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Office of the Chairman

Bureau du Président

Reference: ICSC 32-9

31 December 2020

To: Participating Organizations
Staff Representatives

From: Larbi Djacta
Chairman

Subject: **Classification of duty stations according to conditions of life and work and
Designation of Non-Family Duty Stations – 2020 Annual Review**

1. The 2020 Annual Review of Field Duty Stations according to the Conditions of Life and Work was conducted, virtually via Microsoft Teams, from 1 to 7 December 2020 by the Tripartite Working Group established by the ICSC and composed of members of the ICSC secretariat, representatives of the organizations and staff federations. The hardship ratings for each of the duty stations reviewed were based on the latest information made available to the Working Group, who applied the criteria as approved by the Commission in an objective manner taking into full account the views of all members.

2. The Working Group also reviewed the field duty stations in which the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) had restricted the presence of all eligible dependents for reasons of safety and security, for a period of six months or longer.

3. Following the above-mentioned 2020 Annual Review, I am pleased to promulgate the following, effective **1 January 2021:**

- a. Hardship Classification - Consolidated List of Entitlements Circular (ICSC/CIRC/HC/27) – available at: <https://icsc.un.org/Home/DataMobility>
- b. List of non-family duty stations – available at: <https://icsc.un.org/Home/DataNonFamily>

4. I have approved 335 out of 337 recommendations received from the Working Group on the overall hardship ratings of the reviewed field duty stations. Thus, I have decided the following on the remaining two duty stations:

- a. To maintain Apia, Samoa as an overall “B” category duty station; and
- b. To release the six-year adjusted overall rating of “B” for Lomé, Togo and retain the overall of an “A” category for the duty station according to the established methodology.

5. I am also approving transitional classifications recommended by the Working Group, except for Brazzaville, Republic of Congo and Khartoum, Sudan, as stated below:

Country/Area	Duty Station
DJIBOUTI	Djibouti
TANZANIA, UNITED REP. OF	Kasulu
TANZANIA, UNITED REP. OF	Kibondo
TANZANIA, UNITED REP. OF	Kigoma
WESTERN SAHARA	Laayoune

6. A transitional classification indicates that a duty station is being carefully monitored by the Working Group for potential reclassification and the duty station is required to submit a questionnaire the following year. Therefore, a full questionnaire should be submitted to the ICSC, upon request, for the above duty stations to be included in the **2021 Annual Review of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Middle East**. The Human Resources Director of the lead agency concerned is requested to notify the Resident Coordinator of the transitional status. The Resident Coordinator in turn, should inform the staff and ensure that a questionnaire is submitted to ICSC by due date.

7. In addition to the above, I am approving the recommendation of the Working Group for Burundi to resubmit questionnaires for all active duty stations (i.e. Bujumbura, Gitega, Makamba Muyinga, Ngozi and Ruyigil) and to be reviewed at the **2021 Mid-Year Review** in order to verify and confirm the health conditions of these duty stations. In this regard, the Human Resources Director of the lead agency concerned is requested to notify the Resident Coordinator of Burundi to ensure that fully completed hardship questionnaires for these duty stations are submitted to ICSC by **15 March 2021** for inclusion in the 2021 Mid-Year Review.

8. It should be noted that difficulties in obtaining the information on the health conditions continue to persist and I urge Resident Coordinators, World Health Organization (WHO) Representatives, and United Nations (UN) examining physicians to ensure that as much information and support as possible are provided under the roles and responsibilities defined in the hardship classification scheme are duly exercised. I look forward to receiving recommendations from the UN Medical Directors Network and WHO to strengthen the capacity of the data collection process and improve the submission rate for the health section of the hardship questionnaires. The ICSC secretariat stands ready to advise on the process and provide briefings and guidance.

9. I cannot overemphasize the importance of the review exercise which culminates in the categorization of field duty stations according to conditions of life and work. The Working Group relies heavily on the information submitted to the ICSC secretariat by duty stations. Therefore, failure on the part of organizations to submit comprehensive, accurate information in a timely manner can potentially lead to the erosion of the integrity of the scheme besides giving rise to a question of managerial accountability. Please note, however, that in accordance with the Commission's decision at its seventy-first session, duty stations, which are scheduled for a review, are reviewed whether a questionnaire is submitted or not.

10. I request you to encourage the full participation of field duty stations of your organization for the mandatory **2021 Annual Review of hardship duty stations in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Middle East**. The secretariat will, as in the past, issue the invitation to Resident Coordinators no later than July 2021 to allow for the timely preparation and submission of questionnaires.

11. Thank you for your ongoing support in future exercises.