



COMMUNICATIONS

76TH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

58/21

**Geneva
22 November 2021**

To: All FICSA Members

For distribution to: All staff representatives / all staff (optional)

From: Irwan Mohd Razali, FICSA Information Officer

Dear colleagues,

As you will have seen from our [Circular 1351](#), FICSA addressed the Fifth Committee of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) at 3.00pm New York time on 16 November, under the agenda item 145 titled “UN Common System”.

In order to assist our members in understanding this important process, we are pleased to provide a summary of the events below. As usual, if you have any questions on this or any other topic, please do not hesitate to contact us.

The session began with the presentation of the [report of the International Civil Service Commission \(ICSC\)](#) by its Chair, Mr Larbi Djacta and the ICSC’s introductory [statement](#).

In summary, the ICSC recommended that the unified base/floor salary scale be adjusted by a 0.92% increase effective 1 January 2022 on a no-loss/no-gain in net take-home pay by a commensurate reduction in post adjustment multiplier points. This is a standard agenda item reflecting the annual process to harmonize the base-floor salary with the comparator. The ICSC also reported on the net remuneration margin which stood at 113.3. Again, this is a standard agenda item. Next, the ICSC reconfirmed, for implementation as from the academic year in progress on 1 January 2022, its 2019 recommendation to the General Assembly regarding the adjustment to the declining scale for the education grant and the boarding lump sum as presented in its 2019 annual report (A/74/30, para. 85) and reproduced in annex IV to the [present ICSC report](#). You can read the current and past ICSC annual reports on the [ICSC website here](#).

See below section on Education Grant to obtain more details regarding the education grant sliding scale.

The ICSC recommended that the pilot scheme as approved in UNGA resolution [A/RES/73/273](#) where the Assembly decided to grant, on a pilot basis, an amount of \$15,000 for staff members with eligible dependents in duty stations with E hardship classification conditions only, be formalized and that the reduced non-family service allowance of \$15,000 per annum continue to be payable in lieu of family installation benefits, where applicable and that the measure be expanded to include D duty stations not designated as non-family. The ICSC updated the General Assembly on the new round of baseline cost-of-living surveys that was recently launched, the comprehensive assessment report on the compensation package, review of the mobility incentive and measures to address non-compliance with decisions and recommendations of the Commission.

The Controller in the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, Department of Management ([PPBD](#)) and the Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions ([ACABQ](#)) gave their recommendations on how the recommendations of the ICSC would impact the UN programme budget of next year.



The session continued with the statement by the FICSA President, Tanya Quinn-Maguire. FICSA is recognized by the UNGA through its resolutions 34/220 of 20 December 1979 and 35/213 dated 17 December 1980 to represent the views of staff. The full statement is available through [FICSA Circular 1351](#), and the video recording of the session is available through this [link](#) (scroll to 19:40 of the video).



In the statement, Tanya reminded the delegates to bear in mind the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on every individual globally as we, the UN system staff members, continue to deliver our mandates to the people that we serve, and that FICSA had continued its constructive dialogue with the ICSC despite the constraints of the pandemic.

FICSA expressed its strong support for the revision of the education grant sliding scale levels, as well as the increase of the lump sum boarding assistance as recommended by the ICSC. In addition, FICSA supported the request by the ICSC to formalize the non-family service allowance to staff members at duty stations with a hardship classification of E, and to extend the scheme to category D duty stations. FICSA also reported its active participation in the ICSC Working Group on contractual framework, and was pleased to note that the outcome was in-line with the position long-held by the Staff Federations: the current contractual framework remains fit for purpose. It also took note of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF)'s healthy situation to discharge its obligation, and supported recommendations related to the Pension Board, i.e. the Ethics Policy and amendments to the UNJSPF Regulations and Rules.

In closing, FICSA reiterated the importance of an independent international civil service, with the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity, and that the recommendations by the ICSC today, should be seen as a modest investment that will help ensure the Organizations most valuable asset, its staff, continue to be fit for purpose and continue to deliver to the people it serves.

The other two staff federations, Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System ([CCISUA](#)) and United Nations International Civil Servants Federation ([UNISERV](#)) took the floor next, click on the links above to see their statement to the fifth committee.

The Chair of the Fifth Committee invited statements from Member States next, which saw comments from [Guinea representing the G77 Group and China](#), who were supportive of the ICSC recommendations. The Group also acknowledged that the ICSC's sometimes complex policies and decisions are more sustainable and better implemented when they have the buy-in of Organizations and Staff. They highly recommended that a bigger effort is made in investing in better communications with staff and demystifying the ICSC's methodologies and practices, reaching out to stakeholders, identifying concerns well in advance and collectively identifying policy solutions.



The representative of [Switzerland and also on behalf of Liechtenstein](#) addressed the issue of dual post adjustment in Geneva and is supportive of a baseline cost of living survey as well as the review of the [jurisdictional set up](#). The representative of the [European Union](#) addressed the comprehensive assessment of the compensation package to discuss if and where needed, to further adjust and strengthen the compensation system to serve its objectives in an equitable, transparent and cost-effective manner.

The [African Group, represented by Uganda](#), gave the next statement in support of the ICSC recommendations, and stated that cost effectiveness should not be achieved by reducing staff benefits, but through increased simplification, efficiency and streamlining of procedures. The delegate also stated that teleworking should not be the norm, but rather, a transition to more interactive working methods. The group also expressed their keen interest in equitable geographical representation and strengthening the role of the youth and rejuvenation of the organization.

The representative from the [United States](#) stated his nation's interest in a unified scale in Geneva as well as addressing the diverging jurisprudence, as well as transparency and better data on compensation matters through access to better data on UN system-wide costs. The delegate remarked on the need to encourage further alignment of ICSC methodology with international best practices, such as through the use of external data to establish salary scales and post adjustments.

The representative of [Japan](#) expressed the need to examine the rationales and justifications of ICSC's proposals that has financial impact, for example, revision of base salaries and education grant.

The representative of [Mexico](#), similar to Japan, wished to analyze carefully ICSC's proposals with regard to their financial impact, to ensure a balanced application of the benefits of these concepts, to

the 2022 programme budget and peacekeeping budget of the organization. Mexico also commented on the importance of the review of the jurisdictional set up.

The [United Kingdom](#) stated its support for diversity, and policies that support a culture of respect and inclusion, help to rejuvenate the system and increase diversity, looking beyond the limited but important focus on gender and nationality. The UK is looking forward to the outcomes of the ICSC working group for parental leave as a key enabler of gender equality. They also focused on performance management, effective training and addressing underperformance, and policies which promote a culture of mobility across the system. The UK looked forward to the next steps on the jurisdictional review of the justice systems.

[Republic of Korea](#) would like to see a single, unified UN Common System and the progress report on the review of the jurisdictional set up.

Other Member States took the floor afterwards, including Bangladesh, and Russia.

The ICSC chair was given the floor to wrap up and respond to any questions. He informed delegates that the ICSC is ready to engage with the Member States during the [informal sessions](#), and the Fifth Committee Chair ended the session.

As part of the next steps in the process, the FICSA President will be meeting Member States informally to provide more information and discuss matters of mutual interest to FICSA, and will be accompanied in some sessions by Imed Zabaar, President of the IAEA Staff Association. It is expected that the Fifth Committee will finalize a resolution on this topic in the coming weeks which will then be presented to the GA for approval.

Education Grant – original sliding scale and the proposed revision by the ICSC.

Original Sliding Scale		
Claim amount bracket (United States dollars)	Reimbursement (percentage)	rate
0 to 11,600	86	
11,601 to 17,400	81	
17,401 to 23,200	76	
23,201 to 29,000	71	
29,001 to 34,800	66	
34,801 to 40,600	61	
40,601 and above	-	

Proposed revision		
Claim amount bracket (United States dollars)	Reimbursement (percentage)	rate
0 to 13,300	86	
13,301 to 20,000	81	
20,001 to 26,700	76	
26,701 to 33,400	71	
33,401 to 40,000	66	
40,001 to 46,700	61	
46,701 and above	-	

Note: The simulations below are provided as examples only to illustrate the impact of the proposed revision, and do not constitute a legal or binding advice. Please get in touch with your own office of Human Resources for your specific claims or scenario.

Simulation 1 - Original Sliding Scale

What if you have a claim of 25,000?

The first	11,600	will be reimbursed at 86%	\$ 9,976.00
The next	5,800	will be reimbursed at 81%	\$ 4,698.00
The next	5,800	will be reimbursed at 76%	\$ 4,408.00
The next	1,800	will be reimbursed at 71%	\$ 1,278.00
		Total reimbursed	\$ 20,360.00
		Percentage reimbursed (20,360 / 25,000 x 100%)	81.44%

Simulation 1 - Proposed revision

What if you have a claim of 25,000?

The first	13,300	will be reimbursed at 86%	\$ 11,438.00
The next	6,700	will be reimbursed at 81%	\$ 5,427.00
The next	5,000	will be reimbursed at 76%	\$ 3,800.00
		Total reimbursed	\$ 20,665.00
		Percentage reimbursed (20,665 / 25,000 x 100%)	82.66%

Simulation 2 - Original Sliding Scale

What if you have a claim of 35,000?

The first	11,600	will be reimbursed at 86%	\$ 9,976.00
The next	5,800	will be reimbursed at 81%	\$ 4,698.00
The next	5,800	will be reimbursed at 76%	\$ 4,408.00
The next	5,800	will be reimbursed at 71%	\$ 1,988.00
The next	5,800	will be reimbursed at 66%	\$ 3,828.00
The last	200	will be reimbursed at 61%	\$ 122.00
		Total reimbursed	\$ 25,020.00
		Percentage reimbursed (25,020 / 35,000 x 100%)	71.48%

Simulation 2 - Proposed revision

What if you have a claim of 35,000?

The first	13,300	will be reimbursed at 86%	\$ 11,438.00
The next	6,700	will be reimbursed at 81%	\$ 5,427.00
The next	6,700	will be reimbursed at 76%	\$ 3,800.00
The next	6,700	will be reimbursed at 71%	\$ 4,757.00
The last	1,600	will be reimbursed at 66%	\$ 1,056.00
		Total reimbursed	\$ 26,478.00
		Percentage reimbursed (26,478 / 35,000 x 100%)	75.65%