with the Standing Committee on Staff Management Relations, should collect good practices from member associations on strategic continuity, institutional memory, accountability and staff–management engagement, with the aim of developing a modular, principle-based governance toolkit to be published on the FICSA website.**

Latest Updates from Member Organizations

19. SMR discussed recent developments affecting staff–management relations, including the impact of UN80 and related organizational reforms, as well as ongoing financial constraints. Members reported workforce reductions, primarily affecting vacant posts, alongside hiring freezes and restructuring exercises. In parallel, an increased reliance on non-regular personnel, including consultants and other contractual arrangements, was observed as a means of maintaining operational capacity. It was also noted that, in some cases, separated staff are being rehired under non-standard modalities. Members emphasized the importance of staff representatives being involved in decision-making processes and highlighted the need to support staff through training and professional development to remain competitive in an evolving workforce environment.
20. Building on discussions held jointly with the HRM Standing Committee, SMR examined trends related to non-regular staff and so-called “affiliate personnel”. Members shared a range of practices, including the establishment of dedicated associations for consultants, their inclusion in staff representation structures, or their participation in staff association activities in a non-voting or observer capacity. In some cases, consultants contribute financially to staff associations, while in others they remain outside formal representation structures and are seeking to organize independently.
21. SMR noted that the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) had encouraged organizations to allow consultants to join local staff associations, although this remains an informal recommendation. The adoption of the term “affiliate personnel” was also noted as part of ongoing efforts to standardize terminology across the system.
22. Concerns were raised regarding the increasing reliance on non-regular personnel, including the emergence of a two-tier workforce, the engagement of consultants in core and long-term functions without corresponding job security or benefits, and the use of procurement-based approaches that may exert downward pressure on remuneration. Members also noted that these trends may be linked, in part, to efforts to manage long-term liabilities in the context of broader reform processes. The situation of secondees operating under national employment frameworks was highlighted as a further complexity in ensuring consistent application of conditions of service.

Recommendation

- **SMR recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee, in collaboration with the Standing Committee on Staff Management Relations, should remind its membership to reach out to FICSA for guidance and support in case of any decline in their staff-management relations.**

Nomination of officers and core group members

23. SMR nominated the following delegates as officers:
 - Viera Seben (ICAO) as chair
 - Catherine Korsini (WHO/HQ) Barbara Papadopoulou (IAEA) as vice-chairs
24. All the SMR members present were nominated as members of the core group.

Appendix 1. Participants

Staff association/union

AP-in-FAO	Farid El Haffar
FAO UGSS/WFP	Susan Murray
IAEA	Daniela Panzenboeck, Barbara Papadopoulou
ICAO	Viera Seben, Marissa Collis, Sven Halle
IFAD	Monica Buggi, Charles Forrest
ILO ITC	Eiman Elmasry
IMO	Shereen Barry, Benjamin Herve
UNESCO	Viviana Zaccaria
UNFCCC	Rogier Van der Haagen, Sarah Klinghammer
UN Tourism	Yang Li
UPU	Magali Vifian, Oksana Nobile
WHO/AFRO	Arlette Ossere Okopoue, Harris Benito Koubemba
WHO/EURO	Anita Stefin
WHO/HQ	Catherine Kirorei Corsini, Nicole Valentine, Rosa Alianelli, Neddy Mafunga
WHO/WPRO	James Howlett
WMO	Guilherme Varro

Members with associate status

CERN	Joel Lahaye
CTBTO	Todd Vincent
Green Climate Fund	Caroline Vassighi, Maria Camila
OPCW	Oksana Tyshchenko

Members with consultative status

EMBL	Katarzyna Marciniak
AIIB	Clinton Watson
FUNSA Guinea Bissau	Rosa Ferreira