



COMMUNICATIONS

RESOLUTION FROM THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE COMMON SYSTEM

02/25

Geneva
7 January 2025

To: All FICSA Members

For distribution to: All staff representatives / all staff

From: Wadzanai Garwe, FICSA President

Dear colleagues,

Further to [FICSA's statement to the Fifth Committee of the UN General Assembly \(UNGA\)](#) in November 2024, and [FICSA Communications 28/24](#) on the Compensation Package, we are pleased to share the [letter from the ICSC Chair \(ICSC/CIRC/GEN/05/2024\)](#) on the UN General Assembly resolution 79/252 adopted on 24 December 2024. (As of today, the resolution documents have not yet been published on the UN website - <https://www.undocs.org/A/RES/79/252> and <https://www.undocs.org/A/79/645>.)

This communication summarizes the key issues that will affect all UN-System staff members moving forward. Progress in safeguarding conditions of service and continuous advocacy for a sustainable and fit-for-purpose International Civil Service was primarily achieved due to the continuous efforts of FICSA representation at the various committees, meetings, and working groups. Our representatives' contributions reflected the inputs you provided during Council, Standing Committee-, and Heads-of-Delegation meetings. You are strongly urged to share this information with your members, as this is a large part of your achievement. While we have made some headway in certain areas, you will also recognize that the way ahead will be no less challenging.

We recap some of the main points of the [letter](#):

1. As you can see in the memo, the UN General Assembly reaffirmed its role in approving conditions of service and entitlements for **all staff** serving in the organizations of the UN common system as per articles 10 and 11 of the ICSC Statutes. Also, it recalled that ICSC Commissioners shall perform their functions with full independence and impartiality. The UNGA was concerned that a few organizations of the UN Common System listed in [Annex III of the ICSC Annual Report for 2024](#) have not accepted the modified ICSC statutes yet and reminded organizations that failure to respect UNGA decisions could impact participation in the common system, including in the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF).

2. The UNGA welcomed the inclusion of multilingualism in the ICSC program of work and remarked on language incentives as a measure to promote multilingualism in the common system. FICSA noted that language incentives were removed from the compensation package for International Professional staff during the last review but were retained for locally recruited categories. Therefore, this remark seems optimistic.
3. The UNGA requested the ICSC to achieve a higher response rate and representativeness in future global staff surveys, and the ICSC to provide information on the policies of the organizations on flexible working arrangements (FWA). FICSA noted that until today, FWA has been managed by the organizations with reference to the [HLCM's UN System Model Policy on Flexible Work](#). FWA in the United Nations system organizations was reviewed by the [Joint Inspection Unit \(JIU\)](#) last year, and it is interesting to see the UNGA and ICSC seeking more information on this topic, hoping that it would lead to further harmonization and coherence in a positive direction.
4. Next, the UNGA underlined the importance of comprehensive oversight of the common system in a holistic manner, on the importance of the premise of overall **cost containment, sustainability,** and criteria of **competitiveness** and **flexibility** of the compensation package, [timeliness for completion as per the planned timeline](#) and publication of the review for UNGA's consideration at its [Eighty-first Session that will begin in September 2026](#).
5. The UNGA requested the ICSC to explore options for non-financial incentives, monitor age distribution trends in the workforce, and encourage organizations to rejuvenate the workforce.
6. The UNGA approved a 9.5 percent adjustment to the unified base/floor scale for International Professional staff effective from 1 January 2025, through the standard no-gain/no-loss consolidation procedure, namely by increasing the base/floor salary scale and commensurately decreasing post adjustment multipliers. As you may recall, the salaries of staff in the International Professional categories are set in reference to the comparator civil service – the federal civil service of the United States of America, where there have been increases in salary and changes in the federal tax system. In comparison, locally recruited staff salaries are set in reference to comparators in the local labor market of the duty station and adjusted accordingly during salary surveys. (Para 197 onwards of the [ICSC Annual Report for 2024](#))
7. Unfortunately, it did not approve any changes to the children's and secondary dependent's allowances, and the level of education grant. ICSC had proposed for children's allowance to be updated to \$3,322 per annum from the current \$2,929 level since January 2011, and secondary dependant's allowance to be updated to \$1,163 per annum (from \$1,025 currently), and for the current sliding scale for education grant be adjusted upwards by 5.14 percent to reflect the average rate of tuition fee movements of representative schools for the period. Please note that the above is for International professional staff – locally recruited staff's dependents' allowances are set and established based on local labor market practice during a comprehensive salary survey and adjusted based on the local labor market.
8. The UNGA approved the continuation of the pilot programme for payment of amount in lieu of settling-in grant at category D and E duty stations that are not designated as non-family until completion of the comprehensive review, and also considered documents [A/79/497](#) (Secretary-General's report on system-wide compensation costs), and [A/79/607](#) (Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions ACABQ's report).

Rest assured, FICSA will continue to keep you updated as we engage with the Fifth Committee, the ICSC, the HLCM, and other stakeholders throughout the year, and we look forward to discussing further with you at the upcoming [78th FICSA Council](#) in February.

If you have any questions regarding any specific topic mentioned above, please do not hesitate to contact us through the FICSA Secretariat at ficsa@un.org
