

FICSA

Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations

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74TH FICSA COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

Message from the President, Tanya Quinn-Maguire

Who could have predicted when we left the 73rd Council at the IMO in London what was in store for all of us in 2020 and beyond? The effects of this global pandemic have affected all of us in some way, from getting used to working from home, for some in isolation, along with the added burden for others of caring for family members, not to mention concern about loved ones in distant countries we could not visit because of travel restrictions, as well as the possible effects of all of this on our job security.

The first few months after Council was spent reacting to the latest COVID-19 updates while struggling to keep an eye on the key issues we have worked on for so many years and wondering when it would all return to “normal”. Initially, previously well-planned week-long meetings with our key partners were cancelled and replaced by rapid virtual consultations. Gradually, some of those important meetings were re-scheduled in one form or another.

Despite the unparalleled events of the last 12 months, I am pleased to report that the FICSA Executive Committee (ExCom) worked hard to build on and maintain a constructive and healthy dialogue with the ICSC and the HLCM, in particular, to address many issues of concern to our members. We also ensured your voice was brought to other key fora, such as the UN Joint Staff Pension Board (UNJSPB), as well as consultations on the review of the Jurisdictional set up of the United Nations Common System.

With regard to engagement with the ICSC, the FICSA ExCom continued to support the ongoing review of the Post Adjustment methodology and operational rules, including the amendments agreed at the 90th session of the ICSC, which we believe could provide a major step towards a transparent, simplified, accurate, stable, predictable and unified compensation system for staff in the Professional and higher categories. In the context of the global pandemic, FICSA consistently advocated that the ICSC take into consideration the possible impact on the macro-economic indicators and the consumer behaviour that may negatively affect the conduct of comprehensive cost-of-living surveys. During the 90th session of the ICSC, FICSA agreed to participate in the proposed working group to ensure the optimal implementation of the current contractual framework. We also reinforced our opinion that an agile workforce can be achieved by improving organizational behaviour, practices, processes and structure, by being more strategic, efficient, dynamic and less bureaucratic.

Message de la Présidente de la FICSA Tanya Quinn-Maguire

Qui aurait pu prédire, lorsque nous avons quitté le 73ème Conseil de l'OMI à Londres, ce qui nous attendait tous en 2020 et au-delà ? Les effets de cette pandémie mondiale nous ont tous touchés d'une manière ou d'une autre, que ce soit en s'habituant à travailler à domicile, pour certains en s'isolant, ou en s'occupant de membres de leur famille, sans parler de l'inquiétude concernant les êtres chers dans des pays lointains à qui nous ne pouvons pas rendre visite en raison des restrictions de voyage, ou encore des conséquences sanitaires possibles sur notre sécurité.

Les premiers mois qui ont suivi le Conseil ont été consacrés à réagir aux dernières mises à jour du COVID-19 tout en s'efforçant de poursuivre nos actions concernant les questions majeures sur lesquelles nous avons travaillé pendant tant d'années et en se demandant quand tout reviendrait à la «normale». Dans un premier temps, les réunions planifiées avec les agences des Nations Unies ont été annulées et reprogrammées par des consultations virtuelles.

Malgré les événements sans précédent des 12 derniers mois, j'ai le plaisir de vous annoncer que le Comité exécutif de la FICSA (ExCom) a travaillé dur pour maintenir un dialogue constructif et sain avec la CFPI et le HLCM en particulier, afin d'aborder de nombreuses questions qui préoccupent nos membres. Nous avons également veillé à ce que votre voix soit entendue dans d'autres forums importants, tels que le Comité mixte de la Caisse commune des pensions du personnel des Nations Unies (CCPPNU), ainsi que dans le cadre des consultations sur la révision de l'organisation juridictionnelle du système commun des Nations Unies.

En ce qui concerne l'engagement auprès de la CFPI, le Comité exécutif de la FICSA a continué de soutenir la révision en cours de la méthode d'ajustement et des règles opérationnelles, y compris les modifications convenues lors de la 90ème session de la CFPI qui, selon nous, pourraient constituer une étape importante vers un système de rémunération transparent, simplifié, précis, stable, prévisible et uniifié pour les administrateurs et les fonctionnaires de rang supérieur. Dans le contexte de la pandémie mondiale, la FICSA n'a cessé de plaider pour que la CFPI prenne en considération l'impact possible sur les indicateurs macroéconomiques et le comportement des consommateurs, qui pourrait nuire à la réalisation d'enquêtes exhaustives sur le coût de la vie. Lors de la 90ème session de la CFPI, la FICSA a accepté de participer au groupe de travail proposé pour assurer la mise en œuvre optimale du cadre contractuel actuel. Nous avons également renforcé notre opinion selon laquelle une main-d'œuvre



Preparation for and participation in meetings with the various groups that fall under the HLCM have also continued to be an important area of work for the ExCom. In particular, our engagement with the HR Network on the complex issue of the Future of Work, including the three workstreams on agile contracts, enabling technology and remote working, has encouraged us to develop a new way of working to address these cross-cutting issues. This led to the very successful and informative joint sessions of the FICSA standing committees in preparation for this year's Council. We look forward to developing this approach to enhance our collective knowledge on this and other key topics. In addition, we have participated actively in consultations on the Administrative Guidelines for COVID-19, as well as in meetings of the Mental Health Strategy Implementation Board, the Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) Forum, and most recently on consultations about the UN-system approach to COVID-19 vaccinations for staff and dependents.

Ensuring that we keep our members informed continued to be a priority for the Secretariat with Communications and Circulars sent to you on a regular basis about the efforts of the FICSA ExCom and Secretariat on your behalf. The FICSA website was updated regularly to add pages on important topics including COVID-19, as well as legal issues such as the memorandum of understanding with FICSA lawyers and the FICSA legal insurance contract with Fortuna. In addition, we have taken our first bold steps into the area of social media with the help of our small team of enthusiastic interns and a consultant. We also started to develop virtual sessions on topics of interest to our members in the form of "Ask the FICSA expert" sessions which have so far included the topics of mental health and FICSA legal insurance. Of course, none of this replaces face-to-face communication and we have had to amend our ways of interacting with our membership to almost exclusive virtual discussions due to the COVID-related travel restrictions. These circumstances have also affected our ability to deliver trainings to our members and we are working with our valued resource persons to ensure that we update the FICSA training catalogue to include virtual trainings where possible. We look forward to this situation improving in 2021 so that we can return to more meaningful in-person engagements with our members.

mobile peut être obtenue en améliorant le comportement, les pratiques, les processus et la structure de l'organisation, en étant plus stratégique, efficace, dynamique et moins bureaucratique.

La préparation et la participation aux réunions avec les différents groupes qui relèvent du HLCM ont également continué à être un domaine de travail important pour le Comité exécutif. En particulier, notre engagement avec le réseau des Ressources Humaines sur la question complexe de l'avenir du travail, y compris les trois chantiers sur les contrats mobiles, les technologies adaptées et le travail à distance, nous a encouragés à développer une nouvelle méthode de travail pour aborder ces thèmes. Cela a conduit aux sessions jointes, très réussies et instructives, des comités permanents de la FICSA en préparation du Conseil de cette année. Nous sommes impatients de développer cette approche afin d'améliorer nos connaissances collectives sur ce sujet et d'autres points importants. En outre, nous avons participé activement aux consultations sur les directives administratives relatives au COVID-19, ainsi qu'aux réunions du Conseil de mise en œuvre de la stratégie en matière de santé mentale, du Forum sur la santé et la sécurité au travail (SST) et, plus récemment, aux consultations sur l'approche du système des Nations Unies concernant les vaccinations COVID-19 pour le personnel et les personnes à charge.

S'assurer que nous tenons nos membres informés a continué d'être une priorité pour le secrétariat avec des communications et des circulaires envoyées régulièrement sur les efforts du comité exécutif et du secrétariat de la FICSA en votre nom. Le site web de la FICSA a été mis à jour régulièrement pour ajouter des pages sur des sujets importants, notamment COVID-19, ainsi que des questions juridiques telles que le protocole d'accord avec les avocats de la FICSA et le contrat d'assurance juridique de notre fédération avec Fortuna. De plus, nous avons fait nos premiers pas audacieux dans le domaine des médias sociaux avec l'aide de notre petite équipe de stagiaires enthousiastes et d'un consultant. Nous avons également commencé à développer des sessions virtuelles sur des sujets d'intérêt général pour nos membres sous la forme de sessions «Ask the FICSA expert» qui ont jusqu'à présent inclus des thèmes sur la santé mentale et de l'assurance juridique. Bien sûr, rien de tout cela ne remplace la communication en présentiel et nous avons dû modifier nos modes d'interaction avec nos membres pour passer à des discussions virtuelles presque exclusives en raison des restrictions de voyage liées au COVID.

One of the positives of the last twelve months has been the collective understanding that, more than ever, we need to work together as a team if we want to achieve our goals. I have been blessed to work with the great ExCom members and Regional Representatives that you elected last year. Evelyn, Pilar, Véronique, Kay, Imed and Brett have tirelessly worked on your behalf over the last 12 months in the most difficult of circumstances. It is unfortunate that we will lose the fabulous Evelyn this year as she will leave WHO to start a new life. Evelyn has been an incredibly competent and enthusiastic colleague and friend for many years and will be a big loss to our team. We wish her all the best in her next big adventure in life and hope that we can persuade her to keep working with us in some form or other when she can. This year, we will also lose the wise and invaluable years of experience of the incomparable Brett and Imed as they take a break from the Executive Committee. I have learned a huge amount from both and will miss their counsel.

Of course, none of our work would go very far without the unparalleled support in the Secretariat from Irwan and Marie-Paule who have been working tirelessly to provide you with administrative and expert support through the year. It has been a pleasure for me to work with and learn from them and I look forward to continuing working with them in such a collegial way and benefiting from their experience throughout 2021 and into 2022.

I am excited to welcome and work with the newly elected ExCom members and Regional Representatives as chosen by you at this year's Council. Unfortunately, it seems that we will continue to live with the effects of the global pandemic for at least the first half of this year. Nevertheless, I have no doubt that our new ExCom will build on the lessons learned from 2020 and we will continue to meet the challenges ahead, bringing together the collective wisdom of our members in the form of a dedicated team representing your interest at all levels of our United Nations Common System.

Ces circonstances ont également affecté notre capacité à proposer des formations pour nos membres et nous travaillons avec nos experts pour mettre à jour le catalogue de formation de la FICSA afin d'inclure des sessions virtuelles lorsque cela est possible. Nous espérons que cette situation s'améliorera dans le courant de cette année afin que nous puissions revenir à des engagements plus significatifs avec nos membres.

L'un des points positifs de ces douze derniers mois a été la compréhension collective que, plus que jamais, nous devons travailler en équipe si nous voulons atteindre nos objectifs. J'ai eu la chance de travailler avec les membres compétents du Comité exécutif et les représentants régionaux que vous avez élus l'année dernière : Evelyn Kortum, Pilar Vidal, Véronique Allain, Kay Miller, Imed Zabaar et Brett Fitzgerald ont travaillé sans relâche en votre nom au cours des 12 derniers mois, dans des circonstances difficiles. Il est regrettable de laisser partir un membre résolument actif et engagé : notre secrétaire générale, Evelyn, car elle va quitter l'OMS pour commencer une nouvelle vie. Evelyn a été une collègue et une amie incroyablement compétente et enthousiaste pendant de nombreuses années et sera une grande perte pour notre équipe. Nous lui souhaitons bonne chance dans sa nouvelle aventure et espérons pouvoir la persuader de nous apporter son soutien professionnel sous une forme ou une autre quand elle le pourra. Cette année, nous perdons également la sagesse et les précieuses années d'expériences des incomparables Brett et Imed, qui font une pause au sein du comité exécutif. Leur enseignement a été inestimable, j'ai beaucoup appris grâce à eux et leurs conseils vont me manquer.

Bien sûr, aucun de nos travaux n'irait bien loin sans le soutien d'Irwan et de Marie-Paule au sein du secrétariat, qui ont travaillé sans relâche pour vous fournir un soutien administratif et spécialisé tout au long de l'année. Ce fut un plaisir pour moi de travailler et de collaborer avec eux et je me réjouis de continuer dans ce même esprit de manière aussi collégiale et de bénéficier de leur expérience tout au long de 2021 et en 2022. J'accueille avec plaisir la nouvelle équipe du Comité exécutif et les représentants régionaux pour une solide collaboration. Il me semble que nous continuerons à vivre avec les effets de la pandémie mondiale pendant le premier semestre de cette année. Néanmoins, je ne doute pas que notre nouveau comité s'appuiera sur les leçons tirées de 2020 et que nous continuerons à relever les défis à venir en comptant sur la clairvoyance collective de nos membres par une équipe dévouée représentant vos intérêts à tous les niveaux de notre Système commun des Nations Unies.

74TH FICSA COUNCIL SESSION AND ELECTIONS

74ÈME CONSEIL DE LA FICSA 9 AU 11 FÉVRIER 2021

Welcome from the FICSA President

FICSA President Tanya Quinn-Maguire (UNAIDS) welcomed both experienced and new delegates to the 74th session of the FICSA Council, held virtually owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The President thanked the FICSA Secretariat, as well as the staff association of the World health Organization (WHO/EURO), which had originally planned to host the Council, for their preparatory work. In continuing to deliver through the pandemic, FICSA members had proved, once again, their value to their organizations, despite the limitations imposed by the pandemic and, in some cases, the loss of friends and loved ones.

The Council observed a moment of silence to honour the memory and service of colleagues who had passed away or lost their lives while serving the United Nations (UN) and its specialized agencies.

Opening statements from sister federations

In July 2020, FICSA signed its first tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) with its sister federations, the Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA) and the United Nations International Civil Servants Federation (UNISERV), in addition to its previous cooperative agreements with each. The aim was to enhance the federations' capacity to represent and defend their members' collective interests, including through joint statements and communications to interlocutors. The arrangement was delicate, however, and depended on the willingness of the federation officers involved.

The FICSA President reiterated that the tri-federation agreement had institutionalized closer cooperation and led to joint statements when all three were in agreement. She invited members to communicate their views on and suggestions for the agreement.

A speaker agreed that the effectiveness of the agreement depended on the positive attitude of federation officers, and commended FICSA officers for strengthening relationships with those of the other federations, particularly in view of the potential weight of joint statements. The Council took note of the cooperation agreement with the other two UN staff federations.

UNISERV President Steve Towler valued the privilege of speaking to the Council and noted that partnership among federations enabled each to work more effectively than they could on their own. UNISERV would continue to work as one with its sister federations on such issues as salary-survey methodologies, parental leave and a possible new contractual framework, aiming to ensure that no changes were made that could prove to be detrimental to staff interests. UNISERV would also continue to work closely with the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM). He wished FICSA a successful Council meeting. CCISUA President Stefan Brezina was prevented from addressing the Council as planned and sent his best wishes.

The FICSA President welcomed FICSA's opportunities for cooperation with the ICSC and HLCM, through active participation in their task forces and working groups, particularly on such issues as the contractual framework, sexual harassment and the implementation of the [mental health strategy](#).

In view of organizations' duty of care towards their staff, a speaker asked what measures would be taken to help staff in duty stations such as Brussels and Belgium, where salary surveys had not been conducted in some time. The UNISERV President welcomed the offers from ICSC and HLCM and their cooperation with all staff federations, particularly on the contractual framework, and offered cooperation in turn in finding a way to help staff in Libya who were experiencing difficulties related to huge fluctuations in exchange rates and inflation.

The FICSA President gave an overview of the achievements of the FICSA Executive Committee as described in its annual report ([see FICSA/C/74/4](#)).

Message de bienvenue de la Présidente de la FICSA

La Présidente de la FICSA, Tanya Quinn-Maguire (ONU-SIDA), a souhaité la bienvenue aux délégués ainsi qu'au nouveaux membres participant à la 74ème session du Conseil de la FICSA, tenue virtuellement en raison de la pandémie de COVID-19. La Présidente a remercié le secrétariat de la FICSA, ainsi que l'association du personnel de l'OMS/EURO à Copenhague, qui avait initialement prévu d'accueillir le Conseil. Grâce à un travail régulier pendant la pandémie, les membres de la FICSA ont prouvé, une fois de plus, leur implication vis-à-vis de leur organisation, malgré les limites imposées par la pandémie et, dans certains cas, la perte d'amis et d'êtres chers.

Le Conseil a observé un moment de silence pour honorer la mémoire et le service rendu des collègues qui ont perdu la vie alors qu'ils servaient l'Organisation des Nations Unies et ses institutions spécialisées.

Déclarations des fédérations partenaires

En juillet 2020, la FICSA a signé son premier protocole d'accord tripartite avec deux autres fédérations : le Comité de coordination des associations et syndicats internationaux du personnel du système des Nations Unies (CCASIPNU/CCISUA) et la Fédération des fonctionnaires internationaux des Nations Unies (UNISERV) ; en plus de ses précédents accords de coopération avec chacune d'elles. L'objectif était de renforcer la capacité des fédérations à représenter et à défendre les intérêts collectifs de leurs membres, notamment par le biais de déclarations et de communications communes à leurs interlocuteurs. Cet arrangement est toutefois délicat et dépend de la volonté des responsables des fédérations concernées.

La Présidente de la FICSA a rappelé que l'accord tri-fédéral avait institutionnalisé une coopération plus étroite et conduit à des déclarations communes lorsque les trois fédérations étaient d'accord. Elle a demandé aux membres de communiquer leurs points de vue et leurs suggestions

sur cet arrangement.

Un intervenant a convenu que l'efficacité de l'accord dépendait de l'attitude positive des responsables des fédérations et a félicité le bureau exécutif de la FICSA pour avoir renforcé les relations avec les autres fédérations, compte tenu notamment du poids des déclarations communes. Le Conseil a pris note de l'accord de coopération avec les deux autres fédérations du personnel des Nations Unies.

Le Président d'UNISERV, Steve Towler, a été honoré de prendre la parole et a noté que le partenariat entre les fédérations permettait à chacune d'entre elles de travailler plus efficacement qu'elles ne pourraient le faire seule. L'UNISERV continuera de travailler en étroite collaboration avec ses fédérations partenaires sur des questions telles que les méthodes d'enquête sur les salaires, le congé parental et un éventuel nouveau cadre contractuel, en veillant à ce qu'aucun changement ne soit effectué au détriment des intérêts du personnel. L'UNISERV poursuivra également sa collaboration avec la Commission de la fonction publique internationale (CFPI) et le Comité de haut niveau sur la gestion (HLCM). Il a souhaité à la FICSA un Conseil fructueux.

Le Président de la CCISUA, Stefan Brezina, n'a pas pu s'adresser au Conseil comme prévu et lui a adressé ses meilleurs vœux.

La Présidente de la FICSA s'est félicitée des possibilités de coopération avec la CFPI et le HLCM, par une participation active à leur groupe de travail, notamment sur des questions telles que le cadre contractuel, le harcèlement sexuel et la mise en œuvre de la stratégie en matière de santé mentale.

Compte tenu du devoir de diligence des organisations envers leur personnel, un intervenant a demandé quelles mesures seraient prises pour aider le personnel dans des lieux d'affectation tels que Bruxelles, en Belgique, où les enquêtes salariales n'ont pas été effectuées depuis un certain temps.

Le Président d'UNISERV a approuvé les propositions de coopération avec la CFPI et le HLCM avec toutes les fédérations du personnel, notamment en ce qui concerne le cadre contractuel, et a offert à son tour son soutien pour trouver un moyen d'aider le personnel en Libye qui

The Executive Committee had represented the membership at 17 formal high-level meetings, most often of the ICSC and HLCM but also of the UN Joint Staff Pension Board (UNJSPB) and the Fifth Committee, along with numerous informal meetings. Work with the HLCM had focused on COVID-19: return to offices, administrative guidelines and staff vaccinations. the Executive Committee had worked with the Human Resources (HR) Network on the future of work, addressing agile contracts, remote working and digital solutions. The Executive Committee had participated in two meetings of the Forum on Occupational Health and Safety (OSH), which had so far had limited results to report. The FICSA President was an active member of the Mental Health Strategy Implementation Board, at which relevant standing committee contributions were raised to ensure that the Board provided guidance on practical implementation by organizations. The Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) was a highly technical body, at which UNISERV had represented FICSA's interests. The Executive Committee sought a focal point from the membership to develop capacity on issues related to staff security within FICSA so that it could be able to fully contribute to IASMN deliberations.

Interaction with the ICSC was central to the Executive Committee's work; it had taken part in the meetings of the working groups on local salary-survey methodologies, review of the post-adjustment operational rules and the mid-year and year-end reviews of field duty stations in the African Region to classify hardship/field duty stations. A good compromise had been reached on the operational rules for post adjustment and would be submitted to the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions (ACPAQ) in March 2021. FICSA had advocated staff interests in a number of issues addressed by the ICSC's 90th session, including special measures for the COVID-19 pandemic (such as danger pay), problems with salary and allowance levels in various duty stations, and the contractual framework for UN staff.

FICSA was an observer at meetings of the UNJSPB and had delivered a [statement](#) on behalf of the three staff federations in 2020. One issue in 2020 was the effort to reduce the size of the Board. The Executive Committee advocated fair, equitable and appropriate representation of all stakeholders, and would keep members informed of developments.

The review of the jurisdictional set-up of the UN common system has been a time-consuming, ongoing issue. While responses from the membership had been limited to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the WHO, FICSA had members on both sides of the argument; nevertheless, in principle, the Executive Committee would prefer to see the status quo maintained.

Other agreements included [MOUs with FICSA lawyers](#), which had resulted in the resumption of [legal tips of the month](#) on the FICSA website. Those were a great training resource and highlighted key areas for staff representatives. FICSA had a long-running partnership with the [UN Globe](#); and their active members were invited to work with the Executive Committee to raise its profile, as per past practice at the FICSA Council. Further, more FICSA members should take advantage of its [agreement](#) with the International training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITCILO), which enabled them to access excellent training and facilities with a 10% reduction in cost.

The discussion of cost-sharing for the FICSA President and General Secretary has been under way for over 25 years. The agreement was ready, and had received legal clearance, but its operationalization has unfortunately stalled. The Executive Committee strongly urged all FICSA members to work with their administrations to implement the agreement, to ensure that any FICSA members could nominate candidates to the positions of President and General Secretary, irrespective of size or financial capacity.

Finally, the Executive Committee had, through the Secretariat, upgraded outreach to members and beyond, primarily through the website and social media such as [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Materials on the website included FICSA [communications](#), [circulars](#) and [monthly newsletters](#). The FICSA Secretariat established recurring meetings every second month to increase consultation with standing committees, including regular consultation to follow-up on Council recommendations with the General Secretary. The Executive Committee would further refine this process in 2021, to take the greatest possible advantage from new methods such as virtual meetings, and would work with Standing Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs to improve communications.

In the ensuing discussion, the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Development urged FICSA members to inform themselves of issues and raise them with the Executive Committee, to ensure that it could represent staff's views as fully and accurately as possible. Another speaker agreed with that perspective, and others urged the FICSA Executive Committee to engage further with

connaît des difficultés liées aux énormes fluctuations des taux de change et d'inflation.

La Présidente de la FICSA a donné un aperçu des réalisations du Comité exécutif décrites dans le rapport annuel (voir [FICSA/C/74/4](#)).

Le Comité exécutif a représenté ses membres à 17 réunions officielles, le plus souvent la CFPI et le HLCM, mais aussi du Comité mixte de la Caisse commune des pensions du personnel des Nations Unies (CCPPNU) et de la Cinquième Commission, ainsi qu'à de nombreuses réunions informelles. Le travail avec le HLCM s'est concentré sur les sujets de la COVID-19 : le retour aux bureaux ; les directives administratives et la vaccination du personnel. Le Comité exécutif a travaillé avec le Réseau des ressources humaines (RH) sur l'avenir du travail, en abordant les contrats mobiles, le travail à distance et les solutions numériques. Il a également participé à deux réunions du Forum sur la santé et la sécurité au travail (SST), qui n'avait jusqu'à présent que peu de résultats à communiquer. La Présidente de la FICSA est un membre actif du Conseil de mise en œuvre de la stratégie en matière de santé mentale, au cours duquel les remarques pertinentes des comités permanents sont soulevées afin que le Conseil fournit des propositions sur la mise en œuvre pratique par les organisations. Le Réseau inter-agence de gestion de la sécurité (IASMN) est un organe hautement technique, au sein duquel UNISERV avait représenté les intérêts de la FICSA. Le Comité exécutif a cherché un représentant parmi les membres pour développer des questions liées à la sécurité du personnel au sein de la FICSA afin qu'il puisse être en mesure de contribuer pleinement aux délibérations de l'IASMN.

L'interaction avec la CFPI est au cœur des travaux du Comité exécutif ; il a participé aux réunions des groupes de travail sur les méthodes d'enquête sur les salaires locaux ; à l'examen des règles opérationnelles relatives à l'ajustement de postes et aux examens de classement en zones difficiles des lieux d'affectation hors siège de la région africaine. Un bon compromis a été trouvé sur les règles opérationnelles relatives à l'ajustement de postes et a été soumis lors de la 42ème session du Comité consultatif pour les questions d'ajustement de postes (ACPAQ) en mars 2021. La FICSA a défendu les intérêts du personnel dans un certain nombres de questions abordées durant la 90ème session de la CFPI, notamment les mesures spéciales pour la pandémie COVID-19 (comme la prime de danger), les problèmes liés aux niveaux de salaires et d'indemnités dans divers lieux d'affectation, et le cadre contractuel pour le personnel de l'ONU.

La FICSA a participé en tant qu'observateur aux réunions de la Caisse commune du personnel des Nations Unies (CCPPNU) en 2020 et a fait une [déclaration au nom des](#)

[trois fédérations du personnel](#). L'un des enjeux de 2020 était de réduire le nombre de membre au Conseil d'administration de la CCPPNU. Le Comité exécutif a plaidé pour une représentation juste, équitable et appropriée de toutes les parties prenantes et tiendra les membres informés de l'évolution de la situation.

L'étude de la révision de la structure juridictionnelle du système commun des Nations Unies est une question qui prend du temps. Bien que les réponses des membres se soient limitées à la FAO, à l'OIM et à l'OMS, la FICSA compte des membres des deux côtés ; néanmoins, en principe, le Comité exécutif souhaiterait que le statu quo soit maintenu.

Parmi les autres accords, citons un [contrat](#) conclut avec les avocats de la FICSA, qui a permis la reprise de [publications mensuelles sur des conseils juridiques](#) et qui est posté sur le site web de la FICSA. Celles-ci constituent une excellente ressource d'information et mettent en évidence des sujets importants pour les représentants du personnel. La FICSA a un partenariat de longue date avec le [UN Globe](#) et leurs membres ont été invités à travailler avec le Comité exécutif pour améliorer son profil, comme cela a été fait auparavant durant les autres conseils de la FICSA. Enfin nous avons un partenariat avec le [Centre international de formations de l'OIT à Turin](#) qui propose d'excellentes formations avec une réduction de 10% du coût pour les membres de la FICSA.

La discussion sur le partage des charges salariales avec les administrations des organisations internationales pour les postes du Président et du Secrétaire général de la FICSA est toujours en cours de négociation depuis plus de 25 ans. L'accord est prêt, et a reçu l'autorisation officielle mais son application est toujours en attente. Le Comité Exécutif a vivement encouragé tous les membres de la FICSA à travailler avec leurs administrations pour mettre en œuvre cet accord afin de garantir que tous nos membres puissent nommer des candidats à ces postes indépendamment de la taille ou la capacité financière de leur organisation respective.

Enfin, le comité exécutif, avec le soutien du secrétariat, a amélioré la communication avec les membres et principalement par le biais du site web et des médias sociaux tels que [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) et [LinkedIn](#). Les documents sur le site web comprennent les [communications](#), les [circulaires](#) et le [bulletin](#) d'information mensuel de FICSA. Le Secrétariat de FICSA a mis en place des réunions récurrentes tous les deux mois pour augmenter la consultation avec les comités permanents, y compris une consultation régulière pour suivre les recommandations du Conseil avec le Secrétaire général. Le comité exécutif affinera ce processus en 2021, afin de tirer le meilleur parti possible des nouvelles méthodes telles que les réunions virtuelles, et

members, perhaps by reporting quarterly rather than annually, as well as through virtual meetings or other forms of communication. A delegate applauded the Executive Committee's efforts and asked whether, now that remote working was possible for all, the Statutes could be changed to allow the General Secretary to be based outside Geneva. The General Secretary agreed that while remote working was possible, stressed that the current terms of reference of the General Secretary stipulate that the incumbent should operate from the same duty station as the FICSA Secretariat, which was currently Geneva. Face-to-face contact remained vital, however, especially when events were moving as fast as they had in recent years, owing to the upgrading of the office procedures.

The FICSA President said that the location of the General Secretary was for the membership to decide, but also stressed the value of physical meetings in the General Secretary's work and the possibility that the implementation of the cost-sharing agreement could settle that issue. Particularly in view of the Secretariat's reduced size, member participation, communication and constructive criticism were more important than ever.

Despite the current situation of holding all of the Council meetings virtually, positive feedback had been received from our members, which were appreciative of the efforts developed by the FICSA Secretariat for the organization of this annual session; but most importantly, was the general and positive interest shown from our delegates regarding topics discussed which were of major importance without mentioning the interventions of speakers for the sessions on the future of work: Aubra Anthony from United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Aditya Jain from Nottingham University and Marco Luiuzzi from the UN International Computing Centre (ICC).

Besides, more than 150 staff representatives had the opportunity to attend this Council which provided a wider visibility and understanding on the FICSA activities. The 74th Council elected a new Executive Committee including the new General Secretary. The outgoing General Secretary, Evelyn Kortum from WHO/HQ was followed by Cosimo Melpignano from the UN Global Service centre (UNGSC).

The new composition of the Executive Committee is as follows:

President

Tanya Quinn-Maguire (UNAIDS Geneva)

General Secretary

Cosimo Melpignano (UNGSC Brindisi)

Treasurer

Kay Miller (WHO/EURO Copenhagen)

First of two members for Compensation Issues

Pilar Vidal (PAHO/WHO Washington DC)

2nd of two members for Compensation Issues

Line Kaspersen (AP-in-FAO Uganda)

Member for Regional and Field Issues

Véronique Allain (SCBD Montreal)

Member without Portfolio

Tracy Tollmann (UNFCCC Bonn)

The Council also elected the following Regional Representatives:

Africa

Anthony Ndinguri (ICAO Nairobi)

Americas

Jesus García Jiménez (ILO/ITC Turin)

Asia

Rajesh Mehta (WHO/SEARO New Delhi)

Europe

Juan José Coy Giron (FAO Rome)

travaillera avec les présidents et vice-présidents des comités permanents pour améliorer ces relations.

Par ailleurs, le Président du Comité Ad Hoc sur le développement stratégique a demandé aux membres de la FICSA à s'informer sur des éventuels problèmes auxquels ils font face dans leur association et à les soumettre au Comité exécutif afin que celui-ci puisse représenter les points de vue du personnel de manière aussi complète et précise que possible. Un autre intervenant a souscrit à ce point de vue, et d'autres ont encouragé le Comité exécutif de FICSA à s'engager davantage avec les membres, peut-être en présentant des rapports trimestriels plutôt qu'annuels, ainsi que par le biais de réunions virtuelles ou d'autres formes de communication. Un délégué a applaudi les efforts du comité exécutif et a demandé si, maintenant que le travail à distance est possible pour tous, les statuts pouvaient être modifiés pour permettre au Secrétaire général de la FICSA d'être basé en dehors de Genève. Le Secrétaire général a convenu que le travail à distance était possible, et a souligné que les termes de référence actuels du Secrétaire général stipulent que le titulaire doit opérer depuis le même lieu d'affectation que le Secrétariat de la FICSA, qui est actuellement Genève. Le contact face à face reste toutefois vital, surtout lorsque les événements se déroulent aussi rapidement que ces dernières années, en raison de la modernisation des procédures du fonctionnement de travail.

La Présidente de la FICSA a déclaré que le lieu de travail du Secrétaire général était laissé à la discrétion des membres, mais elle a également souligné la valeur des réunions physiques dans les activités du Secrétaire général et la possibilité que la mise en œuvre de l'accord du partage des coûts puisse régler cette question. Compte tenu de la taille réduite du Secrétariat, la participation des membres, la communication et la coopération constructive sont d'une importance majeure.

Malgré la situation actuelle qui consiste à organiser toutes les réunions du Conseil de façon virtuelle, nous avons reçu un retour favorable de nos membres qui ont apprécié les efforts développés par le Secrétariat de la FICSA pour l'organisation de cette session annuelle ; mais le plus important a été l'intérêt général et positif manifesté par nos délégués pour les sujets discutés qui étaient d'une d'un intérêt majeur sans mentionner les interventions des orateurs pour les sessions sur l'avenir du travail : Madame Aubra Anthony de l'Agence américaine pour le développement international (USAID), Professeur Aditya Jain de l'Université de Nottingham et Monsieur Marco Luizzi du Centre international de calcul (CIC) de l'ONU.

En outre, plus de 150 représentants du personnel ont eu l'occasion d'assister à ce Conseil, ce qui a permis une plus grande visibilité et compréhension des activités de FICSA.

Le 74ème Conseil a élu un nouveau comité exécutif. Cosimo Melpignano de l'UNGSC à Brindisi occupe le poste de Secrétaire général à la place d'Evelyn Kortum de l'OMS à Genève. La nouvelle composition du Comité exécutif est la suivante :

Présidente _____
Tanya Quinn-Maguire (ONUSIDA Genève)

Secrétaire général _____
Cosimo Melpignano (UNGSC Brindisi)

Trésorière _____
Kay Miller (OMS/EURO Copenhague)

Premier des deux membres pour les questions de compensation _____
Pilar Vidal (OPS/OMS Washington DC)

2ème des deux membres pour les questions de compensation _____
Line Kaspersen (AP-in-FAO Ouganda)

Membre pour les questions régionales et de terrain _____
Véronique Allain (SCBD Montréal)

Membre sans portefeuille _____
Tracy Tollmann (UNFCCC Bonn)

Le Conseil a également élu les représentants régionaux suivants:

Afrique _____
Anthony Ndinguri (OACI Nairobi)

Amériques _____
Jesus García Jiménez (ILO/ITC Turin)

Asie _____
Rajesh Mehta (OMS/SEARO New Delhi)

Europe _____
Juan José Coy Giron (FAO Rome)

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE VIRTUAL SESSION OF THE 74TH FICSA COUNCIL HELD IN EARLY 2021

By **Véronique Allain**, FICSA Executive Committee Member for Regional and Field Issues and SCBD Montreal Staff Member



MES IMPRESSIONS SUR LA SESSION VIRTUELLE DU 74ÈME CONSEIL DE LA FICSA

Par **Véronique Allain**, Membre du Comité exécutif de la FICSA pour les dossiers concernant le personnel en région et sur le terrain et Membre du personnel du SCBD Montréal

As many of you have realized, the 74th FICSA Council had to be organized fully virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic and its huge impacts on the life of us all. The FICSA Secretariat, members of the Executive Committee and the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the different standing committees worked very hard to make it a pleasant experience, all in all.

The standing committees held several different sessions over the course of several weeks spanning from November 2020 to January 2021, and despite everything, this enabled more members of the FICSA Federation to participate, compared to a Council in a physical presence. This led to a Field Standing Committee (Field SC) being well attended by participants from the FICSA membership, mostly based in Headquarters' (HQ) duty stations and who would normally attend other committee sessions because of their time availability or their interest in general.

The Field SC, under the able chairmanship of Cosimo Melpignano and Vito Musa (both from UNGSC Brindisi) and Line Kaspersen (AP-in-FAO, outposted in Uganda), had before it a diversified agenda dealing with:

- the classification of duty stations away from Headquarters, according to their level of hardship in terms of conditions of work and life for UN Internationally-recruited Professional (IPs) staff;
- the medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) framework for UN personnel in a COVID-19 context;
- the 2020 ICSC mobility framework, with an emphasis on hardship duty stations.

It was the first time that many Field SC participants could be exposed to the process of classification of UN field duty stations, according to the conditions of life and work, under the auspices of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). Many in the audience became aware that duty stations are classified based on hardship questionnaires submitted to the ICSC (every three years) with rankings from A to E and are lumped into three regions, i.e. (1) Africa, (2) Asia and the Pacific, (3) Latin America, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe (Commonwealth of Independent States).

This classification system calls for a hardship allowance being paid to IPs deployed in duty stations rated from B to E; and, depending on the level of hardship, the level of this allowance is increased. In some instances, because of the difficult local overall conditions, a duty station can be designated as non-family duty stations (NFDS), where dependents of UN staff members cannot be deployed. Many HQ-based participants were not aware that the hardship questionnaires contain targeted questions to cover six factors used to determine the levels of hardship, i.e. climate, housing, isolation, local conditions, health and security, probably because one would not challenge

Comme beaucoup d'entre vous l'ont compris, le 74ème Conseil de la FICSA a dû être organisé de manière totalement virtuelle en raison de la pandémie du COVID-19 et de ses énormes impacts sur la vie de chacun. Le secrétariat de la FICSA, les membres du comité exécutif et les présidents et vice-présidents des différents comités permanents se sont investis dans leur tâche pour en faire une expérience agréable, et productive.

Les comités permanents ont tenu plusieurs sessions différentes s'étalant de novembre 2020 à janvier 2021, ce qui a permis à un plus grand nombre de membres de participer aux réunions, par rapport à un Conseil en présence physique. Ainsi, le comité permanent sur les questions de terrain (Field SC) a connu un taux de participation important par des représentants principalement basés dans les lieux d'affectation au siège social de leur organisations (HQ duty stations) et qui assistaient, en temps normal, uniquement aux sessions des autres comités dû à la contrainte du planning des sessions organisées sur la semaine.

Cosimo Melpignano a présidé le comité permanent sur les questions touchant au personnel déployé sur le terrain avec la collaboration de Vito Musa (tous deux de l'UNGSC Brindisi) et de Line Kaspersen (AP-in-FAO, en poste en Ouganda), le Comité avait un ordre du jour diversifié portant sur les points suivants :

- le classement des lieux d'affectation hors siège en fonction de leur degré de pénibilité en termes de conditions de travail et de vie pour les administrateurs recrutés sur le plan international (IPs -Internationally-recruited Professional) des Nations Unies ;
- la structure d'évacuation médicale (MEDEVAC) pour le personnel des Nations Unies dans un contexte de la COVID-19 ;
- le cadre de mobilité 2020 de la CFPI, en mettant l'accent sur les lieux d'affectation difficiles.

C'était la première fois que de nombreux participants pouvaient être exposés au processus de classification des lieux d'affectation hors siège des Nations Unies en fonction des conditions de vie et de travail, sous les auspices de la Commission de la fonction publique internationale (CFPI). Nombreux sont ceux qui ont appris que les lieux d'affectation sont classés sur la base de questionnaires sur la pénibilité soumis à la CFPI (tous les trois ans), avec un classement de A à E, et qu'ils sont regroupés en trois régions, à savoir (1) l'Afrique, (2) l'Asie et le Pacifique, (3) l'Amérique latine, le Moyen-Orient et les pays de la Communauté des États indépendants d'Europe de l'Est.

Ce système de classification prévoit le versement d'une indemnité de précarité aux IPs déployés dans des lieux d'affectation classés de B à E ; le niveau de cette indemnité est augmenté en fonction du degré de préca-

their own level of comfort to perform the UN duties if these conditions of life and work are more than decent.

The Africa Region was under review at the last ICSC session in the fall of 2020, during which 291 duty stations were reviewed. This region happens to contain the largest number of duty stations where the UN has staff deployed, and interestingly enough, close to 51% of all duty stations in Africa are rated E, with the top five countries in Africa with the most hardship duty stations being the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Nigeria.



Photo credit: [peacekeeping.UN.org](https://peacekeeping.un.org)

This was followed by a presentation from the Chief of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Medical Services and a member of the medical evacuations (MEDEVAC) Task Force (TF) regarding the establishment of a structure for medical evacuations in response to COVID-19 for UN staff working in duty stations away from decent health-care facilities able to cope with outbreaks.

Agreements with countries (Australia, China, Cuba, Egypt, Kuwait, Singapore, the Russian Federation, Uganda and the United Arab Emirates) were rapidly made in April 2020 to accept COVID-19 UN patients on a case-by-case basis, and regional hubs were established in Accra (Ghana), Nairobi (Kenya) and San José (Costa Rica). Statistics were shared with the participants, proving that this system has been performing very well, and in a well-coordinated manner.

This topic of COVID-19, MEDEVACs was new to many in the audience and it became clear that the virtual session of the 74th FICSA Council was a good opportunity, under the duty of care responsibility, to inform UN staff representatives of the available services (including the system of first line of defense (FLOD) as a means to avoid MEDEVACs).

rité. Dans certains cas, en raison des conditions locales difficiles, un lieu d'affectation peut être désigné comme lieu d'affectation non familial (NFDS), où les personnes à la charge des membres du personnel de l'ONU ne peuvent pas être déployées.

Les participants à cette réunion, basés au siège, ne saisaient pas que les questionnaires sur la pénibilité contenaient des sujets ciblés couvrant les six facteurs utilisés pour déterminer les niveaux de pénibilité, à savoir le climat, le logement, l'isolement, les conditions locales, la santé et la sécurité, probablement parce qu'on ne remettrait pas en cause son propre niveau de confort pour effectuer les tâches de l'ONU si ces conditions de vie et de travail sont plus que décentes.

A l'automne 2020, c'était au tour de la région « Afrique » d'être soumise à une étude des conditions de vie, lors de la dernière session de la CFPI au cours de laquelle 291 lieux d'affectation ont été examinés. Il se trouve que cette région contient un grand nombre de lieux d'affectation où l'ONU a déployé du personnel et, fait intéressant, près de 51% de tous les lieux d'affectation en Afrique sont classés E, les cinq pays d'Afrique ayant les lieux d'affectation les plus difficiles étant la République démocratique du Congo, le Soudan, l'Éthiopie, le Sud-Soudan et le Nigeria.

Durant cette session, nous avons eu le privilège d'avoir une intervention du chef des services médicaux de la FAO qui est un membre du groupe de travail chargé des évacuations médicales (MEDEVAC). Il nous a présenté la mise en place de dispositions de soin en réponse au COVID-19 pour le personnel de l'ONU travaillant dans des lieux d'affectation éloignés de structures sanitaires décentes et capables de faire face à l'épidémie de COVID-19.

Des accords avec des pays (l'Australie, la Chine, Cuba, l'Égypte, le Koweït, Singapour, la Russie, l'Ouganda et les Émirats arabes unis) ont été rapidement conclus en avril 2020 pour accepter au cas par cas les patients de l'ONU atteints du COVID-19, et des plateformes régionales ont été établies à Accra (Ghana), Nairobi (Kenya) et San José (Costa Rica). Des statistiques ont été envoyées aux participants, prouvant que ce système a très bien fonctionné et de manière bien coordonnée.

L'assistance de MEDEVAC pour la crise du COVID-19 n'était pas ou peu connu par les participants de notre réunion et il est clairement apparu que cette session virtuelle était une bonne occasion, sous la responsabilité du devoir de diligence, d'informer les représentants du personnel de l'ONU des services mis à leur disposition (y compris le système de première ligne de défense (FLOD)) comme moyen d'éviter les MEDEVACs) et de la nécessité de sensibiliser davantage le person-



Photo credit: UN MEDEVAC Task Force

VACS) and of the need to raise more awareness among the UN staff at large, particularly for those working and living away from the Headquarters or similar duty stations.

The last interesting session of the Field SC was devoted to the mobility framework as revised by the ICSC in 2020, because staff mobility is an important component in helping the UN to develop its activities and programmes and it influences the professional and private lives of staff.

It was not the first time that the FICSA Council had this item on its agenda in one of its standing committees, but the idea was not to find an immediate solution to the policy's many shortcomings but rather to keep the dialogue open. Indeed, mobility is a multi-dimensional issue and it cannot be narrowed down to a few parameters only. However, to be considered as a viable policy, it should contemplate both organizational and staff requirements. One of the obvious findings of the literature studied on this subject is that mobility is limited, and staff driven, with little interest on the side of UN organizations.

The experience of virtually connecting to listen to the reality of UN staff working away from the Headquarters was enlightening and rewarding for many and potentially an eye-opener on the different aspects of the daily life and work in a field duty station, in particular in a context of a pandemic, which is forcing most of the UN workforce to work away from the office, with its wide array of inconveniences and uneasy access to technology for some.

nel de l'ONU, en particulier pour ceux qui travaillent et vivent loin du siège ou de lieux d'affectation similaires. La deuxième session du Comité permanent a été consacrée au cadre de mobilité tel que révisé par la CFPI en 2020, car la mobilité du personnel est un élément important pour aider l'ONU à développer ses activités et ses programmes en impactant la vie professionnelle et privée du personnel.

Ce n'était pas la première fois que le Conseil de la FICSA inscrivait ce point à l'ordre du jour d'un de ses comités permanents, mais l'idée n'était pas de trouver une solution immédiate aux nombreuses lacunes de la politique, mais de maintenir le dialogue ouvert. En effet, la mobilité est une question multidimensionnelle et elle ne peut être réduite uniquement à quelques paramètres. Toutefois, pour être considérée comme une politique viable, elle doit tenir compte à la fois des besoins de l'organisation et de ceux du personnel. L'une des conclusions évidentes sur ce sujet est que la mobilité est limitée et axée sur le personnel, avec peu d'intérêt du côté des organisations des Nations unies.



Photo credit: World Food Programme

L'expérience de participer virtuellement à ces sessions afin d'écouter les situations que le personnel de l'ONU affronte en travaillant hors du siège a été instructive et enrichissante pour beaucoup d'entre nous. Ceci nous a permis de nous rendre compte des différents aspects de la vie quotidienne professionnelle et privée dans un lieu d'affectation sur le terrain, en particulier dans un contexte de pandémie qui oblige la plupart des employés de l'ONU à travailler hors des bureaux, avec son lot d'inconvénients tel que l'accès difficile à la technologie pour certains.

ENJOYING THE SMALL AND BIG THINGS OF LIFE

**By Evelyn Kortum, Outgoing
FICSA General Secretary
and WHO staff member**

I was elected General Secretary to the FICSA in February 2019 for a two-year term. Although Dr Tedros, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), was new and not familiar with FICSA, he learned about its importance and granted my release. I was, and still am, very grateful for the confidence that was put in me. I was not quite sure what I was getting myself into, but I felt excited about taking up my new tasks, about learning new topics and working with a new team serving the membership.

Two years later, I believe I have accomplished what I aimed at accomplishing. In my inaugural speech, I endeavored to raise awareness about the purpose and the importance of FICSA as our common voice on our common issues. I promised to work with clarity, and to focus my attention on my new role. During my time as General Secretary, I managed to increase communication with the membership. Together with my team, I issued more than 220 communications and many, many circulars to the membership. Our communication channels were open and improved through a more accessible and clear composition of the FICSA website. I revamped the documentation for the FICSA Council, as I always thought there was too much to read and that it was far too complicated and repetitive. The format was not suitable for the current times of information overflow and so I introduced summary sheets with few links that easily provided an understanding of issues under discussion. I also streamlined the work of the secretariat, and this resulted in higher efficiency and satisfaction for all.

Obviously, I would not have been able to do anything without such an excellent team. My colleagues, team assistant Marie-Paule Masson and Information Officer, Irwan Mohd Razali, and more recently our accountant, Yvonne Bieri, are the pillars of the Secretariat. I am eternally grateful to them for their support and their excellent human qualities. I am also grateful to the interns who passed through the office, learning about FICSA and at the same time contributing immensely. I have enjoyed excellent working relations with the two Presidents, Brett Fitzgerald and Tanya Quinn-Maguire and consider myself extremely lucky to have been able to work with them and with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Standing Committees, the Regional Advisers, the FICSA lawyers, and a large part of the membership.

During my term, it was confirmed once again that active communications is crucial for good collaboration, for understanding of issues and for taking appropriate actions. However, it is also evident that it is not only the FICSA Secretariat that needs to be active. FICSA belongs to its membership, or better: FICSA is its membership, and, therefore, requires action from those who have been put into place by staff to represent them.

Unfortunately, all too often I learnt that the important information that was sent from the Secretariat, did not reach our members' constituents, the staff bodies. This was unfortunate in many cases. I have seen some improvements over the last few months, but I hope that when you read this, you might reconsider your information flow. The same approach is important for intra-sessional periods, i.e., in-between FICSA Councils. Standing Committee Chairs should more actively invite members to provide updates on pertinent issues throughout the year and enhance and repeat messages contained in the Standing Committee reports destined for the membership. As Cosimo Melpignano (Mino) is now the incoming General Secretary, I am confident that regular outreach sessions will continue with the membership, the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Standing Committees, the Regional Advisers and, of course, the elected officers in the Executive Committee.

Please also take advantage of the upcoming 'Ask the FICSA expert online sessions,' as they will help you guide your way as an international civil servant on many important topics.

I have one plea to the FICSA membership. Please consider applying for positions of the Executive Committee. You can become an expert in many important issues. You may also want to consider applying for the fully released positions of the President or General Secretary to guide the membership through the important years to come. The texture of working life will change even more radically, and job security, as well as benefits including staff health insurance and the pension fund, will need to stay highly performing and in place. This is worth fighting for fellow colleagues! I urge all of you to be supportive of each other, show solidarity and compassion, be creative and daring and remember that 'only the sky is the limit', if you so wish.

Last but not least, I will continue to support the team until I leave the international civil service for good this summer. I have been working with several UN agencies during the last 31 years, but mostly with the WHO, where I have felt most at home. I consider myself to have been extremely lucky, once I could accept that the ups and downs of life in general, and work life in particular, were part of being human and form the basis for lifelong learning. No ups without downs, that is the rule! I now need to go on a finding mission and see what the world out there is like these days. I expect many more adventures to come and opportunities to enjoy more of the small and big things of life.



PROFITER DES PETITES ET GRANDES CHOSES DE LA VIE

Par Evelyn Kortum, secrétaire générale sortante de la FICSA et membre du personnel de l'OMS

J'ai été élu secrétaire général de la FICSA en février 2019 pour un mandat de deux ans. Bien que le Dr. Tedros, Directeur général de l'OMS, soit nouveau et ne connaisse pas la FICSA, il s'est renseigné sur notre activité et a accepté mon détachement. J'étais, et je suis toujours, très reconnaissante de la confiance qui m'a été accordée. Je ne savais pas vraiment dans quoi je m'engageais, mais j'étais enthousiaste à l'idée d'assumer mes nouvelles tâches, d'apprendre de nouveaux sujets et de travailler avec une nouvelle équipe au service des membres.

Deux ans plus tard, je pense avoir exécuté ce que je voulais accomplir. Dans mon discours inaugural, je me suis efforcée de décrire et d'insister sur les objectifs et de l'importance de la FICSA en tant que porte-parole de nos questions communes. J'ai promis de travailler avec clarté, et de concentrer mon attention sur mon nouveau rôle. Pendant mon mandat de secrétaire générale, j'ai réussi à augmenter la communication avec les membres. Avec mon équipe, j'ai publié plus de 220 communications et de très nombreuses circulaires à leur intention. Nos supports de communication ont été créés pour certains et améliorés pour d'autres grâce à une vision plus accessible et plus claire du site internet de la FICSA. J'ai transformé et amélioré les documents du Conseil de la FICSA, car j'ai toujours pensé qu'il y avait trop de choses à lire et qu'elle était beaucoup trop compliquée et répétitive. Le format précédent n'était plus adapté à notre époque de surabondance d'informations. Par conséquent j'ai introduit des fiches de synthèse avec des liens qui facilitent une meilleure compréhension des sujets. J'ai également simplifié le travail du secrétariat, ce qui a permis d'améliorer l'efficacité et obtenir la satisfaction de tous.

Il est évident que je n'aurais rien pu faire sans un bon esprit d'équipe. Mes collègues, l'assistante Marie-Paule Masson et le responsable de l'information, Irwan Mohd Razali, et plus récemment notre comptable, Yvonne Bieri, sont les piliers du Secrétariat. Je leur suis éternellement reconnaissante pour leur soutien et leurs excellentes qualités humaines. Je suis également redevable aux stagiaires qui ont travaillé avec nous, apprenant à connaître la FICSA et apportant en même temps une immense contribution. J'ai entretenu d'excellentes relations de travail avec les deux présidents, Brett Fitzgerald et Tanya Quinn-Maguire, et je me considère extrêmement chanceuse d'avoir pu travailler avec eux ainsi qu'avec les présidents et vice-présidents des comités permanents, les conseillers régionaux, les avocats de la FICSA et une grande partie des membres.

Au cours de mon mandat, il a été confirmé une fois de plus qu'une communication active est primordiale pour une bonne collaboration, pour la compréhension des problèmes et pour la prise de mesures appropriées. Cependant, il est également évident que le secrétariat de la FICSA n'est pas le seul à devoir être actif. La FICSA appartient à ses membres, ou mieux : la FICSA est ses membres, et, par conséquent,

requiert une collaboration de la part de ceux qui ont été désignés par leur personnel pour les représenter.

Malheureusement, trop souvent, j'ai appris que les informations importantes envoyées par le Secrétariat ne parvenaient pas aux membres des associations du personnel. Cette situation est profondément regrettable. Cependant, j'ai constaté quelques améliorations au cours des derniers mois, mais j'espère que lorsque vous lirez ceci, vous reconsidererez le mode de diffusion de l'information au sein de votre équipe. La même approche est importante pour les périodes intra-séssio[n]nelles, c'est-à-dire entre les Conseils de la FICSA. Durant l'année, les présidents des commissions permanentes devraient impliquer plus activement leur membres respectifs pour fournir des informations sur des questions pertinentes et à mettre en avant les messages contenus dans les rapports des commissions permanentes destinés aux membres.

Désormais Cosimo Melpignano (Mino) est le nouveau secrétaire général, je suis convaincue que des sessions régulières de discussion se poursuivront avec les membres, les présidents et vice-présidents des comités permanents, les conseillers régionaux et, bien sûr, les membres élus du comité exécutif.

Je vous invite également à profiter des prochaines sessions virtuelles «Demandez à l'expert de la FICSA», qui vous aideront à vous orienter en tant que fonctionnaire international sur de nombreux sujets importants.

J'ai une requête pour les membres de la FICSA. Pensez à soumettre votre candidature pour les postes du comité exécutif. Vous pouvez devenir un expert dans certains domaines d'importance majeur pour défendre nos intérêts. Vous pouvez également envisager de postuler aux positions de président ou de secrétaire général qui sont entièrement détachés afin d'assister nos membres au cours des années importantes à venir. La structure de la vie professionnelle va changer encore plus radicalement, la sécurité de l'emploi, ainsi que les avantages, notamment l'assurance maladie du personnel et le fonds de pension, devront rester performants et identiques. Cela vaut la peine de se battre pour défendre nos droits acquis ! Je vous invite tous à vous soutenir mutuellement, à faire preuve de solidarité et de compassion, à être créatifs et audacieux et à vous rappeler que «seul le ciel est la limite», si vous le souhaitez.

Enfin, je continuerai à soutenir l'équipe de la FICSA jusqu'à ce que je quitte définitivement la fonction publique internationale cet été. Au cours des 31 dernières années, j'ai travaillé pour plusieurs agences des Nations unies, mais surtout pour l'OMS où je me suis sentie le plus à l'aise. Je considère que j'ai eu beaucoup de chance une fois que j'ai pu accepter que les hauts et les bas de la vie en général, et du milieu professionnel en particulier, faisaient partie de l'être humain et constituaient la base de l'apprentissage tout au long de notre cheminement. Pas de hauts sans bas, c'est la règle ! Je dois maintenant partir en «mission» et voir à quoi ressemble le monde d'aujourd'hui. Je m'attends à de nombreuses autres aventures et à des occasions de profiter davantage des petites et grandes choses de la vie.



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

FICSA STATEMENT ON WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY, 10 OCTOBER 2020

By Tanya Quinn-Maguire,
FICSA President

World Mental Health Day is recognized on 10 October each year. FICSA has prioritized staff mental health and well-being for many years, and it is crucial during these difficult times more than ever, to bring the conversation around mental health and well-being to light.

UN staff are committed to endlessly making a positive impact in our world. While this can be rewarding, it can take a toll on mental health and well-being. As UN staff across the world, you may undergo stress, witness tragedy, and bear a great deal of responsibility and pressure.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought additional challenges to our lives and it may have increased the prevalence of poor mental health in our workforce. As our world continues to grapple with and recover from this pandemic, it is crucial that we shed light on the mental health risks that will no doubt persist past this pandemic. Anxiety related to the uncertainty, social isolation, fear for family, friends and self has affected many of us. Grief and loss are an issue for many of our personnel.

This pandemic has disproportionately affected those most vulnerable to mental health issues: people with mental health conditions, many experiencing even greater social isolation than before; families juggling childcare and work; young people, and those who have remained separated from their families.

Not just for one day

That is why, this year, the United Nations Common System will promote conversations and activities around mental health and well-being throughout the entire month of October. This year, the United Nations System is moving from observing World Mental Health Day to recognizing World Mental Health Month. This is an opportunity to ensure UN personnel:

- Know that the UN is taking action to support their mental health;
- Understand the impact of mental health conditions and reduce stigma and discrimination;
- Consider what action they can take to support their own mental health and wellbeing.

A Coordinated approach

You will probably already have seen messages within your organization during World Mental Health Month, highlighting that events and activities will be organized across the UN-System with the goal to raise awareness about workplace mental health and well-being, and to mobilize efforts around the implementation of the UN System Workplace Mental Health Strategy launched by the Secretary-General in 2018.

World Mental Health Month 2020 will focus on providing access to resources and visibility for all. Different aspects and angles to mental health will be explored and conversations about how we can take care of ourselves, reduce stigma, and work together to create a healthier workforce will be promoted.

This is a call for action to every person in the UN to take part in this month's campaign. We encourage you to engage in the activities proposed through media campaigns, to take part in panel discussions, and to start conversations with your colleagues around mental health and well-being.

This is an unprecedented time in the history of the United Nations. The Secretary General has reiterated his support for promoting and protecting mental health during this time. We need to work as one, to build resources and capacity in support of this issue.

What you can do:

- Check the updated [Mental Health Strategy website](#) for detailed information about the UN World Mental Health Month and share it with colleagues;
 - Check the [UN World Mental Health Month Calendar of Events](#) and invite colleagues to join the centralized panel discussions, talks and roundtable discussion, etc.;
 - Follow @UN4mentalhealth social media accounts on Twitter and Instagram and repost #MentalHealthMatters related hashtags;
 - Share articles about UN World Mental Health Month that will be featured on UN Yammer, organizations intranets, UN public website and UN radio;
 - Share your organization's Wellbeing Resources with colleagues:
 - Host discussion/sharing session with all interested colleagues about mental health:
 - [UN resource Understanding Mental Health](#);
 - [UN resource Recognizing signs of poor Mental Health](#);
 - [UN resource Mental Health Strategy Summary](#).
 - Involve managers and colleagues to carry out activities around mental health in their respective offices;
 - Be aware that most of the activities will have to be held remotely, but also that some colleagues are already going back to the office, so try to give the option to hold activities on- and offline to support togetherness even so for remote working and for those back in the office too.
- General activity ideas for those teams that are still working remotely:
- Share online posters/backgrounds branded to the UN World Mental Health Month;
 - Facilitate little online mindfulness sessions;
 - Invite to virtual conversations over tea/coffee;
 - Take virtual quizzes on mental health topics via Kahoot, Mentimeter, or Slido;
 - Join virtual all staff meeting(s) and have a 15 min (or more) intervention;
- General activity ideas with as much as possible respecting COVID-19 precautionary measures to "welcoming back" those teams back in the office:
- Share table displays;
 - Invite to conversations over tea/ coffee;
 - Take quizzes on mental health topics;
 - take advantage of all staff meeting in the office and have a 15 min (or more) intervention.



LATEST DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO THE MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY

By Tanya Quinn-Maguire,
Focal Point for the Mental Health Strategy
and President of FICSA

You may recall that in December last year, we sent a [FICSA Communication \(37/19\)](#) to update you on the status of the UN System-wide Strategy on Mental Health and Well-being (MH Strategy). Since then, the emergence of COVID-19 across the world has dramatically impacted us in many ways. The virus affects not only physical health, but there are also multiple risks to mental health and well-being: anxiety related to the unknown, to the risks, working remotely and being socially isolated, as well as fear for family, friends and self. Often UN staff also work away from their usual social supports in challenging environments. These developments have shifted the focus of work of the MH Strategy Implementation Board from long-term (over five years) to a focus on urgent action to increase the level of support provided and to increase efforts to look after the health and well-being of staff.

Although the overall MH Strategy remains the same, how activities are prioritized will change in order to ensure the provision of resources that can be adapted by UN organizations to address current and emerging mental health and well-being issues arising due to the COVID-19 outbreak and beyond. The focus is on actions that both individual staff members and organizations can take. Some of the immediate actions that will be implemented include those that respond to mental health and well-being needs and consequent implications (immediate, short-, and long-term), including the impact of working from home, dealing with uncertainty and grief, domestic abuse, and suicide prevention. We felt that developments in the following areas would be of specific interest to our members.

Changes to the Mental Health website

Information related to maintaining good mental health in the shadow of COVID-19 has been added to the general UN COVID-19 website, which is accessible to all UN staff: [Coronavirus | United Nations](#)

At the moment, this site contains basic information for staff on protecting their own mental health, as well as tips for managers on how to support the mental health of staff they supervise in the current environment, particularly in the context of working from home. There are also some basic tips on what to do if you feel anxious, as well as links to online guided meditation. In the coming days and weeks, more information will be added, so please keep checking back. The regular website on general information related to mental health for staff is also being maintained:

<https://www.un.org/en/healthy-workforce> and contains a lot of complimentary information, which is useful in addressing concerns about mental health in general in the workplace.

Psychosocial Support

There is currently, unsurprisingly, an increased demand for Psychosocial Support across the UN System. The MH Implementation Board is exploring options to increase capacity in this area, while continuing to work on where the current gaps are. Some of the options being considered include immediate access to tele-counselling, as this is not covered by all organizations' insurance plans at the time of writing and it needs to be urgently addressed. In addition, work is progressing rapidly on the completion of a Minimum Services Package in order for the Implementation Board to be in a position to recommend actions that facilitate increasing capacity across all agencies. We will keep you updated on any developments in this regard.

Domestic Abuse

The Secretary General has recently drawn attention to the dramatic increase in domestic abuse around the world due to lockdown situations in many countries. Sadly, UN staff are not immune to this trend. A reference group has been formed to work on this issue and a tab will be added on the website to facilitate access to help and information for all UN staff members.

What next

Some HQ duty stations are considering a staggered return to work approach in the coming weeks. In this regard the Implementation Board is focusing on developing a strong foundation for a post-quarantine period, to ensure staff can transition smoothly when able. This work will consist of the points mentioned above as well as ongoing projects.

Ongoing

Among other areas, work will continue on the development of an implementation advice/guide to organizations; this will be an important tool to ensure implementation of a comprehensive Mental Health Strategy across all organizations. It is also essential that managers and leaders have the knowledge and skills to respond to current and emerging needs. Work started in this area will continue to be built on. You can refer to the Mental Health website for existing tools in this area. Another key area which cannot be neglected is the work around stigma reduction to ensure that staff with a mental health condition are not discriminated against. In order not to overburden an already overtaxed system, the Implementation Board will make every effort to ensure that they minimize the duplication of effort across agencies. This has been a guiding principle to date, and efforts in this regard will be reinforced in order to pool and adapt resources that have already been developed and make them accessible to all UN organizations, particularly in the areas of website content, handouts, training, webinars etc. COVID-19 is a challenge to all of us in so many ways, but it has also provided an opportunity to shine a light on the often-neglected area of staff mental health. Let us use the resources available to us to help us and our colleagues through this difficult time and to help us to build a strong foundation for a workplace that is free from stigma related to mental health and which supports all affected staff. FICSA will continue to follow this project.

WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FIELD A COVID 19 PERSPECTIVE

By Line Kaspersen, FICSA Executive Committee Member for Compensation Issues, FAO member outposted in Uganda, and Stella Tereka, Gender Officer, FAO Uganda

The COVID 19 period has been tough on everyone, including women in the field: professionally and in their home care-taking functions. Despite increased gender equality awareness and recruitment of women in employment, there still a wide range of gender inequalities existent that impede women's leadership and delivery capacity at the workplace. Many feel that there are not enough career growth opportunities, and with the COVID 19 pandemic, it is feared that this trend might be exacerbated. There is therefore the need to support all women, irrespective of the contract type with an enabling environment that promotes career advancement.

Challenges observed during COVID

A short survey undertaken in March 2021 at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Country Office in Uganda, shows that the biggest challenges faced by women at the workplace include: long working hours that come as a result of trying to balance office work and domestic chores, the anxiety of the spread of Covid-19 among the family members and overall mental health.

Different women are dealing with the challenges differently. For example, according to the survey, many rely on tips provided during wellness sessions organized by the UN and specific counselling, which was provided by FAO Uganda during the pandemic, to practice work-life balance. Others have resorted to hiring more labor to support with the household chores in order to reduce on the working hours. Figure 2 below shows the different coping mechanisms.

How the women are dealing with the challenges

Trying to take time off

Hiring more people to support with house work
spend more time with family

Appling lessons learnt from wellness and counselling sessions

Trying to restrict my own exposure to COVID-19
and trying to step work at 17:30

Working long hours to accommodate both office work and family duties

Following the guidelines provided by Ministry of Health

Prioritizing the need of the family

Working from home and staying safe

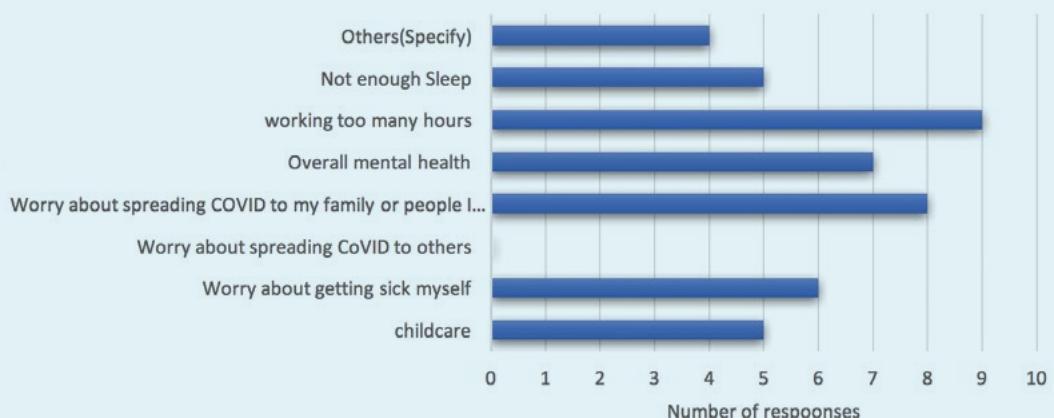
Meditation and prayer, Eating healthy

Try to have work-life balance

Figure 2: How Women are dealing with the challenges.
Source: FAO Uganda Survey-Women Only Group

Figure 1:
Source-FAO Uganda Survey
data for women only group

Challenges faced by women at work in the face of COVID-19





The scale of complexity of the challenges again showed a high heterogeneity amongst women; 52 per cent indicated that managing the challenges during the pandemic was somewhat or very difficult; while 48% indicated that it was not so difficult or not at all difficult.

The heterogeneity could be caused by differences in income levels, but more in depth analysis would be required.

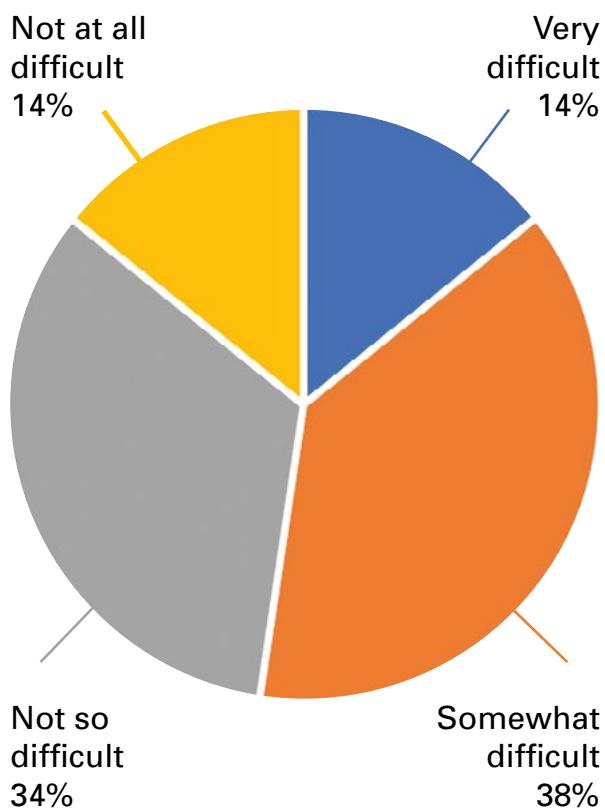


Figure 3:
Managing work-life and personal life while working at FAO.
Source: FAO Uganda Survey on Womens Day, 2021

Concrete proposals for supporting women

The UN Human Resources portal on career development, indicates a lot of tools which can be applied to further career development and job growth: including; career coaching, mentoring, job-shadowing, etc. In the field, especially amongst shorter-term contract type employees, these opportunities rarely trickle down. The survey conducted showed great heterogeneity amongst women, and thus a need to diversify the tools employed, and to use different tools to reach out to different categories of women.

The survey also asked women on how best FAO as an organization could support them to enhance their careers and leadership at the workplace. Below were the proposals categorized into two i.e. skills development and enabling environment/supportive policies for all women irrespective of the contract type. Most of these opportunities had not been available to women in the past.

Skills Development

- Promote capacity building of women and the different levels;
- Institute support mechanisms like mentoring and mentorship Program initiatives for women at the workplace;
- Promote leadership training, e.g. in project management amongst others

Enabling Environment / Supportive Policies

- Convenience for healthcare for women at the workplace, especially National Project Personnel
- Harmonize maternity and child care policies to apply to all women

Textbox 1: Concrete proposals for supporting women. Source: FAO Uganda survey on Womens Day, 2021

A separate part of the survey targeted specifically men; they espoused a willingness to form part of the enabling environment to support women in the workplace. The actions they suggested are highlighted in Figure 3 below.

- Promote gender equality in chairing committee meetings, such as Procurement, Recruitment, Disposal and others;
- Create dedicated mentorship space for women and building of confidence;
- Provide more management opportunities in projects during their implementation;
- Break barriers that often prevent women's engagement
- Provide social and technical support needed;
- Encourage women to apply for higher positions;
- Promote affirmative action for some positions, such as Operations Management
- Ensure gender representation across all roles;
- Avail opportunities for technical advancement and mindset building;

Conclusion

During COVID-19, women have faced extraordinary challenges, in particular related to childcare and mental health as primary caretakers of the home in many instances. At the same time, women, especially in the field, have felt left out of career development opportunities. Formally introducing career growth opportunities in organizations and promoting affirmative action in senior and international positions, are decisions that are largely taken outside the individual field office and many require longer term interaction at a centralized level. However, to support women in our field offices, we would like to encourage strongly that managers take on the below listed actions for implementation during the “new normal” period.

- Introduce mentoring programmes (within the office) targeting women of all contract types and at different stages in their career. Lessons can be learnt from the UN central level programmes, but must be adapted to the local context;
- Ensure availability of leadership and other personal development trainings accessible to all (and different groups of) women in the office; this could be participation in on-line seminars; ensuring budgets available for local trainings; or on-the-job training, e.g. shadowing management members or staff of other local UN agencies;
- Provide varied opportunities for flexibility to support the heterogeneous nature of women in the office: for example, voluntary measures around flexible working hours, working from home etc.;
- Ensure affirmative actions in the various committees within the office: procurement, disposal or recruitment committees; amongst long term consultants, etc.

Figure 4: Suggestions for concrete actions to promote women's opportunities in the field



FUTURE OF WORK

REPORT FROM THE 74TH FICSA COUNCIL ON FUTURE OF WORK

by **Evelyn Kortum**,
outgoing FICSA General Secretary

FICSA officers represented the membership at meetings of the High-Level Committee for Management (HLCM), which had identified the future of work as critical to its workplan in 2019. HLCM had therefore established the Task Force on the Future of Work and identified work streams focused on three topics:

- **Remote work**
- **Agile contracts**
- **Enabling technology.**

To raise awareness among the FICSA membership of those closely related topics and to ensure that FICSA adequately represented the membership's views to the HLCM, the Secretariat convened three joint sessions of standing committees to address them jointly for the first time. The topics must be viewed together as they depend on each other in their development and implementation across the UN common system.

The joint sessions were in no way comprehensive, and FICSA members clearly agreed that they needed further opportunities to discuss the topics in greater depth and as new information emerges, including from the HLCM. The objectives of the joint sessions included considerations of efficiency, transparency, connectedness, roundedness of understanding, preparedness and avoiding overlaps and duplications. This report addresses each topic in turn and then summarizes common issues and proposes joint recommendations. In addition, a dedicated section on the future of work was established on the [FICSA website](#).

Three topics

Remote work

The term remote work currently covered an array of options for working away from offices, which included teleworking from the duty station or another place, flexible working arrangements, and the use of hub and spoke offices. These differed from the business-continuity arrangements that organizations had put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participants noted the lack of clear and consistent definitions for terms related to options for remote and other flexible ways to work. Training for managers was essential to enable them to understand the organizational arguments in favour of flexible working arrangements and to combat outdated opposition, for example, not having staff at hand in person; the latter was also largely a matter of trust. Management needed to apply clear and consistent criteria to decide which staff could access remote or flexible working arrangements in order to ensure increased transparency across the board.

Remote or flexible work also raised important issues related to the lack of adequate equipment (ergonomics), connectivity and cost implications, particularly for staff in the field. Those were also closely related to provisions for staff's occupational safety, health (particularly mental health) and welfare. The specific concerns of field staff included appropriate space to work, security, access to power and adequate access to the internet at an affordable price. Other concerns were related to the possible impact on entitlements, including staff health insurance, pension and post adjustment. The real implications of remote work for all staff categories in all duty stations across the UN common system were unclear.

Agile contract modalities

As no additional contract modalities had yet been proposed, discussion during the joint sessions focused on raising awareness of the current debate in various high-level fora and trends outside the UN system.

The participants discussed the underlying reasons for the HLCM's possible plans to implement agile contracts outside the ICSC current contractual framework. Discussions with and documents from the HLCM could indicate that those reasons included the need to ensure operational agility, save money and respond to the needs of the modern workforce. Nevertheless, the participants noted that the proper implementation of the existing contract modalities could address those concerns.

Current trends in the private sector showed the casualization of employment contracts, with increased use of precarious contracts. Any move towards agile contracts could adversely affect the independence of the international civil service, so the participants stressed the need to uphold the Noblemaire and Flemming principles in discussions in high-level fora.

Enabling technology

The session on enabling technology had two parts, underpinned by technical and practical presentations by staff of the UN International Computing Centre (UNICC) and the University of Nottingham Business School, United Kingdom, and the presence of a staff member of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The technical part of the session informed participants about machine learning (artificial intelligence – AI); the risks of security breaches and inherent bias and discrimination in the use of data behind enabling technology, if not calibrated carefully; and the potential impact on staff skill sets, including those of managers.

Participants discussed the legal and ethical implications and noted the absence of a legal framework in the UN system. There was an urgent need to establish guiding principles across the UN common system that would preserve the right to privacy.

Progress in digitalization and AI was swift, so the participants agreed that UN staff needed to be actively involved in organizations' efforts to chart the course ahead, through FICSA's active participation in the work of the HLCM. They also agreed that a formalized relationship with the UNICC would help the FICSA membership both to follow and provide input on developments. Finally, the participants thought that the well-developed European Social Partners [Framework Agreement on Digitalization](#) would be suitable to adapt to workplaces in the UN system.

Common issues

The participants expressed concerns about the lack of clear and consistent definitions and processes; possible effects on staff entitlements; transparency and fairness; and implications for different staff categories across the UN common system. They discussed more general concerns about occupational health and safety and general welfare, with a particular focus on mental health challenges due to the fast-changing working environment.

FICSA URGES ITS MEMBERS TO ACTIVELY GET INVOLVED IN DISCUSSIONS ON TECHNOLOGICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

FICSA Communication

11/21 - 12 March 2021

Earlier this month, the Federation of International Civil Servants' Association (FICSA) held its first ever virtual Annual Council. With peaks of over a hundred attendees, members, observers and guests - a record high for the FICSA Council - many highlighted both FICSA's long history and its profound commitment to staff representation.

«When we met in London last February for our 73rd Council, none of us could have imagined the impact Covid-19 has had on our world.» said FICSA President Tanya Quinn-Maguire in her opening statement. «We all had to adapt to this new reality: the fact that we are here today is proof we have succeeded. As we formally open the first virtual Council, we want to acknowledge the importance of all contributions throughout what was a difficult year. We are also very happy to welcome colleagues who may not have been able to attend an in-person Council.»

The FICSA President was joined at the opening of the Council by International Civil Service Commission Chair, Mr. Larbi Djacta, and High-Level Committee for Management Vice-chair Kelly Clements. They briefed attendees on the ongoing activities and future plans for their respective high-level bodies and responded to questions submitted by the membership.

The importance of properly consulting staff representatives throughout key organizational processes was emphasized by all attendees. Delegates expressed support for the adoption of recommendations on all topics related to the “Future of Work”, including enabling technologies, remote work, and flexible working arrangements. The Council decisions focus the work of the FICSA Executive Committee around these key issues, which are increasingly relevant to its membership.

“Technology is not homogenous and at least should be thought of in terms of enabling and replacement technologies » explained Associate Professor Aditya Jain at the final FICSA Joint Session on The Future of Work. “With frequent changes in work processes, job insecurity will increase, as well as social isolation. This might foster interpersonal conflicts, cyberbullying, and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Staff associations must support the design of digitalization strategies and related policies that are inclusive and useful for all.”

Important recommendations to the FICSA Executive Committee included:

- For FICSA to advocate for unified administrative guidelines on remote working arrangements;
- That FICSA formalize its relationship with the UN International Computing Centre (UNICC), and work closely with them on digitalization processes within the UN common system; and
- For the UN Strategy on Mental Health to be systematically integrated and implemented across all initiatives of the UN Common System.

The FICSA leadership strongly encouraged members to engage in discussions with administrations on the impact of the «Future of Work» and its consequences, sharing any lessons learned. FICSA will continue active debates around these issues throughout the year.

FICSA members actively engaged on the risks of implementing a digital transformation agenda, mainly in terms of ensuring the «fair use» of digital tools and vulnerability of systems to privacy and security threats. They reported on the increased speed of digitalization brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, and on the importance of making resources on the digital transformation accessible to all staff, irrespective of grade or location. They also acknowledged the specific obstacles and challenges faced by UN staff deployed in field-based duty stations.

In addition, FICSA members highlighted approaches and pre-conditions that could bring a staff perspective to the design and implementation of human-centered digitalization strategies within the UN common system, including: sharing knowledge and experience between and across FICSA members and its sister federations; building partnerships with specialized bodies and agencies, such as the UNICC; and in supporting staff associations by providing their members with the necessary tools and resources to meet the challenges ahead.

Decisions taken by the FICSA Council can be consulted in the [Future of work](#).

[Readiness plan for staff representatives on digitalization and artificial intelligence](#) – Presentation by Dr. Aditya Jain, Nottingham University Business School, UK

[Emerging technology and digital ethics](#). Presentation by Marco Luzzi, Chief Operations Officer, UN International Computing Centre (UNICC), Geneva

More information on enabling technologies:
<https://ficsa.org/topics/future-of-work/enabling-technologies-workstream.html>).

FICSA AND UNICC PRESS RELEASE TEAM UP TO SECURE A BRIGHTER “FUTURE OF WORK” FOR UN STAFF

Sharing expertise in the digital transformation journey

Geneva 25 March 2021 - The Federation of International Civil Servants Association (FICSA), representing the views of over 40,000 International Civil Servants through their member staff associations/unions, recently signed an agreement with the United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC). Sharing expertise and experience in digital transformation journeys, UNICC has been identified as a crucial partner to address FICSA's work on the digitalisation process, the digital divide and its mandate to ensure staff engagement.

To support building a sustainable framework for the future technology roadmap of the UN system means not only to put staff members at the centre of the process, but to make sure that experts are right at the centre with us.

FICSA President Tanya Quinn-Maguire, at the Virtual 74th Annual FICSA Council Plenary, where the recommendation for this partnership was adopted.

This exciting partnership allows for more extensive and better-informed staff consultation processes.

The short-term aims and goals of the partnership include:

- Demystifying issues surrounding enabling technologies among staff members through high-quality education and training, as well as expert-led support for staff representatives, so as to empower them to contribute to ongoing discussions on technology and organizational restructuring on behalf of their constituency;
- Supporting staff members in employing digital tools in sustainable, healthy and proficient ways, in line with the UN Mental Health and Well-being Strategy;
- Fostering a science-based and human-centred approach to the digital transition within the UN, with FICSA serving as a sounding board for UNICC projects and initiatives;
- Identifying feasible solutions to address current inequalities in gaining access to and utilizing enabling technology, including for those that are disadvantaged due to limited access;
- Representing FICSA members at high level meetings with well-prepared FICSA positions.

Digitalisation has already begun, and FICSA members need to understand where these developments are heading. FICSA's long-standing commitment to fact-based staff representation informed the Council's decision to team up with professionals in digital business and technology at UNICC.

About FICSA

The Federation of International Civil Servants Association (FICSA) was established in 1952. Today, FICSA is a federation of staff associations and unions, which represents close to 40,000 members. FICSA fosters the development of the international civil service in accordance with the principles set forth in the UN Charter and the constitutions of the specialized agencies.

About UNICC

The United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC) has 50 years of experience providing trusted services to United Nations programmes, funds and entities. Its mission is to provide digital business solutions to the United Nations family, maximise the sharing of infrastructure, systems and skills and generate economies of scale to benefit its over 70 Clients and Partner Organizations.

For more information, please reach out to
business@unicc.org or ficsa@un.org

More information on related presentations on the FICSA website:

Presentation by Dr. Aditya K. Jain, Associate Professor and Head of Department, OB/HRM, Nottingham University Business School, [Impact of digitalization and artificial intelligence as causes and enablers of organizational change](#)

See also the YouTube film:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8UsUd44Y-4>

Presentation by Marco Liuzzi,
Chief Operations Officer, UNICC, Geneva.
[Emerging Technology and Digital Ethics](#)



SELECTED LEGAL TIPS FROM FICSA LEGAL ADVISORS FOR THE FICSA MEMBERSHIP

IMPORTANCE OF ADDRESSING PERFORMANCE ISSUES OFTEN AND EARLY; LESSONS FROM ILOAT

Judgment No. 4289 (S. v. ICGEB)

by **Larry Fauth**, Attorney at Law

In Brief

A long-serving General Service (GS) staff member (from 2003) at the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) agreed to a performance improvement plan (PIP) rather than challenging the negative performance appraisal given at the end of 2016 by her new supervisor – P-4 Head of Legal and Administration. Even though the full period for the PIP was not completed, ICGEB decided not to extend the appointment for alleged failure to show improvement. The staff member appealed on the grounds that the procedures relating to the PIP were not followed. In Judgment No. 4289 the International Labour Organization's Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) found that the ICGEB terminated the PIP prematurely and awarded 40,000 EUR in moral damages but did not order reinstatement, ending a long and successful career.

Facts

The complainant had served the ICGEB successfully for many years under a senior manager at the D level and had even received two promotions. After her supervisor retired at the end of 2015, the complainant came under the supervision of a new professional staff member at the P-4 level – Head of Legal and Administration. At the end of the year, the new supervisor gave a poor performance appraisal based in part on a review of the organization by an external consulting firm. The complainant provided comments in response to the criticisms but did not formally challenge the ratings, so the appraisal became final. The complainant agreed to enter into a PIP in good faith, since she assumed that her new supervisor would also act in good faith and give her a fair opportunity to show her true worth – after all she had worked successfully under a Director level professional for more than a decade and had significantly more experience than her new supervisor. The complainant's performance appraisals over the last few years had been satisfactory or better and she had received two promotions.

According to the complainant, the supervisor did not conduct the PIP according to its terms, assignments were not given for areas where alleged shortcomings were found, meetings to discuss her performance were per-

functory, and the PIP was ended prematurely, after which the complainant was given notice of non-extension. The complainant's internal appeal was rejected and while the ILOAT found that ICGEB did not respect the PIP procedure on the narrow grounds that it was ended prematurely and set aside the decision, it did not order reinstatement and instead awarded material and moral damages for the lost opportunity of successfully completing the PIP and having the possibility of a further contract extension. In awarding damages, the ILOAT emphasized that the complainant had not challenged the performance appraisal ratings in 2016 and had implicitly accepted her performance was not up to par by agreeing to the PIP. The ILOAT therefore added that it appeared that even if the PIP had not been ended prematurely, it was unlikely that the complainant would have successfully completed the PIP. This was a dubious and speculative finding at best, and caused the complainant in this case significant anguish, feeling that justice had not prevailed despite having "won" the appeal.

Comment

This case demonstrates the power imbalance between a newly appointed P-level supervisor and a G level subordinate. Having worked successfully for her entire career under a Director level officer, the complainant was unaware of the consequences of not dealing diligently to counter any allegations of poor performance, and of not formally challenging the unsatisfactory performance ratings in the 2016 assessment, and instead agreeing to a PIP. The ability of her new supervisor, a trained lawyer with no prior experience with the ICGEB, to surgically end the complainant's 14-year career for her own purpose was underestimated. It is critical that staff members guard their performance assessments diligently and earnestly, and challenge with all means available any unsatisfactory performance ratings.

Other News

The ILOAT is holding its 131st session in three parts. It recently finished its first part session on 6 November 2020, deciding 40 cases, and will publish the judgments on 7 December 2020 on its website (www.ilo.org/trib).

WHEN THE EXCEPTION BECOMES THE RULE: DISCLOSURE OF EVIDENCE IN DISCIPLINARY CASES

By Neil Fishman, Attorney at Law

Disclosure of evidence in disciplinary cases of harassment, and particularly sexual harassment, has required the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) to carefully balance the due process rights of the accused with the rights of witnesses and targets of misconduct to have an investigation handled with strict confidentiality.

General Rule: Disclose all Evidence

ILOAT caselaw highlights that in disciplinary cases, according to a general principle of law, a staff member must “have access to all the evidence on which the authority bases (or intends to base) its decision”. (ILOAT Judgment 2229, cons. 3(b))

As a result, since 2003, the date of the above judgment, organizations have usually been required to disclose to a staff member accused of misconduct, all the evidence upon which the administration relies to base its disciplinary decision. This means that during the disciplinary process a staff member can examine the evidence collected during an investigation, including witness statements, prior to responding to the charges and being found guilty of wrongdoing.

Recent ILOAT caselaw, however, has created an important exception to this general rule.

Exception to Disclosure (ILOAT Judgments 3640 and 4343)

In Judgment 3640 (2016), concerning UNESCO, the ILOAT examined a former staff member’s complaint against his summary dismissal as a disciplinary measure, after an internal investigation concluded that he had sexually harassed and/or engaged in unwelcome conduct towards 21 women.

The complaint was examined by a plenary of all seven ILOAT judges, which happens in exceptional cases. (ILOAT Statute Article III.3)

The ILOAT noted that full witness statements were not disclosed to the complainant and the identities of witnesses were not revealed to him. According to the caselaw cited above, this would normally constitute a breach of due process. However, the ILOAT decided to draw a “reasonable balance” (cons. 20) between the strict confidentiality of information and documentation pertaining to harassment investigations and the due process rights of the accused. It noted that the investigation report contained “an extremely detailed description of all the instances of unwelcome behaviour.” The ILOAT found that the accused was given a “real opportunity to dispute the various items of evidence gathered in the course of proceedings against him” and to rebut the charges. (Cons. 21) The ILOAT therefore found no breach of due process and dismissed the former staff member’s complaint.

In the very recent Judgment 4343 (December 2020), concerning the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the ILOAT examined a staff member’s complaint against his demotion and removal of supervisory responsibilities as a disciplinary sanction. The sanction was the result of an investigation and disciplinary process that found he had engaged in a pattern of harassment against a supervisee. The investigators did not disclose the name of witnesses to the staff member accused of misconduct or to the disciplinary board reviewing the investigation report. The only information about witness statements made available to the disciplinary board was a “very brief summary provided by [investigators] in the relevant parts of the final investigation report.” (Cons. 12) The ILOAT relied on Judgment 3640, stating that it was “necessary to consider whether the evidence in the present case shows that the complainant was sufficiently informed of the content of the witness statements, even though they were not shared with him.” (Cons. 14) The ILOAT noted that the complainant reviewed the investigator’s report, summarizing the relevant testimonies, and he had been informed of the statements during his interview with investigators. As a result, it considered that he had an opportunity to challenge the statements when the disciplinary board interviewed him. It dismissed his complaint, finding he had an adequate opportunity to defend himself.

What does this mean for staff members of international organizations?

The judgments indicate that international organizations might elect to withhold evidence from an accused during a disciplinary process unless the organization's procedures require it to be shared. The judgments are now most relevant to allegations of harassment and sexual harassment, but one could imagine that evidence disclosure obligations in cases about abuse of authority, discrimination or fraud could be viewed in a similar fashion.

Given the time and effort involved in fulfilling evidence disclosure obligations, organizations might increasingly decide to withhold witness statements and other evidence from staff members accused of misconduct. A lack of evidence disclosure will obstruct staff members from adequately defending themselves from accusations of misconduct. It may also erode a staff member's presumption of innocence.

While the ILOAT may overturn some disciplinary sanctions for failing to strike a reasonable balance between disclosure of evidence and confidentiality considerations, in many instances significant damage to a staff member's career and reputation will have already transpired.

Staff members found guilty of misconduct do not only face sanctions from their employer. They also increasingly encounter stigmatization and blacklisting when they seek employment elsewhere because many international organizations will share information about disciplinary sanctions that were imposed to potential employers. This information sharing will occur even when an investigation is completed under dubious circumstances and a staff member is undertaking the lengthy process of an appeal.

What can be done to reinforce staff members' rights?

Staff unions and staff representatives should be aware of this change in ILOAT caselaw and inform their constituents of the impact it could have on their ability to defend themselves if they are accused of wrongdoing. Consideration also should be given to reinforcing an accused's rights to the disclosure of evidence in disciplinary proceedings. The best way to reinforce this general principle of law is to ensure that an organization's investigation or disciplinary procedures, or its staff rules, clearly require the disclosure of evidence to an accused.

Mr. Fishman has provided legal advice within the United Nations system, with an expertise in employment law, for nearly a decade. He served as a staff member in numerous international organizations, including the World Trade Organization, Special Tribunal for Lebanon and as part of the legal secretariat of the WHO Global Board of Appeal. He has training and experience in conducting United Nations harassment investigations and is a certified and experienced workplace mediator. Mr. Fishman stands ready to assist employees in disputes and appeals with their employer and to advise staff associations of international organizations on a range of topics, as well as by serving as an investigator or mediator. This article provides general information and is not legal advice.

LA NOTION DE HARCÈLEMENT INSTITUTIONNEL DANS LA JURISPRUDENCE DU TAOIT

par **Giovanni M Palmieri**,
Conseil en droit la fonction publique internationale

Résumé

La notion de harcèlement institutionnel vise à qualifier des situations dans lesquelles un fonctionnaire est victime soit d'un incident isolé soit d'une accumulation d'incidents par lesquels l'Organisation porte atteinte à sa dignité et/ou à ses chances de carrière. La charge lui incombe de démontrer le caractère irrégulier du comportement de l'Organisation et la réalité du préjudice. En revanche il n'est aucunement nécessaire de prouver l'intention de nuire. Depuis 2014 jusqu'à 2021 le TAOIT au travers d'une jurisprudence variée a pu illustrer les caractéristiques saillantes de la notion de harcèlement institutionnel et mettre l'accent sur ses éléments constitutifs tant du point de vue des faits (à savoir une ou plusieurs erreurs, négligences, comportements irréguliers de la part de l'Organisation défenderesse) que des effets négatifs produits par les actes de harcèlement sur la dignité et/ou la carrière du fonctionnaire concerné. Cependant l'on notera qu'il s'agit d'une catégorie spéciale dans le contexte plus large de la notion de harcèlement moral. Ainsi les principes jurisprudentiels propres à ce dernier s'appliqueront également, dans la mesure du possible, au harcèlement institutionnel.

Jurisprudence pertinente

Le TAOIT énonce pour la première fois la notion de harcèlement institutionnel dans son jugement [n°3250](#) (2014). L'Organisation défenderesse (OIT) avait reconnu avoir commis une série d'erreurs de gestion au détriment de la requérante mais en même temps rejeté les allégations de harcèlement institutionnel, principalement en raison d'un présumé manque d'intentionnalité de sa part.

Le Tribunal a réaffirmé à l'égard sa jurisprudence constante en matière de harcèlement moral selon laquelle «l'intention n'est pas un élément nécessairement constitutif du harcèlement» (considérant 9).

Selon le Tribunal, les «fautes administratives» commises par l'Organisation au détriment de la requérante «peuvent être définies comme constituant un harcèlement institutionnel» (*ibidem*). Le Tribunal précise que : «dans le cas d'espèce, ce n'est pas un incident isolé qui a créé le problème mais bien l'accumulation d'incidents répétés qui ont profondément porté atteinte à la dignité et aux objectifs de carrière de la requérante». Par ailleurs le

Tribunal conclut à l'existence d'une négligence grave de la part de l'Organisation. À cet égard, le Tribunal réitère une position qui ressort de sa jurisprudence en matière de harcèlement moral, à savoir : « pris séparément, chacun des incidents [...] pourrait, malgré son caractère inapproprié, éventuellement être considéré comme justifié d'un point de vue administratif, mais, pris dans leur ensemble, ces incidents ont un effet beaucoup plus préjudiciable pour la requérante de sorte qu'ils ne peuvent plus être légitimés par les besoins du service ». Le Tribunal octroie à la requérante des dommages et intérêts d'un montant de 50.000 francs suisses en plus des 35.000 francs suisses déjà accordés par l'OIT.

Le jugement [n°3315](#) (2014), s'inscrit dans le droit fil de la jurisprudence en matière de harcèlement institutionnel. Le Tribunal considère que la requérante a subi un harcèlement institutionnel en raison d'une longue série d'erreurs de gestion et de négligence de la part de l'Organisation (OMS). Il convient de signaler que l'Organisation avait avancé une exception d'irrecevabilité ratione temporis à l'égard des conclusions de la requérante. Le Tribunal a rejeté cette exception en ce que «les événements et les actions dont elle se plaint ont bien commencé alors qu'elle était en fonction à l'OMS et qu'ils se sont inscrits dans une série d'actes de harcèlement institutionnel et de mesures de rétorsion» (considérant 21 *in fine*). Le Tribunal accorde à la requérante des dommages et intérêts pour tort moral d'un montant de 65.000 \$ des États-Unis. Les jugements [n°4038](#) (2018) et [4039](#) (2018) soulèvent le même ordre de problèmes, à savoir l'allégation de harcèlement institutionnel en raison d'enquêtes administratives entachées d'erreurs et irrégularités de procédure. Le Tribunal a considéré qu'une enquête administrative peut exceptionnellement être considérée comme un acte administratif faisant grief dans le contexte des allégations de harcèlement institutionnel. Il s'agit bien d'une exception dans la mesure où normalement les irrégularités de l'enquête doivent être alléguées à l'égard de la décision définitive découlant de la procédure d'enquête (voir dans ce sens le jugement [n°3236](#) (2013), considérant 1). Le Tribunal a constaté deux irrégularités dans la procédure d'enquête mais est arrivé à la conclusion que ces irrégularités ne sauraient être analysées en un «harcèlement institutionnel» à proprement parler. En effet «une décision illégale ou un comportement inadéquat ne

sauraient suffire à eux-mêmes à établir l'existence d'un harcèlement (voir les jugements [3233](#), au considérant 6, et [2861](#), au considérant 37) » (considérant 16).

Les jugements [4108](#) (2019), [4109](#) (2019), [4111](#) (2019) soulèvent des problèmes identiques à l'égard d'enquêtes administratives distinctes diligentées par l'organisation défenderesse (OIT) à la charge de chaque requérant. Le Tribunal a constaté la violation du principe du contradictoire et annulé l'acte attaqué. Toutefois, il est parvenu à la conclusion que les faits relevés par la Commission ne peuvent être qualifiés de harcèlement moral (considérant 7).

Dans son jugement [n°4286](#) (2020), le Tribunal a examiné le recours d'une fonctionnaire de l'OMPI qui affirmait avoir été victime de mesures de représailles à la suite de ses allégations de harcèlement, de discrimination et d'ilégalité de traitement. Le Tribunal parvient à la conclusion que l'Organisation s'est rendue responsable d'une erreur de droit et de la violation du droit de la requérante à un recours interne effectif. Il affirme qu'il « devrait en principe annuler la décision attaquée et renvoyer l'affaire à l'Organisation concernée » (considérant 19). Toutefois il ajoute qu'«au vu du temps écoulé, une telle mesure serait irréalisable» (*ibidem*). Par conséquent il accorde une réparation pour le préjudice moral s'élevant à 25.000 francs suisse.

Enfin dans son jugement [n°4345](#) (2021), le Tribunal a rejeté le grief de harcèlement institutionnel soulevé par le requérant en ce que ce dernier n'avait pas prouvé que les actes administratifs concernés d'une part étaient irréguliers et de l'autre avaient affecté sa dignité et ses objectifs de carrière (voir considérant 8).

Commentaires

La notion de harcèlement institutionnel est une notion jurisprudentielle récente qui est en voie de s'affirmer tant dans les droits nationaux que dans le droit de la fonction publique internationale. Pour ce qui est des premiers, il convient de signaler l'arrêt du Tribunal correctionnel de Paris du 20 décembre 2019. Le harcèlement moral « institutionnel ou systémique » y est considéré comme étant le fruit d'une stratégie d'entreprise « visant à déstabiliser les salariés, à créer un climat anxiogène et ayant eu pour objet et pour effet une dégradation des conditions de travail ». Le juge administratif international, de par les règles qui régissent sa compétence doit se limiter à

examiner les répercussions sur le requérant de décisions administratives qui concernent directement ce dernier tant dans le cas où elles revêtent un caractère strictement individuel que dans le cas où elles constituent des mises en œuvres individuelles d'une politique générale appliquée au sein d'une Organisation.

Le jugement [n°3250](#) doit être considéré comme étant la base jurisprudentielle de la notion de harcèlement institutionnel. Confronté à une suite d'erreurs, omissions ou négligences de la part de l'administration, le Tribunal se demande si l'accumulation d'incidents répétés a « profondément porté atteinte à la dignité et aux objectifs de carrière du requérant (jugement n°3250 cite considérant 9) » Il est également nécessaire pour le Tribunal d'être en mesure de parvenir à la conclusion que les incidents dont il s'agit ne peuvent pas être considérés comme « légitimés par les besoins de services » (*ibidem* considérant 10). En revanche, l'intentionnalité, à savoir la volonté de nuire de la part de l'Organisation, n'est pas un élément constitutif du harcèlement institutionnel.

Dans les cas d'allégations de harcèlement institutionnel, le Tribunal applique les règles propres au harcèlement moral pour ce qui est de sa compétence ratione temporis et ratione materiae. En ce qui concerne cette deuxième compétence, l'exemple de l'enquête administrative est particulièrement significatif : la décision d'ouvrir une enquête administrative ne constitue pas un acte faisant grief, sauf si elle est considérée par le requérant comme un élément du harcèlement institutionnel qu'il allègue.

Enfin l'on notera que le Tribunal accorde des réparations pour préjudice moral dû au harcèlement institutionnel en général supérieures à celles qu'il octroie lorsqu'il constate un comportement irrégulier de l'Organisation défenderesse. Dans le cas du jugement n°3250, le Tribunal a accordé une réparation s'élevant à 80.000 francs suisses. Dans une autre affaire où le harcèlement institutionnel était allégué mais pas prouvé, le Tribunal accorde une réparation moindre pour tort moral en raison d'erreurs administratives (par exemple jugement [n°4286](#)).

En conclusion, la notion de harcèlement institutionnel peut être considérée comme une notion évolutive, qui demeure ouverte à des précisions ultérieures qui pourraient se situer dans le droit fil des principes énoncés par le Tribunal dans son jugement n°3250.

LE NON-RENOUVELLEMENT DE CONTRAT POUR DES RAISONS DE NON-PERFORMANCE

Par Héloïse Bajer-Pellet,
Avocate au Barreau de Paris

NON- RENEWAL OF APPOINTMENT FOR UNSATISFACTORY SERVICE

By Héloïse Bajer-Pellet,
Attorney at the Paris Bar

Résumé

Des décisions récentes du Tribunal administratif de l'OIT semblent illustrer une tendance à l'accroissement de son pouvoir contrôle sur les décisions de non-renouvellement de contrat à durée déterminée pour insuffisance professionnelle. Tout en continuant à affirmer qu'il ne dispose que d'un contrôle restreint en la matière, le Tribunal, sous couvert de vérifier que la décision ne repose pas sur une erreur de droit ou de fait ou n'a pas omis des éléments essentiels, étend son contrôle au processus d'évaluation des performances des fonctionnaires en interne et à l'environnement professionnel du fonctionnaire évalué. Si la réparation d'une décision de non-renouvellement irrégulière reste imparfaite, cela permet à l'agent de mieux faire valoir ses droits, surtout s'il prend en amont quelques mesures préventives.

Introduction

Les organisations internationales ont de plus en plus recours aux contrats à durée déterminée concernant leurs agents. Elles s'octroient ainsi une certaine flexibilité sans être liées sur la durée puisque le non-renouvellement de contrat permettant de se séparer d'un agent est une décision soumise à l'appréciation de l'intérêt du service qui leur appartient.

Si les agents n'ont pas de droit à renouvellement de leur contrat à échéance, il n'en demeure pas moins que la décision de non-renouvellement doit être motivée. Le Tribunal administratif de l'OIT a sens doute pris par là en compte l'idée d'expectative raisonnable d'emploi stable qui tend à se renforcer avec le temps et la réitération successive des contrats à durée déterminée.

Quand elle n'est pas motivée par une suppression du poste, la décision de non-renouvellement du contrat le sera le plus souvent par des questions liées à la performance de l'agent. Or, selon une jurisprudence ancienne bien établie, l'appréciation des performances relève du pouvoir discrétionnaire de l'Administration dans laquelle le Tribunal ne veut s'immiscer. Il se limite dès lors à un contrôle restreint de la décision qui lui permet d'annuler une décision de non-renouvellement de contrat uniquement si un des critères suivants peut être retenu :

- La décision émane d'un organe incomptent ;
- La décision a été prise en violation d'une règle de forme ou de procédure ;
- La décision repose sur une erreur de fait ou de droit ;
- Des éléments essentiels n'ont pas été pris en considération ;
- En cas d'abus de pouvoir établi ;
- Si des conclusions manifestement erronées ont été tirées du dossier.

Or, à l'occasion de plusieurs arrêts récents, le Tribunal a, renforcé de facto son pouvoir en vérifiant en amont,

In brief

Recent case law of the International Labour Organizations Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) seems to depict a tendency towards an increasing scope of judicial review by the Tribunal regarding decisions of non-renewal of fixed-term appointments for unsatisfactory service. While stating that such decisions can only be subject to limited review by the Tribunal, which will interfere only if the decision was based on a mistake of fact or of law, or if an essential fact was overlooked, the Tribunal extends the scope of its review to the process of performance assessment and to the working environment of the employee who is the subject of the assessment. Although compensation in case of an irregular decision not to renew an appointment remains imperfect, it offers the agent the opportunity to assert their rights, especially when they took care to take preventive measures.

Introduction

International organisations are increasingly using fixed-term appointments regarding their employees. It is their way of keeping a certain flexibility without being tied to an agent for a long period of time, since international organisations have wide discretion regarding decisions not to renew a fixed-term appointment according to the needs of the department involved.

Employees do not have a right to the renewal of their contract upon expiry. However, the decision not to renew their contract must be motivated. This is likely a way for the ILOAT to take reasonable expectation of stable employment into consideration, which is becoming an increasing concern, particularly with regards to the recurrent recourse to fixed-term appointments.

When the non-renewal of a fixed-term appointment is not based on the decision to abolish the post, it is usually based on performance issues regarding the employee. According to well-established case law, international organisations have wide discretion in taking decisions concerning staff performance appraisal, which explains why the Tribunal is reluctant to interfere with such decisions. Therefore, judicial review is limited, and the Tribunal will interfere only if:

- The decision was taken in breach of applicable rules on competence, form, or procedure;
- The decision was based on a mistake of fact or of law;
- An essential fact was overlooked;
- If there was abuse of authority;
- Or if a clearly mistaken conclusion was drawn from the facts.

However, in recent cases, the Tribunal expanded de facto the scope of its review to reviewing the process of performance appraisal followed by the organisation and the

outre l'examen du respect des droits fondamentaux des agents, la procédure suivie par l'organisation pour l'évaluation de leurs services et même les conditions d'exercice professionnel de l'intéressé. C'est le cas dans le jugement rendu lors de sa 130ème session sous le numéro 4289 qui s'inscrit dans la lignée de décisions précédentes, comme les jugements 4062 et 4170.

Faits et décisions

Dans l'affaire qui a donné lieu au jugement n°4289, la requérante était entrée au service du Centre international pour le génie génétique et la biotechnologie (CIGGB) en 2003 et y était demeurée au bénéfice d'une série de contrats de durée déterminée dont le dernier prenait fin au 30 juin 2017. Courant 2016, elle a reçu de sa nouvelle supérieure une évaluation défavorable et s'est vue proposer un plan d'amélioration des performances. Au cours du troisième des quatre entretiens de suivi mis en place, elle était informée que son contrat ne serait pas renouvelé à l'issue du dernier entretien. Saisi d'une demande de réexamen de cette décision et d'une plainte pour harcèlement visant sa supérieure, le Directeur général a fait sienne la recommandation du Comité paritaire de recours et rejeté son recours interne. Le Tribunal a annulé cette décision.

Il rappelle pour commencer le principe selon lequel « la décision de ne pas renouveler un contrat de durée déterminée est de nature discrétionnaire », et que les organisations jouissent d'un large pouvoir d'appréciation en termes de renouvellement de contrats de durée déterminée.

Il précise cependant, dans le cadre de son examen d'éventuelles erreurs de droit, que « lorsque cette décision est fondée sur des services insatisfaisants, l'évaluation doit être faite dans le respect des règles établies à cette fin » (considérant 7).

Le Tribunal souligne par ailleurs qu'à cette obligation s'ajoute celle de « donner à la personne concernée la possibilité de s'améliorer ». Cela implique que le plan d'amélioration doit être exécuté intégralement sans pouvoir être arrêté d'autorité avant son terme. A l'Administration qui soutient que la requérante n'aurait pas accepté le plan de bonne foi, il répond qu'il lui appartient de prouver ses affirmations et qu'elle aurait dû le cas échéant agir en conséquence, sans attendre un stade avancé du plan.

Il considère en outre que c'est à tort que le Groupe consultatif a pu recommander de ne pas ouvrir d'enquête sur les allégations de harcèlement soulevées par la requérante au motif qu'elles n'étaient pas suffisamment étayées. Le Tribunal clarifie le fait qu'au stade de la plainte, le fonctionnaire n'a pas à démontrer que le harcèlement dont il estime être ou avoir été victime est établi au-delà de tout doute raisonnable - car cela est l'objet de la procédure disciplinaire postérieure qui doit s'en suivre - mais selon un niveau de preuve moins élevé.

working environment of the employee. This was the case in judgement no. 4289, rendered during its 130th session, which was in line with previous decisions such as judgments no. 4062 and 4170.

Facts & Decisions

In the case regarding judgment no. 4289, the complainant joined the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) in 2003, employed under a fixed-term appointment which had been renewed several times until the expiry of her last contract on June 30th, 2017. In 2016, she received a negative performance appraisal from her supervisor and was offered to follow a performance improvement plan (PIP). During the third of the four planned follow-up meetings, she was informed that her contract would not be renewed. The complainant sought a review of this decision and also submitted a complaint of harassment against her supervisor. However, the Director-General accepted the recommendation of the Joint Appeals Board and dismissed her internal appeal. The Tribunal annulled this decision.

First, it recalled the principle that “the decision not to renew a fixed-term contract is a discretionary decision”, and that international organisations have wide discretion in taking such a decision.

However, when reviewing if the decision was attended by legal error, the Tribunal specified that “if the decision is based on poor performance, the assessment of that performance has to be made in accordance with the rules established for that purpose” (consideration 7).

The Tribunal stressed that “allied to this is an obligation to afford an opportunity to improve”. This implies that the PIP must be pursued to completion and cannot be peremptorily cut short. Regarding the organisation's defence, arguing that the complainant did not accept the plan in good faith, the Tribunal replied that such a claim needs to be made out on the evidence and that, in any event, the organisation should have acted accordingly instead of waiting for a further stage of the plan.

In addition, the Tribunal considered that the Advisory Panel erroneously concluded that the allegations of harassment were not sufficiently established on the documentation to warrant further investigation. The Tribunal clarified that at the complaint stage, the employee does not need to prove that the harassment is established beyond reasonable doubt – since it is the subject of the disciplinary proceedings that must follow – but rather according to a less demanding standard of proof.

Le Tribunal laisse entendre que de ce fait, l'affaire aurait pu être renvoyée devant les organes internes en vue d'une enquête approfondie sur les faits de harcèlement dénoncés mais, faute de demande en ce sens de la requérante, cet élément sera simplement pris en compte dans le cadre de l'évaluation de l'indemnisation pour tort moral sollicitée.

Il sera ainsi alloué à la requérante une indemnité de 40 000 euros, toutes causes de préjudice confondues. Le Tribunal indique avoir mis en balance différents éléments : il a, d'une part, pris en compte le fait que l'évaluation ayant jugé ses performances non satisfaisantes n'avait pas été contestée, mais d'autre part retenu qu'il n'était pas exclu, même si peu probable, que le plan d'amélioration des performances aurait pu permettre une amélioration des performances et que l'organisation n'a pas traité de façon satisfaisante sa plainte pour harcèlement.

Cette décision complète le jugement 4170 rendu dans une affaire dans laquelle une requérante avait contesté un rapport d'évaluation et la décision de ne pas renouveler son contrat à durée définie en raison de services non satisfaisants. La requérante avait porté plainte pour harcèlement moral contre deux de ses superviseurs qui avait donné lieu à des avis relevant une absence de respect mutuel ayant créé des tensions et un climat d'hostilité imputable tant à la requérante qu'à ses superviseurs. Un plan d'amélioration de performance avait également été mis en place dont le Conseil d'appel avait relevé qu'il « n'avait pas été appliqué de manière efficace et appropriée ». A cet égard, le Tribunal confirmera que le changement de superviseurs au sein du même service dont elle avait bénéficié « ne pouvait suffire dans le climat de travail déjà hostile ». Sa réaffectation dans un service différent avait été recommandée afin qu'elle puisse bénéficier d'un environnement de travail complètement nouveau sans que cette possibilité de transfert soit sérieusement considérée par l'Organisation qui a préféré ne pas renouveler son contrat. Le Tribunal relève que dès lors qu'il avait estimé que la décision de maintenir l'évaluation défavorable et de ne pas renouveler le contrat était irrégulière, le Conseil d'appel aurait dû recommander de revoir l'évaluation et non accorder des indemnités prévues en cas de résiliation d'engagement.

The Tribunal implied that accordingly, the case could have been remitted to the organisation for further investigation regarding the allegations of harassment. However, in the absence of such a request, the Tribunal only used this fact to establish the quantification of the damages to which the complainant was entitled.

Therefore, the complainant was awarded compensation in the amount of 40 000 euros under all heads. The Tribunal explained having taken into account several considerations: first, the fact the negative assessment of her performance appraisal had not been challenged; second, that although the likelihood of a renewal was not great, it was not excluded that the improvement performance plan could have improved the complainant's performance and the organisation failed to adequately address her complaint of harassment.

This decision supplements Judgement 4170 rendered for a case in which the complainant had contested a performance report and the decision not to renew her fixed-term appointment for unsatisfactory service. The complainant had lodged a complaint of moral harassment against two of her supervisors which had culminated in opinions revealing a mutual lack of respect that had led to tensions and a hostile environment. An improvement performance plan had also been enforced, however, the Appeals Board noted that it had not been "implemented in an efficient and proper manner". In this respect, the Tribunal confirmed that placing the complainant under different supervisors from the same department "could not suffice in the already hostile work climate". The complainant's redeployment in a different service had been recommended. However, the solution of transferring her to another service had not been seriously considered by the organisation, which preferred not to renew her contract. The Tribunal pointed out that the decision of maintaining the negative assessment and not renewing her appointment was unlawful. The Appeals Board should have recommended to review the assessment instead of paying the complainant a termination indemnity.

Le Tribunal ne se contente pas de relever l'inadaptation de la solution proposée mais revient sur les circonstances ayant abouti aux décisions contestées. Il estime qu'en interne, il aurait dû être vérifié que l'évaluation défavorable des performances de la requérante et le non-renouvellement de son engagement n'étaient pas dus à un parti pris ou à un autre facteur étranger au service.

Le Tribunal rappelle que le contexte professionnel dans lequel le fonctionnaire est appelé à exercer ses fonctions doit être pris en compte et retient qu'en l'espèce, le comportement des superviseurs de la requérante avait contribué à créer un environnement de travail tendu et hostile. Il souligne à cette occasion qu'il s'agit là d'un manquement à un principe général s'appliquant même à défaut de texte.

Le Tribunal élargit de facto son pouvoir en se plaçant cette fois sur le terrain du contrôle de la prise en considération des éléments essentiels, puisqu'il revient sur le contrôle d'éléments factuels tels que le contexte professionnel dans lequel évolue le fonctionnaire et apprécie les possibles conséquences de ces circonstances sur l'évaluation des performances. Il rappelle à cet égard qu'il relève d'un principe général qu'elle doit être équitable, impartiale et honnête. Faute de vérifier le contexte dans lequel le fonctionnaire était appelé à exercer ses fonctions, les organes internes ne sont pas en mesure de s'assurer que l'évaluation des performances répond à ces exigences et omettent ainsi un élément essentiel que le Tribunal a le pouvoir de sanctionner.

Dans cette affaire, la requérante demandait sa réintégration. Mais le Tribunal exclut une telle réparation. Il considère en effet que cette mesure n'est possible qu'en cas de licenciement, mesure que le Tribunal a toujours tenu à distinguer du non-renouvellement. Certes, il n'y a pas de faute, mais on pouvait toutefois à notre sens s'interroger sur la question de savoir s'il ne s'agissait pas en l'espèce d'une révocation déguisée.

Le Tribunal retient qu'il n'a pas été mis un terme à un contrat en cours mais qu'un engagement à durée définie n'a simplement pas été renouvelé à son échéance. Il rappelle par-là implicitement un autre grand principe de sa jurisprudence aux termes de laquelle un fonctionnaire titulaire d'un contrat à durée déterminée n'a aucun droit à renouvellement. Il se contente ainsi d'accorder à la requérante en indemnisation de son préjudice matériel l'équivalent des traitements et indemnité dont elle aurait bénéficié si son contrat avait été renouvelé une fois.

En définitive, si on peut se féliciter de ces jurisprudences en ce qu'elles permettent au Tribunal d'exercer un certain contrôle sur les circonstances encadrant le non renouvellement d'un contrat et donc au fait qu'elles sont bien fondées sur « une bonne raison », comme le veut un principe général de la fonction publique internationale, les

In addition to stressing the inadequacy of the solution offered, the Tribunal went back to the circumstances that culminated in the impugned decisions. It considered that internally, the Organisation should have verified if the negative performance appraisal and the non-renewal of the complainant's appointment were not affected by prejudice or other extraneous factors.

The Tribunal recalled that, as a general principle, the professional context in which the staff member works must be taken into account and considered that in the present case, the behaviour of the complainant's supervisors contributed to creating a tense and hostile working environment.

The Tribunal expanded de facto the scope of its review, this time on the grounds of reviewing a conclusion drawn from the facts, since it reviewed the facts, such as the professional context in which the staff member works, and assessed the possible consequences of those circumstances on performance assessment. In this regard, it recalled as a general principle that performance assessment requires fairness, impartiality, and honesty. If the internal bodies do not examine the professional context in which the staff member works, they are not able to ensure that performance assessment complies with these requirements and, consequently, they fail to take into account an essential fact, which the Tribunal has the power to sanction.

In this case, the complainant asked for her reinstatement. However, the Tribunal did not deem this appropriate. It believed that such measure can only be possible in case of termination of contract, which the Tribunal has always distinguished from non-renewal. Suffice to say, there was no misconduct. However, in our opinion, it could be argued that it was a dismissal in disguise.

The Tribunal did not consider that a contract was terminated but that a fixed-term appointment was simply not renewed beyond its expiry, which implicitly recalls another great principle established by its case law regarding the fact that those employed under a fixed-term contract are not entitled to the renewal of their contract. As an alternative, the Tribunal simply awarded the complainant the equivalent of salaries and allowances she would have received if her contract had been renewed, as compensation for material damages.

To conclude, these cases can be considered a step forward, as they allow the Tribunal, to a certain extent, to review the circumstances of a decision not to renew a fixed-term contract, which implies there must be a "valid reason" for such decision, in accordance with a general principle of the international civil service. But they remain a modest step forward regarding adequate compensation.

mesures de réparation peuvent sembler un peu timides. Cela est plus flagrant encore dans une affaire similaire, objet du jugement 4062 . Il s'agissait d'une fonctionnaire de l'UNESCO qui, depuis son entrée au sein de l'Organisation en tant que surnuméraire puis en vertu de contrats à durée définie renouvelé à plusieurs reprises, avait toujours donné satisfaction jusqu'à ce qu'elle soit affectée dans un nouveau service. Lorsque l'agente a reçu une évaluation défavorable malgré un plan d'amélioration de ses performances, l'Organisation a décidé de ne pas renouveler son contrat de durée définie en raison de services insatisfaisants malgré l'avis de l'organe de recours interne compétent en matière d'évaluation des performances qui avait recommandé son transfert dans un service différent au vu notamment des graves difficultés de communication constatées eu sein de la section.

Sous couvert d'examiner si l'organisation n'avait pas omis de tenir compte d'éléments essentiels, le Tribunal a retenu que :

« un tel contexte professionnel est, à l'évidence, de nature à nuire à la qualité des performances des membres du personnel et rend, a fortiori, particulièrement difficile, pour un fonctionnaire qui ne donnerait pas satisfaction, d'améliorer la qualité de ses prestations ».

Il a également estimé que malgré le plan d'amélioration des performances mis en place, « la requérante n'a pas bénéficié, de la part de ses supérieurs hiérarchiques, du suivi régulier qui lui aurait en l'espèce été nécessaire pour améliorer substantiellement la qualité de ses performances ».

L'évaluation défavorable était ainsi entachée d'illégalité tout comme, en cascade, la décision de ne pas renouveler son contrat.

Le Tribunal a considéré être une juste réparation du préjudice matériel subi par la requérante l'octroi de l'équivalent des traitements et indemnités dont elle aurait bénéficié si son contrat avait été renouvelé.

On regrettera pour notre part que le Tribunal ait écarté sa demande tendant au paiement des émoluments qu'elle aurait perçus jusqu'à sa retraite proche car si un renouvellement de son contrat n'était pas garanti, il était plus que probable pour cette requérante qui avait travaillé au sein de l'organisation de façon interrompue depuis près de onze ans en ayant toujours donné satisfaction avant d'être transférée dans le service dysfonctionnant. Cela est sans doute pondéré, dans les affaires 4062 et 4170, par la reconnaissance par le Tribunal du caractère « substantiel » du préjudice moral subi, qui prend en compte l'atteinte à la réputation professionnelle des intéressées et le manque de sollicitude de l'organisation mais l'allocation d'une somme de 10 000 euros ne compense certainement pas.

It is all the more significant in a similar case, judgement n° 4062 . The case regarded a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) employee, who had joined the organisation as a supernumerary and was then employed under a fixed-term contract, which was renewed several times. She had always received good reviews until she was transferred to a new service. When the complainant received a negative assessment, despite a PIP, the organisation decided not to renew her contract for unsatisfactory performance, despite the opinion of the internal appeals body, which is competent to review performance assessment and recommended her transfer to a different service, particularly given serious communication issues in her current section .

Under the guise of reviewing whether an essential fact had been overlooked by the organisation, the Tribunal established the following:

“Such a working environment is clearly detrimental to the quality of staff performance and makes it particularly difficult, a fortiori, for employees who are not providing satisfactory services to improve the quality of their performance.”

The Tribunal also considered that despite the improvement performance plan enforced, “**the complainant did not receive the regular feedback from her supervisors that she would have needed in this case in order to substantially improve the quality of her performance**”.

Consequently, the negative assessment as well as the decision not to renew her contract was considered unlawful. The Tribunal deemed, as fair compensation for material damages suffered, that the complainant should be paid the equivalent of all salary and allowances that she would have received had her contract been renewed.

At our end, we regret that the Tribunal rejected her claim for the payment of all the emoluments which she would have received until she reached retirement age. Indeed, although the renewal of her fixed-term contract was not guaranteed, it was more than likely for this specific complainant who had been working for the organisation for eleven uninterrupted years before being transferred to this dysfunctional service.

The award of 10 000 euros is surely not enough to compensate the damage suffered. It was more balanced in cases 4062 and 4170, since the Tribunal qualified the moral injury suffered as “substantial”, given the professional reputational harm and the lack of care from the Organisation, and awarded a more appropriate compensation.

Conclusion et conseils pratiques

Malgré l'absence d'un droit à renouvellement d'un contrat à durée déterminée, un agent peut faire l'objet d'une mesure de non-renouvellement si et seulement si l'organisation est en mesure in fine de motiver sa décision et de justifier du respect des procédures applicables. Cela se traduit, en matière de non renouvellement pour insuffisance professionnelle, par la prise en compte du contexte professionnel dans lequel le fonctionnaire exerce les performances évaluées et par le respect de la procédure applicable au plan d'évaluation de performances qui doit nécessairement être proposé puisque l'organisation a l'obligation de « donner à la personne concernée possibilité de s'améliorer ».

Le comportement inapproprié d'un supérieur hiérarchique ou un environnement de travail néfaste est de nature à influer négativement sur les performances de l'agent sans que ses capacités propres soient en cause. Il est heureux que le Tribunal, malgré son contrôle restreint, vérifie ces conditions.

En pratique, il est recommandé au fonctionnaire titulaire d'un contrat à durée déterminée qui verrait ses performances jugées insatisfaisantes non seulement de contester son évaluation, de suivre fidèlement les préconisations du plan d'amélioration des performances, quitte à les contester par la suite, mais également de dénoncer les considérations extérieures qui viendraient parasiter ces performances.

Si les conditions sont remplies, cette dénonciation peut prendre la forme d'une plainte pour harcèlement dont le Tribunal a rappelé que sa recevabilité est soumise à une exigence de preuve relativement souple et face à laquelle une organisation doit :

- procéder à une enquête rapide et approfondie, les faits devant être établis objectivement et dans leur contexte général ;
- s'assurer que les garanties d'une procédure régulière sont respectées ;
- garantir la protection de la personne accusée ;
- garantir que la personne se plaignant de bonne foi d'avoir été harcelée ne soit pas stigmatisée ni ne fasse l'objet de représailles.

On soulignera à ce titre que le Tribunal a insisté sur le fait qu'une organisation doit alors faire toutes diligences utiles et ne peut simplement se contenter de laisser le Tribunal se prononcer sur la question sans lui fournir les informations qui auraient pu lui être utiles en réalisant les investigations utiles. A défaut, cela constituerait un manquement pour lequel le requérant serait non seulement fondé à demander réparation (jugement 1619, considérant 6) mais encore un motif viciant la décision d'évaluation et partant, celle de non renouvellement du contrat.

Conclusion and Tips

Despite the absence of a right to have a fixed-term contract renewed, an agent can only be subject to a decision not to renew their appointment if the organisation can in fine motivate its decision and prove the applicable procedures have been followed. Regarding the non-renewal of an appointment for unsatisfactory service, this translates into considering the professional context in which the staff member works and the need to follow an improvement performance plan, which must necessarily be implemented since the organisation has an obligation “to afford an opportunity to improve”.

Inappropriate behaviour from a manager or a hostile working environment can have a negative influence on the performance of an employee, without prejudice to his or her abilities. Fortunately, the Tribunal, despite a limited review, verifies these conditions.

In practice, if an employee employed under a fixed-term contract receives a negative performance assessment, it is recommended that they challenge the assessment and scrupulously follow the specifications of the improvement performance plan, even if they challenge it later on. They should also report extraneous factors that could impact their performance.

If conditions are met, reporting an extraneous factor can take the form of a complaint of harassment, regarding which the Tribunal recalled recevability is subject to a less demanding standard of proof and compels organisations to:

- Investigate the matter both promptly and thoroughly, as facts must be determined objectively and in their overall context;
- Ensure due process;
- Guarantee the protection of the person accused;
- Guarantee that the person claiming, in good faith, to have been harassed not be stigmatised or victimised on that account.

In this regard, it can be pointed out that the Tribunal insisted that an organisation must carry out a full and proper inquiry and cannot simply let the Tribunal rule without offering evidence that might have proved material, provided a proper inquiry has been carried out. Failure to do so would constitute a breach for which the applicant would not only be entitled to claim compensation (but would also be a ground for impairing the legal validity of the evaluation decision and, consequently, the decision not to renew the contract).

ROSTER OF FICSA LEGAL ADVISERS

List of FICSA Lawyers

Disclaimer

These resources and articles are provided for the convenience of FICSA members and do not constitute legal advice, are not intended to be a substitute for legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. You should seek legal advice or other professional advice in relation to any particular matters you or your organization may have. The views expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of FICSA.

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Ces informations sont fournies par des parties externes à la FICSA et ne représentent pas nécessairement le point de vue de notre Fédération. Elles ne sont pas destinées à se substituer à un conseil juridique et ne doivent pas être considérées comme tels. Vous devez demander un avis juridique ou tout autre conseil auprès d'un professionnel en rapport avec un sujet particulier que vous ou votre organisation pourriez avoir



OTHER LEGAL MATTERS & MISCELLANEOUS

LETTER FROM THE FICSA PRESIDENT TO ALL CHAIRS OF MEMBER STAFF ASSOCIATIONS/UNIONS ENCOURAGING THEM TO SECURE A LEGAL PROTECTION INSURANCE

Dear colleagues,

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on international civil servants has emphasized the need for and benefits of joining a legal protection insurance scheme.

FICSA therefore urges its members to consider the importance of having legal protection insurance that comprehensively covers employment law matters in your international organization. Legal protection insurance is a class of insurance that facilitates staff access to legal advice and justice by covering the costs incurred in case of an unforeseen legal matter, such as lawyer's fees and related legal expenses. These costs can be very high and potentially prohibitive.

Unfortunately, this is often only considered when a staff member approaches a lawyer for assistance about a potential legal dispute. At this point, the dispute may have already started, and the staff member could face deadlines, heightened stress, and require urgent help. When staff do not have legal protection insurance, the expenses associated with bringing a dispute may impede them from obtaining competent and timely legal advice. Staff may therefore elect not to pursue a meritorious claim out of fear that they will not be able to recuperate legal fees after litigation. As most international organizations already have formidable internal legal departments, there is already a daunting inequality of arms. Legal insurance is therefore imperative to facilitate access to justice for staff.

FICSA's role is to provide adequate resources and assistance for its members throughout the world. As such, in 2020, FICSA signed an agreement with Fortuna insurance to provide FICSA's member organizations with headquarters in Switzerland with a legal protection package. Fortuna insurance covers cases related to informal negotiations of employment disputes or grievances, or formal employment disputes or grievances brought before the internal justice bodies or the authorities of the subject international organization, the United Nations (UN) Joint Staff Pension Fund, or before the administrative tribunals of the UN, the UN Dispute Tribunal (UNDT/AT) or International Labour Organization (ILOAT).

For further information on the Fortuna legal protection package FICSA has negotiated, please consult the section of our [website](#) on Fortuna Legal Insurance, including our [Q&A on Fortuna legal protection insurance coverage](#). Interested member staff associations and unions are asked to contact the FICSA office (ficsa@un.org). Staff associations and unions that already provide insurance coverage are also asked to use this opportunity to compare provisions in order to make informed decisions about the best possible insurance coverage.

WHAT IS FICSA ANYWAY?



By Tracy Tollmann,
FICSA Executive Committee
Member without Portfolio
and UNFCCC Bonn Staff
Member

I have had the honour of serving on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Staff Associations Executive Committee (SA ExCom) twice in the past 22 years; once alone and, more recently, under the umbrella of the Federation of International Civil Servants Association (FICSA). I say alone the first time, not as a lone staff representative, but isolated from any form of external support or source of assistance, as we represented staff interests. The second time, I have been more fortunate to assume this role as a part of the FICSA family, which has proven to be the difference between night and day vis a vis the level and quality of support and assistance we now enjoy by virtue of this membership.

On the basis that you have to charge for something before you appreciate it's worth, I was in full agreement with the concept of staff members contributing towards a common fund to pay for FICSA membership and also SA ExCom activities when we joined in 2013. It wasn't until I attended my first FICSA Council in London in 2020, however, that I fully appreciated what it actually meant to be a part of FICSA, in spite of having been a member of the SA ExCom for almost one year. The term "FICSA" had always been a very distant concept and, I thought, FICSA ExCom members were probably far too busy to have time to bother with many of our issues.

I recall sitting in the main plenary in London and being impressed by the sheer number and variety of other UN organizations represented in the room, as well as the frank, open and friendly approach displayed by the other delegates; I was especially struck by how down-to-earth and approachable the FICSA ExCom members actually were – a far call from my obviously false assumptions – there's a moral in there somewhere! What truly resonated with me however, was my first Standing Committee experience. Listening to the various delegates discussing issues they were having within their respective organizations and the steps they were taking to address them helped me to fully realise how important the sharing of experiences, best practices and lessons learned are. It opened my eyes to the fact that we are not alone as a staff association and that others were in fact experiencing many of the same issues we were, specifically as we were going through a major restructuring exercise at the time. I finally came to understand and appreciate one of the main reasons why it makes so much sense for us to be united under this one umbrella, primarily the fact that we are so much stronger when united and working collaboratively together. What I also greatly value is simply having a seat at the table with high-level interagency bodies such as the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM), the Human Resources Network (HR Network), the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), The Fifth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the UN Joint Staff Pension Board (UNJSPF) and the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN), where our concerns are not only be raised, but heard and acknowledged.

So why is it that FICSA's work and value-add seems to constitute a bit of a black box to the majority of the nearly 40,000 staff represented and protected through FICSA? More importantly, identifying that this is in fact an issue, what can we do as staff representatives to address and resolve it and promote the work and efforts that FICSA are making on our behalf? We can't have 40,000 UN staff members attending FICSA Councils to replicate my personal eureka moment after all.

We, at the UNFCCC SA ExCom, have recently identified a number of areas to raise awareness on FICSA with our staff members, with a view to promoting a greater understanding and so foster active engagement and interest in the important issues currently being discussed, pertaining to staff benefits and welfare. Many of them have been relatively low-hanging fruit and surprisingly easy to implement:

1. Sharing FICSA related information on our in-house intranet and considering setting up a FICSA corner, where all FICSA related information can be accessed;
2. Scheduling what we call “One-on-One” sessions, which focus on specific themes. In this context, we recently invited the FICSA President: Tanya Quin Maguire, and Vice-President: Cosimo Melpignano, to join us in talking about FICSA and reporting back from the 74th Council, with an especial focus on the Future of the UN Workforce System. We welcomed around 133 staff who joined us for this virtual meeting and received very positive feedback on the session;
3. Encouraging our staff members to register on the FICSA website, so as to access the wealth of information available, and thus become more informed about efforts and actions currently underway;
4. Promoting the FICSA “Ask the Expert” series: Many UNFCCC staff members attended the recently run session on the impact of digitalization and AI as causes and enablers of organizational change with a view to the impact on the international civil service, who thoroughly enjoyed this session;
5. Promoting some of the FICSA organized workshops from the comprehensive [Training Catalogue](#), which FICSA members receive at a reduced rate and which are relevant and of interest to many of our staff members.

No-one is saying there is a magic bullet to get the message across, but I believe it behoves all of us to at least attempt to do so. And, it shouldn't end with raising awareness on FICSA activities, as I think we are all guilty of not taking the time to promote the work we do within our own staff associations/unions. Admittedly, much of it is of a confidential nature, and there never seem to be enough hours in the day to dedicate to the “nice to haves”, but we do ourselves a dis-service when we don't communicate on the efforts we are making on our staff members' behalf, often in addition to our regular duties. Who knows, we might even receive more support and interest when the inevitable elections come around!

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

2020 - 2021

By **Anthony Ndinguri**

FICSA Regional Representative
for Africa and ICAO Nairobi
Staff Member

When Covid 19 knocked on our doors rearing its ugly face, the world was sent scampering for safety. The safest place remained behind our doors and away from the rest, including at times our beloved next of kin. As the dust settled, we realized that the worlds' business had to continue transacting, albeit at a slower pace. This meant that we had to adopt new ways of working, which we chose to call; telecommuting, remote work, future of work, telework, teleworking, working from home, mobile work, remote job, work from anywhere, and flexible workplace, all depending on the person entrusted in choosing the name of the new working modality.

Business continuity in the Covid era dictated that we had to adapt to new ways of holding meetings, workshops and trainings minus the need to travel. It was a struggle to find our way around these platforms but finally, we got the gist and many were able to join in almost instantly and navigate our way around. In a click, you could meet and chat with people from the farthest corners of the world and wish them a quick recovery, if and when their faces showed signs of being under the weather. It was a smart and exciting way to do business and every one of us looked forward to the next meeting.

However, we were not prepared for the moment when the call for lights, camera, action was announced, and the recording started rolling. In an instant, we were ushered to a world full of diverse sights and sounds. When microphones clicked unmute, sounds of family talks, children laughing or crying came flowing in. Pets, ambulances, noisy neighbours, television newscasters in the background and some reggae beats became part of the meeting sound effects. Cursing and embarrassing words also became part of the conversation. That was tolerated up until the cameras clicked open and the world came in sight to some award winning images based either on beauty or ugliness.



Beautiful background photos and effects were breath taking, children and pets seeking attention from their guardians was another adorable sight. These images brought us closer together and in a moment made us forget the trying times that we were facing and adjusting to.

It has been a trying, exciting, embarrassing and eventful year in equal measure. So many inventions as to how we work have been made and lessons on how to adjust have come in plenty. Every meeting has created a new lesson for us. We are called upon to adjust and make the best of the new working order for ourselves and future generations.

We welcome 2021 as our year of debriefing, correcting the mistakes that we made during the pandemic period, applying the lessons that we learnt, implementing and laying foundation for the future of work. As the people mandated with protecting the welfare of our colleagues, these lessons will come in handy in helping us deal with the challenges, as our colleagues settle. This means we must analyze and internalize them in order to give the best guidance in future challenging times if they ever come again.

This is a call for astute leadership and informed decisions that are in line with the new, adopted and updated policies by the agencies that we serve. I call upon us to record and discuss these policies in good time to provide good answers to our virtual arrangements!

ONLINE SERVICE MEANS SERVICE WITHOUT FRONTIERS

LE DIGITAL POUR UN SERVICE À L'ÉCHELLE MONDIALE

by **Mr. Xavier Roblin**

Member of the AMFIE's
Board of Directors

You will have first noticed it years ago: Association coopérative financière des fonctionnaires internationaux (AMFIE's) board and authorized management work together to harmonize the experience of members who entrust their savings to our association. In addition to the improvements constantly being brought to AMFIE.NET, members can now use the application to access their accounts and for their everyday transactions. These are just the start of an ambitious programme to improve our services, which the management will continue to roll-out following the recent installation of Mozaik as our platform.

par **Xavier Roblin**

Membre du Conseil
d'administration de l'AMFIE

Vous l'avez constaté : depuis plusieurs années, votre Conseil d'Administration travaille de l'AMFIE travaille en coopération avec les administrations afin d'harmoniser l'expérience des sociétaires qui confient leur épargne à l'AMFIE. Outre les améliorations constantes apportées à AMFIE.NET, les sociétaires peuvent désormais accéder à leurs comptes via l'application et utiliser cette dernière pour leurs opérations au quotidien. Ces fonctionnalités ne sont que le début d'un ambitieux programme d'améliorations de services que la Direction va continuer à déployer grâce à l'installation récente du système central « Mozaik ».





With this upgrade to the core of your experience, it has become possible to work on expanding our association's membership and begin AMFIE's plan for development both geographically and in terms of the range of organizations represented. The Coronavirus crisis, travel restrictions and the development of teleworking have all contributed to hastening the adoption of the commercial prospection tools offered by LinkedIn.

For there are more than a million international officials and consultants, from 162 international organizations, who have a LinkedIn account. That is why the AMFIE teams chose to get training in all the professional tools offered by the platform. Their aim? To make AMFIE much better-known and initiate real personal contacts between potential future members and the «globetrotters» who in normal times travel the world to meet you at your offices. The results are already very encouraging. Thanks to LinkedIn, thousands of international officials and eligible consultants have discovered the existence of AMFIE, and several hundred have followed the remote presentation webinars. This is just the beginning of an ambitious development which, together with the hoped-for resumption of meetings at the workplace, will allow AMFIE to recruit many new members.

The fact is that in a cooperative, the members are its lifeblood. The more they are, and the more different backgrounds they come from, the better AMFIE will be able to finance the development of innovative services which benefit all but are at the same time tailored to each. Unity makes strength: even in this digital age, some things never change.

Le « cœur » de votre expérience s'améliorant, il devient possible de travailler à l'élargissement du sociétariat et d'engager le plan de développement de l'AMFIE tant d'un point de vue géographique qu'en terme de variétés d'organisations représentées. La crise du Coronavirus, les restrictions de déplacements et le développement du télétravail, ont servi d'accélérateur interne à l'adoption des outils de prospection commerciales offerts par LinkedIn.

En effet, vous êtes plus d'un million de fonctionnaires internationaux et de consultants, issus de 162 organisations internationales, à avoir un compte LinkedIn ! Les équipes AMFIE ont donc décidé de se former sur tous les outils professionnels proposés par la plateforme. Le but ? Rendre AMFIE beaucoup plus connue et engager de vrais contacts personnels entre les potentiels futurs sociétaires et les « globetrotteurs » qui, en temps normal, parcourraient le monde pour vous rencontrer à vos bureaux. Les résultats sont déjà très encourageants ; grâce à LinkedIn, des milliers de fonctionnaires internationaux et de consultants éligibles ont découvert l'existence de l'AMFIE, tandis que plusieurs centaines ont déjà suivi les webinaires de présentation à distance. Ce n'est que le début d'une démarche ambitieuse qui, combinée au retour des rencontres sur vos lieux de travail que nous espérons tous, permettra à l'AMFIE de recruter de très nombreux nouveaux membres.

Car une coopérative ne vit que par ses sociétaires ; plus ceux-ci sont nombreux et viennent d'horizons différents, mieux l'AMFIE pourra financer le développement des services innovants à la fois utiles à tous et personnalisés pour chacun. L'union fait la force ; même à l'heure du digital, certaines choses ne changeront jamais.

FOR AMFIE, FRONTIERS NO LONGER EXIST

L'AMFIE NE CONNAÎT PLUS DE FRONTIÈRES !

by **Janine Rivals:**

Association coopérative financière
des fonctionnaires internationaux
(AMFIE's) Honorary Vice-President

Dear colleagues

I am a natural optimist, but to be honest my optimism fell to zero in late February 2020 when, returning after a very congenial meeting of FICSA in London, Svend Booth and I both found ourselves marooned, he in Rome and I in Paris. There was no further prospect of our visiting our beloved organizations for they had all, one after another, cancelled all our presentations, and that sine die.

For years I had been preaching to the deaf, extolling the benefits of LinkedIn to no great effect. Meanwhile, Xavier Roblin has fortunately been elected to the board, and Xavier knew. He will be reporting on it after me.

So Svend, Miguel Figuerola and I, with the support of Alexandra Roger in the Secretariat, began a prospecting campaign using LinkedIn. It proved to be a great success, making AMFIE's name known around the world.

What we found most striking, though, was that with the virus, the nature of our relations with contacts had totally changed.

Before, when contacting international officials to ask whether we had their permission to send them information – as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requires – the reply was mostly a short YES/YES.

Since Covid, that short YES/YES has become rare, because it turns into a dialogue, often personal, sometimes wide-ranging, together with thanks, to the point that it is sometimes quite moving. Our correspondents, who have often been teleworking for many months, seem happy to

par **Janine Rivals**

Vice-Présidente d'honneur de l'AMFIE

Chers collègues,

Pour être honnête avec vous, je suis d'un naturel optimiste, mais mon moral est tombé à zéro, fin février 2020, lorsque de retour d'une très sympathique réunion de la FICSA à Londres, Svend (ooth et moi nous sommes retrouvés, lui à Rome, moi à Paris, le bec dans l'eau. En effet il n'y avait plus aucun espoir de nous rendre dans nos chères organisations, qui l'une après l'autre, ont annulé toutes nos présentations, et cela, sine die !!!

Depuis longtemps, je prêchais dans le désert, en disant combien LinkedIn était utile, sans grand succès ! Mais heureusement, Xavier Roblin a été élu au Conseil d'Administration et lui savait ! Il va d'ailleurs vous en parler après moi.

Donc Svend, Miguel Figuerola et moi, avec le soutien d'Alexandra au bureau, et celui de quelques coordonnateurs, nous avons entamé une campagne de prospection par LinkedIn qui s'est avérée un grand succès pour faire connaître notre existence dans le monde entier !

Mais surtout, ce qui nous a frappé, c'est que, grâce au virus, la nature des rapports avec nos connections a totalement changé.

Auparavant, en contactant les fonctionnaires internationaux, à la question que je posais pour savoir s'ils nous permettaient de leur envoyer des informations - RGPD oblige – je recevais la plupart du temps un bref YES.

Depuis la Covid, cette brève réponse est devenue rare, car il s'établit un dialogue, souvent personnel, parfois approfondi, accompagné de remerciements, tels que j'en suis quelquefois fort ému. Souvent en télétravail depuis de longs mois, nos correspondants ont l'air heureux de communiquer avec



be able to talk to us. Maybe they take a little more time to take an interest in their own financial situation, since they need to spend less of it commuting or in meetings. This very positive development in our online relations is most pleasing.

And then one of our friends in Human Resources or a staff association asked me whether we could do webinars. First, I panicked, because we had nothing to offer. But then, once again, Svend took up the problem, and in collaboration with Julian Finn, produced a presentation which we rated as «presentable».

From September 2020, we began a series of presentations in places as diverse as the Hague, Beirut, Rome, etc., and then in January 2021, London, and in February, Baku, Brussels, Munich, Lyon, and more. Xavier will tell you more about this.

For me, one of the most positive aspects of these on-line presentations is that we have been able to bring in the members of the development team, who took over from us without ever having had the pleasure of working out in the field – so Alexandra Roger and Giancarlo Danieli, but also Virginie Segura and from time to time Muammer Kardelen of course, have been on hand during presentations and were able to answer specific questions directly. And at the same time, participants could immediately book telephone appointments with them.

Obviously, on-line will never replace human contact and the pleasure of face-to-face meetings. Because first, the number of participants can be high (more than 300 at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in London), and secondly not everyone will switch their camera on. But I am sure that once things have returned to normal, our face-to-face meetings will be all the richer, because our colleagues will have the impression that they already know us. And beyond that, we will have been able to raise awareness of AMFIE's services in parts of the world where the association could never afford to send us. Result: for AMFIE, there are no longer any frontiers.

nous. Ils prennent peut-être un peu plus de temps pour s'intéresser à leur situation financière, puisqu'ils en perdent moins dans les transports ou dans des réunions. Nous nous réjouissons de cette évolution très positive dans les relations virtuelles.

Puis l'un ou l'autre de nos amis des ressources humaines ou des associations de personnel m'ont demandé si nous avions des webinaires. J'ai d'abord paniqué car nous n'avions rien à proposer.

Là encore, heureusement, il y avait Svend qui s'est attaqué au problème et, avec la collaboration de Julian Finn il a finalisé une présentation qui nous a paru «présentable».

Dès septembre 2020, nous avons entamé une série de présentations dans des lieux aussi divers que la Haye, Beyrouth, Rome, etc. Puis en janvier 2021, Londres, en février Bakou, Bruxelles, Munich, Lyon... Xavier vous en dira davantage.

Un des aspects les plus positifs de ces présentations virtuelles est pour moi le fait que nous avons pu faire participer les membres de l'équipe de développement qui prenaient le relais sans avoir eu le plaisir des rencontres sur le terrain : ainsi Alexandra et Giancarlo, mais aussi Virginie et bien sûr, Muammer Kardelen de temps en temps, nous soutiennent lors des présentations et peuvent répondre directement à des questions spécifiques. En outre, les participants peuvent immédiatement prendre des rendez-vous téléphoniques avec eux.

Bien sûr, le virtuel ne remplace pas l'humain et le plaisir des rencontres en tête à tête.

Car les participants sont quelquefois très nombreux (plus de 300 à Londres, à la BERD) et n'activent pas toujours leur caméra. Mais je suis sûre que les rencontres que nous ferons lorsque la vie sera redevenue normale n'en seront que plus riches parce que nos collègues auront l'impression de déjà nous connaître. De plus, nous aurons pu faire découvrir nos services dans des endroits du monde où il serait trop coûteux pour l'AMFIE d'aller en mission sur place ! Donc l'AMFIE ne connaît plus de frontières !

WITH INGENUITY AND INNOVATION UNFCU SERVES THE PEOPLE WHO SERVE THE WORLD

Interview with William Thomas, Chief Member Operations Officer by Elisabeth Philippe, UNFCU Senior Manager, Business Development and Media Relations, Marketing, Global Affairs

In 2020, the [United Nations Federal Credit Union \(UNFCU\)](#) became a member of FICSA with observer status. UNFCU is a member-owned financial institution that serves the needs of the UN community globally. Thirteen UN staff members founded UNFCU in 1947. They wanted to provide financial peace of mind to staff moving to the US, so they could stay focused on the work of the UN.

Today, more than 163,000 UN/agency active and retired staff located in 200 countries and territories are members of UNFCU. An array of services helps duty station, field office personnel, and retirees stay connected to their money anytime, anywhere.

Elisabeth Philippe recently interviewed William Thomas, Chief Member Operations Officer, to learn how UNFCU's strategy seizes opportunities, creates value, and puts members' needs first.

Q: First, how is UNFCU helping members navigate the global pandemic true to its dedicated service mission?

A: Our members' financial security remains the top priority at UNFCU. The pandemic underscored the importance of security, especially as we expand our self-service tools in Digital Banking. In 2020, we gave members even more control of their account management. This was especially reassuring for members who needed to quickly and securely pay bills or transfer funds to children living abroad, for example. New features introduced last year enable members to open accounts, manage their credit and debit cards, and send mobile money transfers in local currencies. To help members make the most of these self-service tools, we are developing more educational resources. These include product guides, videos, and webinars.

We are also connecting with more members through virtual consultations and educational seminars hosted by staff associations. In fact, FICSA organized a few presentations for us in 2020 on topics ranging from fraud pre-

vention to home buying amidst the pandemic. We look forward to more of these presentations in 2021.

Q: Can you tell me more about how members are using your online services? After all, UNFCU was an early adopter of Digital Banking. More than two-thirds of your membership works or resides internationally.

A: Members can use Digital Banking to securely manage their accounts. They can open new accounts, view statements, transfer money, set alerts, apply for loans, and update their profile information. In 2020, we also expanded the card management features in Digital Banking, giving our members more security and convenience. Members can order new cards, track their delivery, set ATM limits, and much more - all in Digital Banking.

Q: Your UN field of membership has given you good reason to be an innovator. Name a few examples of your evolution.

A: One of the most innovative features we introduced last year allows members to replace their damaged, stolen, or lost cards in Digital Banking. They no longer need to wait for their physical card to start shopping. Members can immediately access the details of their new card in Digital Banking to update their digital wallets and to shop online. We are proud to be among the first credit unions to make the digital issuance of card details available to our members. We also launched mobile money transfers in 2020. This service is currently available in 14 countries. It is a quick and cost-effective way for members to transfer money in the local currency.

Q: Further to mobile money transfers, UNFCU continues to team up with innovative leaders in payments. How do you establish these partnerships?



A: Given our commitment to exceptional member service, we build strong relationships with industry leaders. For example, we are collaborating with Thunes and Transpay to offer mobile money transfers. Members can now quickly and cost-effectively transfer money to mobile wallets in select countries in local currencies. Mobile money transfers started with M-Pesa transfers in Kenya. We have since expanded the service to 14 countries.

Q: It is clear that security is an important feature of all of UNFCU's access channels. What are a few other ways you are ensuring peace of mind for international civil servants?

A: Members' security remains the top priority at UNFCU. In Digital Banking, for example, there are certain activities that require members to enter a secure code. This is to validate their identity as an additional security measure after they have logged in. We recommend the use of Google Authenticator for such codes. This is a free app that can be used worldwide even without Wi-Fi or a data connection. It generates random security codes every 30 seconds. To protect our members' card credentials, we now issue contactless cards and encourage members to use their digital wallet when possible. If members misplace their card, they can now lock it with a few clicks in Digital Banking. This will prevent the use of the card in case it has fallen into the wrong hands. We also offer virtual presentations to help the UN community better manage their finances. One of the tips we stress is for members to assign a beneficiary to each of their accounts. We also provide some guidance on ways to save money, and when to apply for a loan.

Q: You have been working at UNFCU for 22 years and seen the organization transform technologically. What is one of your organization's proudest achievements in enhancing members' experience?

A: Keeping with our focus on members' financial security, UNFCU designed an award-winning online payments system. This enables members to send payments in various currencies globally, quickly, securely, and cost effectively. Our IT developers integrated the system within Digital Banking. It features an intelligent routing engine for payments. Offering mobile, convenient, and fast service is one of our core business strategies. We want members to have more time with their families and doing the work that they love. We will take care of offering financial guidance and solutions for everyone's peace of mind.

Q: What can FICSA representatives expect from UNFCU in the months ahead?

A: In the months ahead, we look forward to re-opening all of our representative offices when it is safe to do so. We continue to work with UN and health officials at the applicable UN duty stations on this front. We are especially pleased to be expanding our presence in Uganda. In addition to our representative office in Entebbe, we are opening a new office in Kampala. We are also renovating our office in Rome. In general, you can always rely on us to offer secure access to banking solutions designed for the UN community. The needs of our members are likely going to evolve, as we establish a new post-pandemic normal. We are monitoring this evolution closely to continue delivering tailored solutions.

Resources:

[UNFCU Digital Banking webinar](#)

For more information and to join UNFCU visit: unfcu.org/contact