

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES

Officers

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| Chair | Christian Gerlier (ITU) |
| Vice-Chair | Santhosh Thanjavur Prakasam (UNFCCC) |
| Rapporteur | David Lloyd (EMBL) |
| FICSA President | Brett Fitzgerald (WIPO) |
| FICSA General Secretary | Evelyn Kortum (WHO/HQ) |
| Members, FICSA Executive Committee | Veronique Allain (SCBD), Diab El-Tabari (UNRWA ASA), Imed Yabaar (IAEA) |
| Regional representatives | Jesus Garcia Jimenez (ITC-ILO) |

Participants

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| AP-in-FAO | Juan José Coy Girón, Jakob Skoet, Ny You |
| IARC | Cecile Le Duc |
| ICAO | Sanya Dehinde |
| IFAD | Lixia Young |
| IMO | Elene Sarria, Juan Lyu |
| UNAIDS | Andrea Palazzi |
| UNFCCC | Tracy Tollmann |
| UPU | Birahim Fall, Franck Landauer |
| WHO/AFRO | Hamidou Bague, Symplice Mbola Mbassi |
| WHO/EMRO | Tonya Rifaey |
| WHO/EURO | Shahin Huseynov |
| WHO/HQ | Lianne Gonsalves |
| WHO/GSC | Kiranjeet Kaur |

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| WHO/WPRO M | Priya Mannava |
| WIPO | Lucia Tchougang-Palombo |
| WMO | Andres Orias-Bleichner |

Member with associate status

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| OPCW | Romina Catera |
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Guest

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| WMU | Anne Pazaver |
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Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

1. The Committee adopted the following agenda:
 1. Adoption of the agenda
 2. Election of the rapporteur
 3. Report of the PTC/PSA
 4. Status of the new methodology following the meetings/discussions throughout the year
 5. Eligibility for P-staff positions: requirements and qualifications needed – differences among agencies
 6. Workshops and other business
 7. Nomination of Standing Committee officers and core group members

Election of rapporteur (agenda Item 2)

2. David Lloyd (EMBL SA) was elected rapporteur.

Report of the PTC/PSA (agenda Item 3)

3. As the report was not ready when the meeting started, it would will be distributed to the participants as soon as it was available (Appendix 1).

Status of the new methodology following the meetings/discussions throughout the year (agenda Item 4)

4. The Chair reminded the Standing Committee that the new survey methodology was not clearly defined. The two items that were more or less defined were the use of the Törnqvist formula (instead of the modified Walsh and Fisher formula used by the ICSC during the 2016 cost-of-living surveys) and the collection of data prices from the market, not from staff's reported expenditures or incurred costs. Whether removing the staff questionnaire was an improvement was unclear.
5. There were two survey methodologies for the professional and higher categories: one for the Group I duty stations and one for the Group II duty stations. The review of the survey methodology concerns the latter.
6. The Chair reminded the Committee that “the overall purpose of the current system of

operational rules was to ensure that the adjustment of the salaries of the United Nations common system staff in the Professional and higher categories was in line with specific compensation policy objectives, including accuracy, stability and predictability of salary adjustments, as well as simplicity and transparency of the salary-setting process”. The last round of cost-of living surveys had been organized in 2016 and it should be conducted every five years. The next round should therefore occur in 2021, so the ICSC secretariat had little time to get an new survey methodology and operational rules approved. As the ICSC Chair had told the Council that “Member States want to close the gap between post-adjustments in the same duty station”, it was possible that the review of the survey methodology could lead to a reduction of the higher post adjustment multiplier to align with the lower one in such cases.

7. The ICSC Chair had announced to the Council that a working group would meet two weeks after the Council, in UNESCO, Paris, to define more closely the operational rules and specifically the Control Convergence Mechanism (CCM). The new CCM could have potential pitfalls and may request an increase of the revisions’ frequency. Its impact on staff’s net remuneration was unclear.

The Committee recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee:

- **advise relevant staff associations at the duty stations where the old methodology is being implemented not to participate in the cost-of-living surveys; if ICSC insisted on proceeding, that decision to proceed must be appealed;**
- **be actively involved in updating the survey methodology and the operational rules and keep the membership informed;**
- **monitor on a quarterly basis changes to post adjustment, reach out to the relevant organization(s) in affected duty stations when it found a discrepancy, and provide support, information and guidance.**

The Committee reiterated 72nd Council’s recommendation that the FICSA Executive Committee should create a matrix displaying the differences between the old and the new methodology. FICSA should gather the members’ views, to come to a position on which methodology should be adopted.

The Committee reiterated the 72nd Council’s recommendation that the Executive Committee approach the ICSC Secretariat to provide training on the proposed new methodology(ies).

Eligibility for P-staff positions: requirements and qualifications needed – differences among agencies (agenda Item 5)

10. The Committee aimed:

- to gather views on how different agencies handle job classification is in
- to discover whether the ICSC standard for job classification is applied in different organizations;
- to share views and documents on practices that being followed in different agencies.

11. The discussion revealed that: similar roles were not given consistent grades; qualification requirements for similar posts differed; discrepancies appeared even within an organization on level of jobs; some staff did work at a higher grade without due recognition, etc. More common issues included: failure to trigger reclassification when the job description changed significantly, use of out-of-date job descriptions in process changes/restructuring exercises.

The Committee recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee urge the Human Resources (HR) network and heads of agencies to apply ICSC standards for job classification and qualification requirements, including periodic updating of job descriptions, especially when a restructuring exercise was foreseen.

Workshops and other business (agenda Item 6)

12. The Chair expressed his concern about paragraph C of the UN General Assembly resolutions 74/255A and 74/255B, approved on 27 December 2019, which postponed discussion of the ICSC recommendations on the education grant. Those recommendations were related to the sliding reimbursement scales and the boarding lump sum, and they should have a positive impact on the staff.

Nomination of Standing Committee officers and core group members (agenda Item 7)

13. Whilst the ITU staff union remained a member of FICSA, the following were nominated as officers of the Standing Committee:

- Christian Gerlier (ITU) as Chair
- Santhosh Prakasam (UNFCCC) as first Vice-Chair
- Priya Mannava (WHO/WPRO) as second Vice-Chair.

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

- Cecile Le Duc (IARC)
- Birahim Fall (UPU)
- Shahin Huseynov (WHO/EURO)
- Elene Sarria (IMO).
- Imed Zabaar (IAEA)
- Andrea Palazzi (UNAIDS)
- Sanya Dehinde (ICAO)
- Ny You (AP-in-FAO)

Appendix 1

REPORT OF PERMANENT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES

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| Coordinator: | Christian Gerlier (ITU, Geneva) |
| Rapporteur | Tonia Rifaey (WHO/EMRO, Cairo) |
| FICSA President | Brett Fitzgerald (WIPO Geneva) |
| FICSA General Secretary | Evelyn Kortum (WHO/HQ Geneva) |
| Members, FICSA Executive Committee | Diab El-Tabari (UNRWA ASA Beirut) |

Participants

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| AP-in-FAO | Juan José Coy Girón |
| ICAO | Sanya Dehinde |
| IFAD | Lixia Young |
| UNAIDS | Andrea Palazzi |
| UNFCCC | Ambretta Perrino Santhosh Thanjavur Prakasam Tracy Tollmann |
| WHO/EMRO Cairo | Tonya Rifaey |
| WHO/EURO Copenhagen | Shahin Huseynov |

Introduction

1. Under the coordination of Christian Gerlier the Permanent Technical Committee met to address items 1-8 of its agenda.

Adoption of the agenda (Agenda item 1)

2. The Committee adopted the following agenda:
1. Adoption of agenda
 2. Election of the rapporteur
 3. Report on the 2019 ACPAQ session in May, review of approved recommendations – Christian Gerlier
 4. Strategize in preparation for the next ACPAQ meetings (provisionally 11-18 May 2020, NY)

5. The post adjustment system operational rules
6. ILOAT judgement regarding the PA in Geneva (FICSA/C/73/PTC/PSA/Summary Sheet 6) – Brett Fitzgerald, President and Imed Zabaar, Member for Compensation Issues
 - a. Status of implementation
 - b. Implications
 - c. FICSA's position
 - d. UNGA resolution(s)
 - e. The way forward
7. Membership issues
8. Workshops and other business

Election of a rapporteur (Agenda item 2)

3. Tonia RIFAEY (WHO/EMRO) was appointed Rapporteur of this meeting.

Report of the 2019 ACPAQ session in May, review of approved recommendations (Agenda item 3)

4. It was explained that the ICSC Task Force for the review of the conceptual framework of the post adjustment methodology had submitted its report to the May 2019 session of ACPAQ for consideration and discussions. Most of the recommendations in that report were approved, but many would firstly need to be modelled and tested before a final decision on specific items could be taken. As concerns the proposed changes which could be implemented without extensive further study, those changes will be implemented between now and the next round of cost-of-living surveys.

5. Use of the newly agreed upon Tornqvist formula (instead of the modified Walsh and Fisher formula) could yield lower post adjust multipliers in nearly all duty stations. Therefore, while recognizing that the use of the Tornqvist formula would be the correct statistical way to go, the staff federations of FICSA (joined by UNISERV) stated that they would not be able to agree to this proposed change in formula unless the Commission agrees to implement a recalibration factor at the same time, as the staff should not have to suffer lower post adjustment multipliers if they are due only to a change in methodologies. The recalibration factor could either be incorporated into the methodology itself or, alternatively, in the operational rules which govern the use of the methodology. At the upcoming ICSC Working Group session on the review of the operational rules, FICSA will insist that the 5% gap closure measure be reintroduced.

6. Collection and comparison of prices of goods and the IRSP rental data

Costs/prices are collected by going into local shops selling goods comparable to the goods for which prices were collected at the base, i.e. New York. In other words, collected prices of goods/food in the local shops are compared to similar goods/food in New York City.

Housing rental data is collected from the IRSP rental data.

7. In response to a question, it was explained that the questionnaires which are completed by the

staff are not actually used for purposes of determining the costs of goods and services but are only used to establish the different weights to be accorded to each element.

**Strategize in preparation for the next ACPAQ meetings (provisionally 11-18 May 2020, NY)
(Agenda item 4)**

8. It is extremely important that the staff federations continue to liaise with both the Federations' expert statisticians as well as with those representing the HR Network/organizations. Everyone needs to be in agreement that, if they support the proposed revisions of the methodology, it be on the condition that the Commission introduce a recalibration factor.

9. On a more general ACPAQ matter, the FICSA President informed the meeting that the ICSC Chair is proposing the names of three new persons (based on geographical distribution) for nomination to fill two vacant seats on ACPAQ. The vacant seats came about as a result of two ACPAQ members who had served many years beyond the maximum allowable term of office.

The post adjustment system operational rules (Agenda item 5)

10. The second and probably final meeting of the ICSC working group to review the operational rules will be held in two weeks from now at UNESCO in Paris. The ICSC Secretariat will undoubtedly put back on the table its earlier suggestion to introduce a new Controlled Convergence Mechanism (CCM). The Staff Federations will insist that the earlier cancelled 5% gap closure measure be reintroduced into the operational rules for future cost-of-living surveys.

ILOAT judgement regarding the PA in Geneva (FICSA/C/73/PTC/PSA/Summary Sheet 6) – Brett Fitzgerald, President and Imed Zabaar, Member for Compensation Issues (Agenda item 6-7)

11. The FICSA President explained that the ILOAT had delivered its judgments, on 3 July 2019, in favour of the complainants/staff who had lodged appeals contesting the decisions of the Geneva-based organizations' implementation of the ICSC decision known as the "pay cut". The ILOAT judgments were subsequently implemented by ILO, WHO, IOM, ITU, UPU and WIPO.

12. Staff of Geneva-based organizations under the UNDT/UNAT jurisdiction who filed similar appeals have still not received the judgments from the UNDT. Consequently, there are currently two different post adjustment multipliers in place in Geneva.

13. The ILOAT decided: 1) to set aside the organizations'/ICSC's decisions in this matter; 2) that the complainants would be paid, retroactively, the difference (with 5% interest) between the lower post adjustment multiplier based on the ICSC decision and the higher post adjustment multiplier in place immediately prior to the organizations' implementation of the ICSC decision.

14. The main two arguments on which the ILOAT based its judgments are: 1) That the ICSC Statutes did not allow for the ICSC to take decisions on post adjustment multipliers, but only make recommendations to the UN General Assembly which in turn decides; 2) That the ICSC had eliminated the 5% gap closure measure and then reintroduced it at the level of 3% without any scientific or statistical reason.

15. Staff in Madrid and Rome can, theoretically, also request that the basis of the ILOAT judgments be equally applied in their two duty stations. On the practical side, it could be difficult to be able to get the ICSC Secretariat to provide the subsequent post adjustment multipliers. The ICSC Secretariat may refuse to do so.

Workshops and other business (Agenda item 8)

16. It was mentioned that in organizations which have internal appeal bodies, such bodies cannot take decisions but only submit recommendations to the Executive Head who takes the final decision.

17. A member informed the meeting that the mandatory minimum lunch break of 30 minutes is not paid and asks whether this could be changed so that the minimum 30 minutes lunch break be paid. This matter will be moved to the SOCSEC Standing Committee (see Tanya of UNAIDS).

18. Look into the possibility of organizing a workshop on post adjustment methodology in Cairo for a combination of 22 UN agencies.
