



**United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
Organization (UNESCO), Paris, 3–7 February 2025**

**Report of the 78th session
of the FICSA Council**



Abbreviations

Abbreviations of the names of the organizations whose staff are represented by FICSA members are not given here, but spelled out in the participants list, Annex 13 to the report of the Council.

ACPAQ	Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions
AI	artificial intelligence
ASHI	after-service health insurance
CCISUA	Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System
CEB	Chief Executives Board for Coordination
COL surveys	Cost-of-living surveys
DIN	UN Disability Inclusion Network
FWA	flexible working arrangements
FAFICS	Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants
FUNSA	Federations of United Nations Staff Associations
GS staff	General Service staff
HLCM	High-Level Committee on Management
HR Network	Human Resources Network
IASMN	Inter-Agency Security Management Network
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
ILOAT	ILO Administrative Tribunal
IP staff	International Professional staff
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System
LGBTQI+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and identifying using different terms or no specific terms
LSC	Local survey committee (related to Professional staff salaries)
LSSCs	Local salary survey committees (related to locally recruited staff salaries)
MENASC	Middle East, North Africa, and Arabic-speaking countries (FICSA region)
MoU	memorandum of understanding
PTA	Personal Transition Allowance
Q&A session	question-and-answer session
SC	(FICSA) standing committee

SOGIESC	(personnel with) diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and sex characteristics
TOR	terms of reference
UN	United Nations
UNAT	UN Appeals Tribunal
UNDT	UN Dispute Tribunal
UNISERV	United Nations International Civil Servants Federation
UNJSPB	UN Joint Staff Pension Board
UNJSPF	UN Joint Staff Pension Fund

Terms for FICSA structures

ExCom Executive Committee

Standing committees

Standing Committee on Field Issues

Standing Committee on General Service Questions

Standing Committee on Human Resources Management

Standing Committee on Legal Questions

Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances

Standing Committee on Programme Budget, Administration and Strategy

Standing Committee on Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety

Standing Committee on Staff-Management Relations

Permanent technical committees to standing committees

PTC/GSQ Permanent Technical Committee of the Standing Committee on General Service Questions

PTC/PSA Permanent Technical Committee of the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances

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Opening of the session

Welcome and address by FICSA President

1. FICSA President Wadzanai Garwe (AP-in-FAO) welcomed all delegates to the 78th session of the FICSA Council, and expressed FICSA's gratitude to UNESCO's Staff Union, administration and staff for their support in organizing the Council and the warmth of their welcome to delegates. She asked all present to observe a moment of silence to honour the commitment, courage and sacrifice of the colleagues whose lives had been tragically cut short in unprecedented numbers over the past year, to extend their deepest condolences to the loved ones of deceased staff, and to thank the loved ones who support United Nations (UN) staff as they deliver their organizations' mandate.
2. The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) comprehensive review of the compensation package for International Professional (IP) and higher-grade staff would reach a critical stage in 2025. That year offered FICSA and its members the chance to ensure that the review reflected the complexity of UN staff's work and the unique challenges of their duty stations, and to shape a fairer, equitable future for all staff of the UN common system.
3. Like all subsequent speakers at the Council session, the FICSA President noted that the challenges were undeniable. Some Member States were reducing funding while expecting greater impact from staff, and many organizations were downsizing. Crisis appeared the only constant factor in the environment.
4. FICSA and its members embraced change, despite its difficulties. The staff representatives comprising the Council needed clearly to articulate a vision that the members of the FICSA the Executive Committee (ExCom) would carry to high-level bodies such as the UN General Assembly, the Chief Executive Board (CEB), ICSC and the governing bodies and senior management of the UN. This was FICSA's time to make a greater impact.
5. Staff representatives could celebrate [victories](#), such as the UN General Assembly's approval of an increase in the base floor salary of 9.5% for IP staff for the next two years, the extension of the "D-E pilot" programme for staff serving in dangerous duty stations, and the support expressed for multilingualism. Nevertheless, they could not afford to become complacent. FICSA and its members needed to focus on protecting the existing compensation package, building momentum, and safeguarding the gains achieved.
6. The FICSA President urged delegates to work together to ensure that FICSA was fully prepared for each working group and to stay informed while coping with the daily demands of their jobs. That would enable them not only to represent their colleagues well in the Council but also to elect ExCom members who were ready to make an immediate impact: for example, in the meeting of the ICSC working group 1 that would take place immediately after the Council session.

7. Serving as FICSA President was an honour; this was FICSA's time to make a greater impact to benefit all staff of the UN common system.

Welcomes from UNESCO

8. Simone Grego, President of the UNESCO Staff Union, was delighted to welcome to UNESCO headquarters premises colleagues from over 40 agencies and organizations, all united by a shared goal of fostering a safe, healthy, and stable working environment within the UN common system. Since the previous FICSA Council session hosted by UNESCO headquarters in 2009, the role of the UN and UNESCO had become more important than ever. FICSA played an indispensable role in representing and defending the rights of international civil servants.
9. He thanked everyone who had helped to organize the Council session, particularly: the UNESCO administration, especially staff of the Bureau of Human Resources Management; the FICSA Secretariat and ExCom; and colleagues in the UNESCO Staff Union. He invited delegates to the Council session to explore UNESCO's extraordinary collection of artworks and wished the 78th session of the FICSA Council every success.
10. Jennifer Linkins, Director of the Bureau of Human Resources Management, welcomed delegates on behalf of UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay to the 78th session of the FICSA Council. FICSA had been a key voice for staff in the UN common system for over seven decades. FICSA and the individual staff associations helped to maintain the delicate balance between fulfilling organizations' missions and safeguarding the well-being and professional development of the people who make those missions possible.
11. UNESCO's management prioritized consistent engagement with staff representatives. While the ICSC review of the compensation package needed to consider cost-effectiveness, the UN needed a compensation package that would enable its organizations to remain attractive to and to retain qualified staff who delivered in often challenging and difficult environments. It was important to continue collaborative thinking on non-financial rewards and staff-wellbeing initiatives, as well as on the implications of remote work arrangements and measures for staff with disabilities. FICSA provided a strong example of how international civil servants, through their ongoing dedication beyond their formal roles, contributed to the UN's objectives. She wished the delegates a productive session. [Full statement](#)

Address by the ICSC Chair – [Full statement](#)

12. The FICSA President welcomed the ICSC Chair and invited him to address the Council.
13. Anticipating a productive discussion with FICSA, Larbi Djacta, Chair of ICSC, began by highlighting some of the decisions that the UN General Assembly had made in [resolution 79/252 on the UN common system](#), based on ICSC recommendations: a 9.5% adjustment over the unified base/floor salary scale and revised pay protection points for IP staff, and the continuation of the pilot programme for payment of the amount in lieu of settling-in grant at category D and E duty stations that were not designated as non-family until the conclusion of ICSC's comprehensive review of the compensation package. The General Assembly had also requested that ICSC:

substantiate any recommendation on the latter by cost data in the context of the review, provide information on organizations' policies on flexible working arrangements (FWA) in its 2025 report, explore options for non-financial incentives and continue to monitor trends in the age distribution of the UN workforce.

14. The ICSC Chair outlined the most important tasks for 2025. While the compensation review was at the forefront for both ICSC and FICSA, ICSC's tasks also included reviews of phase 1 of its Noblemaire study and the report of the working group on the [Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service](#), including comments from all legal offices of the common system.
15. ICSC's comprehensive review of the compensation package should include a focus on the children and secondary dependents' allowances, which the General Assembly had decided to maintain at the current level, and the education grant. ICSC valued FICSA's input on the review as it strove to craft a package that would not only be fit for purpose but also attract and retain top talent in an increasingly competitive landscape. It was an opportunity to strive for excellence, foster a culture of inclusivity and adapt to the evolving needs of the global community and the UN common system. The three ICSC working groups had found that there were no overlaps, the rationale behind all entitlements was justified and needed to be preserved.
16. While 2025 had brought great change – three new Commissioners – within ICSC, it looked forward to FICSA's continued collaboration with the ICSC members and secretariat as they pursued a common goal. The ICSC Chair extended his gratitude for FICSA's dedication, hard work and invaluable contributions to difficult discussions. He was confident that together they would navigate the challenges ahead and build a brighter future for the UN common system.
17. The FICSA President reiterated FICSA's commitment to cooperation with ICSC. The subsequent question-and-answer (Q&A) session, involving the ICSC Chair and Yuri Orlov, Chief, Salaries and Allowances Division, and Acting Executive Secretary, ICSC, comprises Annex 2.

Statement by HLCM Vice-Chair – [Full statement](#)

18. The FICSA President invited the Vice-Chair of the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) to take the floor.
19. Like the FICSA President and ICSC Chair, Kelly Clements, HLCM Vice-Chair and UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), stressed both the value of the UN system and the strain placed on its workforce by multiple factors. Major contributors were reassessing their financial commitments and crises were escalating. That placed an increasing burden on the UN workforce, which was required to navigate severe budgetary constraints and, in too many cases, face deteriorating security conditions and even risk their lives.
20. Despite those challenges, the UN system continued to fulfil its mission, while redefining how it worked, fostering new approaches and simplifying processes to increase effectiveness, and continuing efforts to improve staff well-being and mental health, and

workplace culture. To support those efforts, HLCM resourced a central support function for the Mental Health Strategy Implementation Board, which would strengthen responses to growing mental health concerns. HLCM was grateful for FICSA's active and constructive role in that area.

21. HLCM had continued to address workforce and workplace issues; for example, setting up a dedicated multidisciplinary working group, hosted by the Human Resources (HR) Network, to promote respectful and inclusive work environments, giving priority to better integrating disability inclusion into policies, including in the ICSC compensation review. In addition, pilot efforts to enhance the use of Clear Check in hiring were underway to continue to combat sexual harassment and abuse and other forms of toxic workplace behaviour. Further, HLCM welcomed ICSC's revision of the [Standards of Conduct](#), to ensure that the UN workforce operated with integrity in both the workplace and the public sphere.
22. The ICSC comprehensive review of the UN compensation package needed to balance financial sustainability with maintaining the UN as an employer of choice. Achieving that balance required collaboration between ICSC leadership, management and staff federations. While ensuring the UN's ability to deliver effectively, any review of UN compensation and workforce structure must also account for the realities of the shifting global geopolitical landscape and the trends shaping the future of work.
23. In navigating those complex challenges, the UN needed to use resources more efficiently, embrace innovation and adapt to the rapidly evolving global environment. That included leveraging opportunities such as artificial intelligence (AI) while managing the associated risks. Above all, those efforts must be made in partnership with UN staff and their representatives. Their contributions through HLCM, ICSC and staff-management consultations in agencies were critical. HLCM remained committed to addressing the concerns of all personnel and looked forward to continuing its work with staff and their representatives.
24. The FICSA President thanked the HLCM Vice-Chair for her participation and HLCM for its commitment to the UN system. The Q&A session involving the HLCM Vice-Chair comprises Annex 3.

Statements by other staff federations

25. The FICSA President welcomed representatives of FICSA's sister staff federations, the United Nations International Civil Servants Federation (UNISERV) and the Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA).
26. Samar Haidar, representing UNISERV, expressed appreciation for the continuing collaboration between the three staff federations and called for unity among staff unions and associations across the UN common system, particularly in their approach to the ICSC review of the compensation package, which would enter a critical stage in 2025.

27. UNISERV was concerned that the review might result in staff being either no longer willing to work for the UN or unable to afford to do so. Because international civil servants lacked the traditional support networks available in their home countries and did not rotate in and out of them, their compensation package needed to provide a realistic substitute, which included ensuring that children of UN staff did not lose their rights, for example, to affordable and quality education, as a result of their parents' employment with the UN.

The three staff federations needed to remain united in their work on the review with UN organizations and the ICSC. That included requesting access to data, not just to simulations or rough estimates of staff compensation costs. UNISERV had taken note of the [FICSA communication 28/24](#) on the compensation package review from November 2024, and looked forward to developing a tri-federation position statement as soon as possible, to help guide the collective work in the ICSC working groups and to convey messages to staff. [UNISERV Statement](#)

28. Nathalie Meynet, President of both CCISUA and the UNHCR staff association, was grateful for CCISUA's good cooperation with FICSA; one example was the attendance of the FICSA President at CCISUA's midterm meeting in New York. CCISUA remained committed to the implementation of the [CCISUA/FICSA/UNISERV Cooperation Agreement](#) of 2020 to promote the principles of solidarity, justice and social dialogue, and the protection of staff rights.

CCISUA's Vice President, Samar Haidar stated that UN organizations were going through troubled times and the situation was having an unprecedented impact on the mental health of staff, with increasing stress-related illnesses. While CCISUA continued to focus on the security of staff working in dangerous places, including the different treatment given to national and international staff, its main area of cooperation with sister staff federations had been the ICSC compensation review. Here the federations had brought their different and complementary perspectives to bear with mutual respect and support. In the upcoming meetings of the three ICSC working groups, CCISUA would join UNISERV and FICSA in efforts to help preserve the current compensation package, despite the enormous pressure to reduce it, and to seek improvements in, for example, compensation for mobility and the conditions for staff with disabilities and caregivers. In other areas of cooperation, CCISUA welcomed FICSA's work to clarify the functioning of Federations of United Nations Staff Associations (FUNSAs) and called for joint advocacy to improve the methodology in the next round of local salary surveys. [CCISUA Statement](#)

29. The FICSA President replied that FICSA truly appreciated its joint work with other staff federations and pledged to continue that work for the benefit of staff.

Statements from other partners

30. Jerry Barton, President of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS), explained FAFICS' role in representing the interests of UN retirees. In addition to thanking UNESCO for its 80 years of inspiring work, he celebrated FAFICS and FICSA's commitment to working together to safeguard those who

dedicated their lives to international service, focusing on two key issues: the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) and health insurance for UN staff and retirees. FAFICS' collaboration within the UNJSPF had succeeded in making it more transparent and responsive and was essential in ensuring that UNJSPF stayed healthy far into the future. FICSA and FAFICS also shared an interest in the long-term problem of organizations' increasing use of consultants, who did not contribute to or benefit from UNJSPF. FAFICS also sought to improve the lot of retirees with the smallest pensions.

31. Furthermore, health insurance was a fundamental right for current and retired staff, and greater advocacy was needed to ensure that health insurance systems were comprehensive and sustainable. FAFICS had recently urged the UN Secretary-General and the chairs of CEB and HLCM to ensure that retiree representatives had full membership of all local health insurance committees in UN organizations, to fully ensure rights to and financing of after-service health insurance and to review the medical insurance programme for retired field staff. A FAFICS representative would serve on the FICSA Standing Committee on Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety. Efforts in those areas and others would benefit from a shared approach that leveraged the experience, expertise and influence of FAFICS and FICSA.
32. Gabriel M. Schirvar (IOM), Secretary of UN GLOBE Board, said the partnership with FICSA, based on a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed in 2022, was among the organization's most important. UN GLOBE represented the interests of all UN personnel with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), including those who were lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and who identified using different terms or no specific terms (LGBTQI+). It had chapters in 22 UN duty stations and 29 UN entities and was opening chapters in numerous other locations. Based on their MoU, FICSA and UN GLOBE worked together to promote a more inclusive workplace culture that respected the needs of LGBTQI+ staff promoted diversity, equality and respect for SOGIESC people, and to ensure that the views of LGBTQI+ staff are heard and are conveyed to management of the UN.
33. UN GLOBE asked for FICSA's assistance in its priorities for 2025:
 - a. promoting adherence to established LGBTQI+-inclusive policies and guidance on key issues, which include encouraging standardization across the UN system of policy approaches on key issues, such as personal status, mobility, family instalment, parental leave, and health insurance coverage;
 - b. striving for workplaces that are inclusive for trans and gender non-conforming personnel and their dependents, including by sharing with staff unions UN GLOBE's comprehensive recommendations;
 - c. urging the UN to organize a system-wide survey to establish a baseline of experiences of LGBTQI+ personnel, and to improve both the biodata collected on personnel and the security of the data collected;
 - d. continuing to include UN GLOBE in the key conversations about mobility schemes and their impact on staff; and

- e. establishing a clear, system-wide approach to core LGBTIQ+ learning material to establish a common approach to the topic, encourage entities to further develop more detailed training and push back against the worrying backlash globally and in many UN governing bodies, aimed at stalling and reversing progress on gender and human rights.

34. UN GLOBE appreciated FICSA's support on all those issues.

35. The FICSA President restated FICSA's commitment to continued cooperation with FAFICS and expressed her gratitude for the UN GLOBE presentation. [Full statement](#)

Election of Council officers, adoption of the agenda and credentials

36. The Council elected Denis Pitzalis (UNESCO) as Chairperson by acclamation, Cosimo Lunedi (UNGSC) and Sarah Klinghammer (UNFCCC) as Vice-Chairs. Mary Stewart Burgher served as Rapporteur.

37. The Council adopted the agenda (document [FICSA/C/78/D1](#) – see Annex 1) as submitted. Four working groups would be organized to examine different aspects of the ICSC comprehensive review of the UN compensation package and to make recommendations to the Council that would help FICSA to form a strategy to pursue until the review was concluded in 2026. During the Council session, delegates could also take advantage of a presentation on the UNJSPF Board, by Rosemary McClean, Chief Executive of Pension Administration, a training by a FICSA expert on pension issues and a joint session on UN 2.0 and the impact of AI on the workplace.

38. The FICSA General Secretary, Cosimo Melpignano (UNGSC), explained that, out of FICSA's 30 current full members, 28 were physically represented at the Council, one proxy had been received and one was not present. He also welcomed five associate members, seven consultative members and four observer organizations to the Council session.

Questions relating to membership status in FICSA and constitutional matters

39. There had been no changes in FICSA membership during 2024, and the Council approved the FICSA General Secretary's Council proposal of FUNSA Zambia for observer status by acclamation.

40. A delegate explained that the Middle East, North Africa and Arabic-speaking countries were experiencing severe crises that demanded increased attention and representation in FICSA, and thus requested that FICSA create a new MENASC region with a permanent representative for those countries.

41. The General Secretary noted that that proposal had been introduced at 71st session of the FICSA Council, during which the Standing Committee on Legal Questions had reviewed the sections of the FICSA [Statutes](#) that required modification and the position of an ad-interim FICSA Regional Representative for the Middle East, North Africa, and

Arabic-speaking countries (MENASC) had been created. After the 73rd Council session had adopted the recommended statutory changes, interest in the matter had declined. As heads of delegations had been informed in December 2024, however, there was renewed interest in the position. As a result, FICSA would circulate the proposed modifications to the [Statutes](#), already approved by the Standing Committee on Legal Questions, after which the Council would vote on them during the election of ExCom officers. Delegates were reminded that the creation of a MENASC Region would not carry any implications for the FICSA budget.

Report of the Executive Committee for 2024–2025 (March 2024–January 2025)

42. The FICSA President urged all delegates to read the [Executive Committee report](#) (FICSA/C/78/4) in full, and thanked every member of ExCom and the FICSA Secretariat for their contributions to the work discussed. The report had two themes: what FICSA had done to inform and support its members, and how it had worked for them in working with high-level UN bodies.
43. The numerous meetings with members had covered a basic introduction to FICSA, responded to specific issues and provided both training and “Ask the FICSA Expert” sessions. In five meetings with heads of delegations, ExCom had briefed the participants on the positions taken by FICSA in high-level meetings, constitutional matters, preparations for the 78th Council session and ExCom positions open for election. In addition, ExCom had collected examples of staff lived experiences from such meetings in order to present them to the working groups involved in the ICSC review of the compensation package, in the absence of the hard data requested by FICSA. In addition to supplying information and support, these meetings helped heads of delegations to gain the experience needed to serve effectively on ExCom immediately after the election. For example, two ExCom members would attend a meeting of ICSC Working Group I immediately after the Council session.
44. FICSA officers and ExCom members had also taken part in multiple meetings of high-level bodies such as the 5th Committee of the UN General Assembly, CEB, ICSC, HLCM and UNJSPB. Under the 5th Committee, FICSA had met with 15 Member States; some of which were members of regional blocs; supported the recommendations of ICSC’s annual report; advocated the retention of the current compensation package; and prepared Member States for the General Assembly resolution on the hosting of FICSA by the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG). In addition to attending ICSC sessions and participating in the three working groups involved in the compensation review, FICSA had taken part in the work of the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions (ACPAQ) and the ICSC Focus Group on Personal Transition Allowance (PTA), to tackle problems resulting from ICSC’s methods to buffer negative changes in post adjustment. Members should inform FICSA of any issues with post adjustment and the cost of living that arose after the [9.5% increase](#) in the base floor salary for P staff took effect, so they could be passed on to ACPAQ. Work with HLCM included attending a retreat on the [United](#)

[Nations System Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy](#), working on security management through the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) and taking part in the designation of hardship duty stations during the General Assembly session.

45. In the ensuing discussion, several delegates commented on the report or asked questions about the work it described. Some raised specific issues, and all thanked the FICSA ExCom and Secretariat for their contributions to the report and their hard work during the year. Various ExCom members replied.
46. In response to questions about the aims, content and tenor of FICSA's meetings with Member States, ExCom members explained that, in thinking about the UN compensation package, the most important issue for discussion, countries were comparing their perceptions of their own national civil servants or diplomatic staff with those of international civil servants, who worked under very different conditions: for example, being permanently expatriated. In defending the package, FICSA tried to pierce those misperceptions and give countries a true understanding of conditions for UN staff, while urging them to see the compensation package in the context of reduced contributions to UN common system organizations, and the large savings made from the last review. ExCom members supplied countries with data, from ICSC for example, proving that UN Professional staff (P staff) were substantially lower paid than those at the World Bank and shared the examples of lived experiences supplied by staff. ExCom members had pointed out that changes to the compensation package would change the demographics of UN staff, and asked Member States to look at AI as a way to upskill and reskill existing staff. Giving Member States real data enabled them to make informed decisions. As FICSA lacked the hard data on the use of entitlements that management had, ExCom asked FICSA members to continue to supply examples of their lived experiences, as well as to suggest other representatives of Member States to approach for discussions.
47. The results of the ICSC review would be critical to the decisions that Member States would make about the compensation package. The ICSC Chair had been a strong advocate for staff; he talked about improvements, not cuts, and stressed the need for action on disability and mental health, particularly to support staff in hardship duty stations.
48. In response to speakers stressing the importance of the education grant, ExCom members noted that this grant begins from primary school education but not for early childhood education. ICSC was studying the latter, to find out how many duty stations were affected and what solutions were possible. In advocating for the education grant to ICSC, FICSA also raised the issue of the services available to families with children who turned 5 years of age at different times in the year.
49. A delegate asked what could be done about the local recruitment of some P staff in their home country, usually in headquarters duty stations, who therefore did not get the expatriate benefits of the full compensation package. ExCom members agreed on the importance of the issue, and noted that the previous round of ICSC review of the compensation package did not address it.

50. When a speaker thanked FICSA for delivering valuable training in the methodology for conducting local salary surveys, ExCom expressed its gratitude for the contributions of member organizations to the success of that and other training events.
51. In conclusion, an ExCom member thanked member organizations for enabling important improvements to the working conditions for the FICSA Secretariat. The relocation of the Information Officer to Geneva from Kuala Lumpur had both allowed the FICSA Assistant to take annual leave and enabled the former to work Geneva hours in Geneva. ExCom encouraged members to keep providing constructive feedback on FICSA’s work.
52. The Council Chair noted ExCom’s report with appreciation.

FICSA cooperation with the other staff federations

53. The FICSA President was proud of the [CCISUA/FICSA/UNISERV Cooperation Agreement](#) of 2020, and stressed that all three federations strove to present a united front in dealings with management and governing bodies.

Election of the Executive Committee Officers and Regional Representatives for 2024–2025 (March 2024 to February 2025)

54. The Council Chairperson announced the nominations received (in alphabetical order) for election to the Executive Committee for 2024–2025 (see [FICSA/C/78/5/Rev1](#)). In plenary, the candidates briefly outlined the strengths that they could bring to the offices that they sought, and their priorities for the coming year. Table 1 lists the candidates for the Executive Committee and Regional Representative positions, and those who were elected.

Table 1. Candidates for the Executive Committee and Regional Representative positions, and those elected

Offices	Candidates (organizations)	Those elected (organizations)
General Secretary	Kay Miller (WHO/EURO) Cristina Pierini (ILO TC)	Cristina Pierini (ILO TC)
Member for Compensation Issues	Simone Grego (UNESCO) Houcine Mhadhbi (IAEA)	Simone Grego (UNESCO)
Member without Portfolio	Steven Geoffrey Eales (UNIDO)	Steven Geoffrey Eales (UNIDO)
Regional Representative for Europe	Maria Del Rocio Martin (UNICTF)	Maria Del Rocio Martin (UNICTF)

Regional Representative for Asia	Jean-Michel Pedroso (WHO/WPRO)	Jean-Michel Pedroso (WHO/WPRO)
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55. After the election, the 78th session of the FICSA Council also voted to approve the creation of the MENASC Region. As the approved changes to the FICSA [Statutes](#) took effect, members would elect a representative for the new region through postal vote.

Approval of the decisions from and the election of officers of FICSA standing committees

56. Before and during the 78th Council, all delegates took part in virtual and face-to-face meetings of FICSA’s eight standing committees (SCs) on Legal Questions, Human Resources Management, Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety, Conditions in the Field, General Service Questions, Professional Salaries and Allowances, Staff-Management Relations and Programme Budget, Administration and Strategy. In addition to meeting individually, the SCs on Conditions of Service in the Field, Human Resources Management and Legal Questions held a joint session discuss the FWA.

57. All SCs debated the issues on their agendas, including discussing the actions taken to implement the decisions of the 77th session of the FICSA Council; made decisions about the next steps in their own work; and drafted recommendations for the Council to consider. These are contained in the SC reports, which comprise annexes 4–11 to the Council report. Those reports list each SC’s membership, describe its deliberations, give its recommendations, and list the elected officers for 2025. The report on the joint session on FWA comprises Annex 12.

58. As was customary, a member of each SC presented its recommendations and future leadership to all delegates in the Council’s final plenary session. The Council discussed and amended the recommendations submitted as necessary, and then adopted them as the decisions presented here. The Council also approved the chairs and vice-chairs nominated by the standing committees for the period 2025–2026. Finally, the Council made an additional decision in plenary session.

Legal Questions

59. The SC on Legal Questions had addressed a range of topics, including an update on the Legal Defence Fund guidelines, and requests for FICSA courses to meet the needs of UN staff for basic training on legal issues. The SC would support FICSA training by providing a brief written explanation for workflow between the different UN judicial bodies. The SC’s full report comprises Annex 4.

Decision

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should provide specific training to members on UN legal tribunals: the ILO Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT), the UN Appeals Tribunal (UNAT) and the UN Dispute Tribunal (UNDT).**

Human Resources Management

60. The SC on Human Resources Management tackled some thorny issues, such as engaging with AI implementation, the role of and capacity building for staff representation in evolving technology implementation, representation of non-regular employees and the outsourcing of general service tasks to UN service providers (“shared services”). Annex 5 contains the SC’s full report.

Decision

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should support the development of or identify existing virtual training modules for FICSA members by the panel of chairs of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Management. One should introduce the role of staff representation in UN organizations’ adaptation to modern, disruptive technologies; digital transformation; and [UN2.0](#).**

Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety

61. The SC received an update on the work of the Occupational Health and Safety Forum and FICSA participation in it in the last 12 months, discussed the future for the implementation of the [United Nations System Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy](#), the results of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System (JIU), [Review of the quality, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of health insurance schemes in the United Nations system organizations](#), and the request from staff councils for a FICSA focal point for disability inclusion. It also outlined its future tasks, including: working closely with FAFICS to review the findings of the JIU report to identify priority areas for joint advocacy and coordinated action, seeking to collect and share best practices on mental health literacy and stigma reduction to contribute to the efforts of the UN Mental Health and Well-Being Hub, exploring the feasibility of training staff as well-being ambassadors to provide peer support and facilitate early intervention for mental health challenges and calling for equitable access to benefits and allowances for staff with children living with disabilities. Annex 6 comprises the SC’s full report.

Decisions

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should continue its advocacy for the development of a shared services model by the Mental Health and Well-Being Hub to ensure equitable access to mental health services across all organizations in the UN common system, particularly those without dedicated resources.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should organize “Ask the FICSA Expert” sessions to follow up the action taken to support initiatives related to well-being ambassadors and the UN Disability Inclusion Network (DIN).**

Conditions of Service in the Field

62. The SC reviewed the ICSC methodology for the classification of field duty stations according to the conditions of life and work and received a presentation on the new

statutes of FUNSAs. It discussed the security of local staff in the field during the current increased geopolitical turmoil and armed conflicts. The SC's full report comprises Annex 7.

Decisions

- **In collaboration with the Standing Committee on Conditions of Service in the Field, the FICSA Executive Committee should:**
 - **continue to strengthen the skills of its members by developing and disseminating to them knowledge packages on the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) classification of hardship duty stations and other issues; and**
 - **actively participate in and contribute to the revision of ICSC classification methodology to ensure that the methodology is fit for purpose and captures the hardship of duty stations.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should identify among the FICSA membership a technical focal point for security to represent FICSA at meetings of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN).**
- **In collaboration with the Standing Committee on Conditions of Service in the Field, the FICSA Executive Committee should continue engaging with ICSC and other stakeholders to resolve the differences in danger benefits and allowances that are available to internationally versus locally recruited staff members.**
- **In collaboration with the standing committees on Conditions of Service in the Field and Human Resource Management, the FICSA Executive Committee should develop a draft guidance paper on the retirement residency options that are available in selected countries.**
- **FICSA and its sister federations should advocate to the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) to include in the negotiations for host country agreements the issue of:**
 - **visa status after retirement from the UN system in the host country; and**
 - **the limited time that may be allowed to UN staff to leave the host country after retirement.**
- **In collaboration with the Standing Committee on Conditions of Service in the Field, the FICSA Executive Committee should continue its work on reviewing and enhancing the modality, functioning and statutes on Federations of United Nations Staff Associations (FUNSAs) in FICSA.**

General Service Questions

63. The SC considered the work of the Permanent Technical Committee (PTC) of the Standing Committee on General Service Questions, and reviewed: the lessons learned from the latest comprehensive salary surveys, including the exercise using the revised methodology and the best practices identified; the list of organizations scheduled to

conduct comprehensive salary surveys in 2025; and the resources offered by FICSA training and capacity building work on local salary survey methodologies and job classification. Annex 8 comprises the SC's full report.

Decisions

- **In collaboration with the Standing Committee on General Service Questions, the FICSA Executive Committee should investigate providing training in job classification, a key component of a salary survey, as the members of local salary survey committees (LSSCs) needed to have a thorough understanding of this important process. In addition, FICSA should continue providing training on ICSC methodologies I and II for salary surveys.**
- **In collaboration with the Standing Committee on General Service Questions, the FICSA Executive Committee should capture the lessons learned and best practices from duty stations that have completed local salary surveys in order to share them with other FICSA members on an ongoing basis.**

Professional Salaries and Allowances

64. The SC reviewed the decisions of the UN General Assembly on ICSC's recommendations on the children allowance, the sliding scale for the education grant and the base/net salary, and discussed the education grant in the context of the ICSC's comprehensive review of the compensation package. It also discussed the proposal for a training programme made by its Permanent Technical Committee. The SC's full report comprises Annex 9.

Decisions

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should take immediate steps to prioritize the allocation of resources for and the planning and implementation of the training-the-trainers programme on cost-of-living surveys of the Permanent Technical Committee of the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances, with the FICSA Secretariat leading the project. In addition, each FICSA member should nominate suitable candidates to participate in the programme, to ensure the success and sustainability of the initiative and provide the membership with a timeline.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should develop and circulate to member associations a checklist of benefits and entitlements to find out which of them staff retain when moving between organizations through the [Inter-Organization Agreement concerning Transfer, Secondment or Loan of Staff among the Organizations applying the United Nations Common System of Salaries and Allowances](#)**

Staff-Management Relations

65. The SC focused on a strategic framework for staff-management relations – including the objectives of and a roadmap, continuity and handover practices for executive

committees – and the requirements for outlining key duties and responsibilities in the terms of reference for staff representatives. Annex 10 contains the SC’s full report.

Decisions

- **To strengthen staff associations and representatives, the FICSA Executive Committee should:**
 - **annex the checklist ([FICSA/C/78/SMR/CRP.01](#)) to the model recognition agreement;**
 - **identify association(s) within its membership with no agreements in place and remind them of the importance of having a signed memorandum of understanding/cooperation agreement; and**
 - **advocate, in collaboration with sister federations, that the UN Secretariat update its administrative instruction [ST/AI/293](#) related to facilities for staff representatives, in accordance with the comments of the UN Secretary-General ([A/67/136/Add.1](#)).**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should advocate in meetings of the Human Resources (HR) Network and the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) the necessity of ensuring that management and staff associations/unions establish and maintain mechanisms in their organizations for regular communication and that both parties receive training on the importance of the guiding principles of staff-management relations as part of their induction or onboarding process.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee, in collaboration with the Standing Committee on Staff Management Relations, should collect the terms of reference for staff representatives’ duties available in the membership and consolidate them in a sample/model document to be published on the FICSA website.**

Programme Budget, Administration and Strategy

66. The SC on Programme Budget, Administration and Strategy presented to the Council the proposed budget and the scale of contributions for 2025 (documents FICSA/C/78/PBAS/4 and FICSA/C/78/PBAS/6/Rev1, respectively). Its discussions had also addressed both strategic issues, such as setting up a task force to determine a long-term strategy for FICSA, and reviews of the various financial reports submitted to it. The SC’s full report comprises Annex 11. It should be noted that this is the first year in which the audited accounts for the immediately preceding year were presented at the council. This is unprecedented.

Decisions on strategic development and FICSA funds

- **FICSA should form a Task Force on FICSA Strategy and Communications, fundraising and alternative revenue sources, with terms of reference drafted by the FICSA Secretariat, by the end of February 2025.¹**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should report the findings of the Task Force to its membership by September 2025.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should remind any withdrawing members of their duty to pay arrears of dues, as clearing any arrears would be a necessary precondition for rejoining FICSA.**
- **As one associative member and one consultative member of FICSA had not paid dues for two years, the 78th FICSA Council session should suspend their membership and notify them to that effect by letter.**
- **FICSA should align the dues paid by consultative members with the increase in dues currently applied to full and associate members, include requests for voluntary contributions in the correspondence with associate and consultative members, and explore with members improvements to the current dues methodology, for example, introducing minimum dues level for associate members.**
- **The FICSA Council should amend the Financial Rules in the [FICSA Statutes](#) to specify that the terms of reference for the Reserve Fund say that it should cover 12 months of FICSA operations, instead of the current 18 months. The 78th Council session should leave the Reserve Fund underfunded since there are no expectation of any further usage of the Reserve Fund, and it was sufficient.**

Draft programme and budget and scale of membership contributions to FICSA for 2024

67. The proposed budget for 2025 (FICSA/C/78/PBAS/4 – see list below) was calculated at CHF 615,730. The operational budget of CHF 615,730 represented a 0.03% decrease over the operational budget for 2024 (CHF 615,945) and a decrease of 9.3% compared to the total budget for 2024 (CHF 679,219). The biggest area of increase was in FICSA representation and was due to anticipated higher costs connected with ICSC and the ongoing discussions of its comprehensive review of the compensation package, which was expected to conclude by December 2026.

1. _____

¹ Volunteers to comprise the Task Force included: Mark Brown (FAO/WFP UGSS), Sylvie Castonguay (WMO), Jérôme Zanga Foe (WHO/HQ), James Howlett (WHO/WPRO), Sarah Klinghammer (UNFCCC), Dejan Mincic (CTBTO), Harris Benito Koubemba Mona (WHO/AFRO), Susan Murray (FAO/WFP UGSS), Juliette Prazak (IARC), Pilar Ramon-Pardo (PAHO) and Vanda Ferreira Santos (AP-in-FAO).

Total Budget (CHF)

2023: 550,000

2024: 679,219 (CHF 615,945 was operational and CHF 63,274 for funds replenishment)

2025: 615,730

68. The Council took note of the proposed budget, and adopted the budget shown in Table 2 (see also Appendix 2 to Annex 11) and the scale of contributions (FICSA/C/78/PBAS/6/Rev1 – see Appendix 3 to Annex 11).

Table 2. Summary of proposed FICSA budget for 2025, with changes from budget for 2024

Chapter	Title	Amounts (CHF)	Change from 2024 (%)
1	FICSA representation	94,865	-11.7
2	FICSA Council and ExCom	26,500	-23
3	FICSA Administration	494,365	+4.3
Total		615,730	

Decisions

- **The 78th FICSA Council approved the draft programme and budget for 2025 (FICSA/C/78/PBAS/4) in the amount of CHF 615,730.**
- **The 78th FICSA Council approved the scale of contributions for 2025 (FICSA/C/78/PBAS/6/Rev1).**
- **FICSA should increase the dues paid by consultative members, so that they would pay dues at the same levels as full and associate members, and include requests for voluntary donations in the correspondence with associate and consultative members.**

Council decision in plenary session

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should ensure that the report on future Council sessions includes clear sections on the core duties and workplans of FICSA standing committees, in addition to the current section on recommendations for Council.**

Recommendations for future FICSA engagement with the ICSC review of the compensation package

69. Delegates took part in four breakout sessions in parallel ([FICSA/C/78/Plenary/CRP.1](#)); three focused on each of the working groups in the ICSC review of the compensation package:
- Working Group I: Compensation package review governance and general issues
 - Working Group II: Family and dependency-related benefits and entitlements
 - Working Group III: Field and mobility-related benefits and entitlements.
70. The fourth group examined possible strategies that could help staff in addressing issues around the role that staff representatives could play when organizations lose funding due to imminent environmental factors and may face some very difficult decisions to keep performing their mandate.
71. The four groups discussed the issues from the perspectives of ICSC Commissioners and Secretariat, UN organizations, and staff representatives, and then formulated the following recommendations on the points that FICSA representatives should stress when taking part in ICSC working groups and in other for a.

Working Group I: Compensation package review governance and general issues

Staff Recruitment and Retention

- **Management should prioritize internal staff retention; the UN should be a more supportive employer that values its employees and acknowledges the long-term investment in staff systemwide. Management should therefore:**
 - **stop the current practice of assigning regular P and G posts to seconded or consultant personnel, who do not contribute to the UNJSPF;**
 - **either define a maximum threshold for external hiring or freeze it, except for a very few specialized professions after internal recruitment processes have been unsuccessful;**
 - **preferably fill regular posts internally, from within the common system, through a hiring process that could include the use of a roster system that is merit based and not used punitively;**
 - **promote opportunities for career development through interdepartmental, interagency and internal (within the common system) secondments to break down silos, encourage experience sharing and utilize the knowledge gained over years of service; and**
 - **promote more transparent and equitable job classification, ensuring that there is a distinction between the work done by General Service (GS) and Professional (P) staff and ensuring that job classifications demonstrate that distinction: that is, that small differences in wording do not lead to two categories of staff doing essentially the same job.**

- **Management should improve efficiencies in recruitment by ensuring that:**
 - **there is full transparency in the cost of doing business – no hidden costs of onboarding or other recruitment costs – with an understanding of the effects and impact of tax exemptions; and**
 - **recruitment systems and policies are updated in a timely manner to avoid delays, which would reduce the time spent on recruitment (some delays have resulted in the freezing or outright removal of vacant posts, which affects staff pensions).**

Flexible working arrangements (FWA)

- **Management should align its policies on FWA with the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) [UN System Model Policy on Flexible Work](#) and endorse/implement the recommendations on FWA and remote working in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on [Flexible working arrangements in United Nations system organizations](#). FWA, or remote work outside the duty station, is not part of the compensation package, is not a monetary or non-monetary benefit, is part of management responsibility and is not mandated by the ICSC, as it is not a compensation element.**

Disability inclusion

- **The compensation package should include reasonable accommodations in the allowances, for example, rental subsidy, for staff with disabilities, to ensure that they can adapt their living and working arrangements so that they can work and live without undue stress.**

Working Group II: Family and dependency-related benefits and entitlements

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should advocate to the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) and the Human Resources (HR) Network alternative administrative arrangements for staff members to declare their secondary dependents for the purposes of health insurance, family-reunification visa at the duty station and other administrative matters, without reliance upon the ICSC's definition of a secondary dependent and its inherent limitations, since the ICSC definition is for the purposes of a secondary dependent allowance. This would effectively separate the definitions of secondary dependents for the purposes of administrative matters from those for allowances.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should encourage FICSA members to increase awareness among all staff, both locally recruited and internationally recruited, on the availability of the special education grant for children with disabilities.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should ensure that the discussions of ICSC Working Group II on the education grant and early education/child care take account of the situation of staff in field and hardship duty stations, and not focus only on staff serving in headquarters.**

Working Group III: Field and mobility-related benefits and entitlements.

- **In participating in the discussions of ICSC Working Group III, the FICSA Executive Committee should take account of the report of the FICSA working group submitted by one of its members.**

Possible strategies for staff representatives

- **The FICSA Executive Committee and members should proactively monitor the financial situation of organizations and identify how FICSA can support staff associations/unions in discussions with organizations that lose funding on measures to minimize the impact on staff.**
- **In its regular meeting with the heads of delegations of its members, the FICSA Executive Committee should provide information and updates, hold discussions and receive feedback on international developments.**

Date and place of the next Council session

72. The FICSA General Secretary was glad to inform the delegates that FICSA had received an invitation to hold the 79th Council session in 2026, (23 to 27 February) from UNGSC, in Brindisi, Italy, and an invitation for the 80th Council session from OPCW in The Hague, Netherlands.
73. The head of the UNGSC delegation thanked the FICSA General Secretary for his four years of service and invited him, and Cosimo Lunedi, a Vice-Chair of the 79th Council session, to attend the 79th session as special guests and counsellors. Both were retiring after years of service to FICSA; the FICSA President added her thanks and delegates gave them a standing ovation.

Closing of the session

74. The FICSA General Secretary expressed his confidence that FICSA was in good hand for the future. He and the FICSA President thanked the rest of ExCom, the FICSA Secretariat, the UNESCO Staff Union, and the Council officers and delegates for the success of the 78th Council session.
75. The President of the UNESCO Staff Union congratulated the whole FICSA family for its work, and thanked everyone who had made the session possible, particularly the Staff Union secretariat.
76. The Chairperson thanked all the colleagues who had contributed to the success of the Council session, including UNESCO staff, the Polling Officers of the UNESCO Staff Union, the staff of the FICSA Secretariat and the Council vice-chairs. He thanked those who were leaving ExCom for all the work they had done for FICSA and those who had accepted the challenge of the ExCom office for the coming year, and declared the 78th session of the FICSA Council closed.

Annex 1. Agenda for the 78th FICSA Council

1. Opening of the session
2. Credentials
3. Election of the Chair and vice-chairs and approval of the appointment of the Rapporteur
4. Adoption of the agenda
5. Organization of the Council's work
6. Constitutional matters
7. Questions relating to membership status in FICSA (changes in membership)
8. Report of the Executive Committee for 2024–2025 (March 2024–January 2025)
9. FICSA cooperation with other staff federations
10. Election of the Executive Committee Officers and Regional Representatives for 2025–2026 (February 2025 to February 2026)
11. Approval of the session report:
 - (a) Legal Questions
 - (b) Human Resources Management
 - (c) Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety
 - (d) Conditions of Service in the Field
 - (e) General Service Questions (including PTC/GSQ)
 - (f) Professional Salaries and Allowances
 - (g) Staff/Management Relations
12. Programme Budget, Administration and Strategy Committee
 - (a) Draft programme and budget 2025
 - (b) The scale of membership contributions to FICSA for 2025
13. Endorsement of Standing Committee officers for 2025-2026 (February 2025-February 2026)
14. Date and place of the next Council session
15. Other business
16. Closing of the session

Annex 2. Q&A session with the International Civil Service Commission

Larbi Djacta, ICSC Chair, and Yuri Orlov, Chief, Salaries and Allowances Division, and Acting Executive Secretary, ICSC responded to questions asked by delegates to the 78th FICSA Council session.

Currency used to calculate dependency benefits for dependent children

1. **Question:** As things stand right now, the benefit, as determined by the ICSC, is US\$ 2,929 for a dependent child. It is stipulated in [Information Circular ST/IC/2011/6 dated 8 March 2011](#), subparagraph 3: "the United States dollar amounts of the allowance, as established in subparagraphs 2 (a) and (b) above, should be converted to local currency using the official United Nations rate of exchange, as at the date of promulgation, and should remain unchanged until the next biennial review. At that time, in 2011, the official exchange rate between the United States and Canadian dollars was basically 1 to 1, so the equivalent amount then was C\$ 2,929. However, the exchange rate fluctuated over the years, even going in the opposite direction on 1 January 2013 when it was 0.993, before going down again to what is currently 1.355. From my reading, it seems that the amount of US\$ 2,929 had to be converted on 1 January every two years, and that the resulting amount would remain the same for the following 24 months. If that is the situation, there may be a case for a review of this whole matter to properly implement the decisions of the ICSC. If this is not the case, kindly advise.

The Acting Executive Secretary, ICSC agreed that the issue was complicated. The initial idea had been that the US dollar amount would be converted into local currency and then reviewed within two years. The UN General Assembly had not yet made a final decision on whether to hold such a review. In 2024, it was said that the level of dependency allowance should remain unchanged. As the amount had not been adjusted in more than a decade, perhaps ICSC should look at the issue again and make recommendations to the General Assembly. Member States were conscious that even a small change in the level of benefits could have large financial implications.

Salary scale in France and harmonized post descriptions

2. **Question:** What will be the status of Lyon salary scale going forward, once Paris' new salary scale survey is finalized? Lyon's salary scale has not been updated since 2005 and it is currently "piggybacking" on that of Paris. The IARC staff association would positively welcome one salary scale for France. This question is especially relevant in 2025 as the WHO had been likely to employ around 500 staff in Lyon by the end of the year.
3. **Question:** Is there an appetite on the ICSC's part to investigate harmonizing post descriptions across organizations and duty stations? This question stems from the fact that there seems to be an average of one grade discrepancy within the same post description between WHO organizations in Lyon and Geneva.

The Acting Executive Secretary, ICSC explained that the salary scales for the two duty stations had been set by different bodies. Operational work for salary scales had since moved to the UN. The scales should now be the same, but the Lyon scale would still be set by WHO. To reach a unified scale, some kind of survey would need to be made and it would need to be discussed with the responsible agency. ICSC would welcome that if the agency agreed.

As to harmonized post descriptions, all duty stations were now under the same global standards for both General Service (GS) and Professional (P) staff, although organizations might apply them differently. ICSC developed the standards, but organizations applied them, even though ICSC advocated uniform implementation.

The ICSC Chair asked for clarification from IARC staff association. A delegate replies that staff did not understand why their salary scale was 20 years old, and were uncertain about whether to seek an independent scale or piggyback on that of Paris.

The Acting Executive Secretary, ICSC advised the staff association to try again to have a survey done, when more comparators can be found in Lyon.

Digital strategies

4. **Question:** Organizations are acknowledging skills gaps but at the same time expressing an appetite for implementing artificial intelligence (AI) capacities to achieve efficiency gains. At the same time, we witness industry trends in which workforce talent is a major barrier to successfully implementing digital transformation. In the same industries, high employee turnover remains a particular challenge in maintaining the frontline talent stability needed. Historically, the UN employment landscape has followed major industry trends albeit with some delay. This leads to the following questions.

- In anticipation of such an impact and standing at the precipice of a new Industrial Revolution (IR4.0), are efforts to work in closer consultation with management and stakeholders in strategic change and development considered by the ICSC? Is there are risk of inadvertently handing over more competency on working culture, strategic human resources management and overall organizational strategy to the agencies?
- Can the ICSC Secretariat foresee adding capacity on workforce transformation and safeguarding the principles of the international civil service?
- Is the rollout of IR4.0 (and by extension [UN2.0](#)) already affecting job classification standards?
- What risks does the ICSC Secretariat currently see to the common system in that regard?

The ICSC Chair replied that everyone needed to recognize the emerging challenge of AI, which was not going to replace jobs but would create a need for new skills. All organizations should provide the training need to upskill their staff. The Acting Executive Secretary, ICSC agreed; while was no evidence of high staff turnover, AI created a good opportunity

for ICSC to work with organizations on the topic. Some jobs would need to be reprofiled. As to job classification, new jobs would be fitted into the existing master standard. If that standard subsequently needed revision, he was sure Member States would be receptive to that.

Hardship-related benefits

5. **Question:** Are there any discussions/engagement with Member States on tackling different treatment of local and international staff members who serve in danger pay duty stations? Current financial differences (fixed amount for internationally recruited staff members and floating rates for locally-recruited staff members) underline inequity among staff and go against UN core values.
6. **Question:** With the [UN General Assembly resolution on UN common system](#), what are the plans for “language incentives as a measure to promote multilingualism in the common system”?
7. **Question:** Are there any discussions/engagement with Member States on expanding the D/E pilot to other categories of duty stations?

The Acting Executive Secretary, ICSC replied that the last two subjects were included in the comprehensive review. The D/E pilot would be continued and the review would look at multilingualism. The issue of different treatment of staff in terms of danger pay was an emotive one; no price could be set on human life. The initial approach had been to have a single level of danger pay for all affected staff, but that had not proved practical for all categories of staff. The idea was to ensure a similar impact for all staff receiving danger pay.

Questions from the floor

8. **Question:** What was the feeling of Member States, especially those on the 5th Committee, about increasing the periodicity of comprehensive reviews of the compensation package to 10 years, to allow ICSC and staff association to focus on their core work? In addition, what are the next steps for hardship classification to ensure that it is revised to reflect current realities?

The ICSC Chair said that Member States were willing to consider a ten-year scale for compensation reviews, and would make a decision about it in 2026 at end of the current review. The first compensation review had been initiated by the ICSC Chair.

The FICSA General Secretary noted that the Acting Executive Secretary, ICSC had often engaged with the Permanent Technical Committee of the FICSA Standing Committee on General Service Questions.

9. **Question:** A UN organization had had to replace two comparators for the local salary survey, with good results. The external data used had not been shared with the staff association, which wanted to know what effect they had had.

The ICSC Chair would need to ask the agency involved, but asserted that unified criteria had to be applied. The Acting Executive Secretary, ICSC added that the survey must have been done by the UN, not ICSC; salary movement data could have been used in that case.

There was a pilot project on the use of external data. Salary surveys were sufficient if there were enough comparators. External data were used if that was not the case. As they had to be purchased, such data were not usually shared with staff associations.

The FICSA President suggested that the staff association concerned consult with the FICSA Information Officer.

10. **Question:** Chair's statement mentioned update the updating of the [Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service](#); what changes did he think there would be?

11. **Question:** In view of current risks to funding for UN organizations, what risk mitigation measures would ICSC consider to respond to those funding problems?

The ICSC Chair replied that organizations must manage their funding issues; ICSC was a service provider, and would respond to requests to develop measures in that regard. As to the Standards of Conduct, the last revisions had been 10 years previously; the current revision was taking account of new factors such as AI and social media, and the new recognition of old problems such as sexual harassment. The aim was to establish staff's responsibilities in these regards.

12. **Question:** How could ICSC help maintain the attractiveness of UN employment in the current political situation, and what message could be taken to staff to reassure them that their rights would be protected?

ICSC was doing everything possible to secure guarantees from organizations on how they would maintain an attractive working environment and to protect staff in the 600 UN duty stations worldwide. The ICSC agenda included efforts focusing on staff security, probably to be reviewed as part of ICSC's work on classification of duty stations.

As to post adjustment, the process was devoid of politics; ICSC would never deflate the standards set. As the UN used the United States federal civil service as a standard, changes there would have wide effects. As to local salary surveys, a decrease in salary levels locally would have an effect on local salary levels and surveys. ICSC's special measures were temporary by nature. ICSC could not tweak the survey methodology to achieve either a better or a worse result.

13. **Question:** Staff who complain about post adjustment multipliers come from two hotspots: Rome and Chile. What could be done about that? And what about the difference in the results of cost-of-living (COL) surveys from the methodology used by ICSC and sources of external data?

14. **Question:** What options were available for staff at the top of the salary scale?

15. **Question:** Was ICSC on FICSA's side or that of Member States who think UN staff are overpaid?

The ICSC Chair replied that the COL Division would answer the query about post adjustment. As to whose side ICSC was on, ICSC had to do its job: advise Member States, who would decide for themselves what to do, on what staff needed to be able to do their work. If Member States wanted programmes to be delivered, staff needed fair conditions of work. As to FWA, organizations were seeing empty offices for which they paid rent. ICSC

was concerned about the inconsistency of FWA approach across organizations and work in that area was just beginning.

The Acting Executive Secretary, ICSC thought that expenditure patterns should capture local conditions, but the out-of-area component might have unexpected effects. A COL weighting based on external data should be taken with a grain of salt; it was a complex business to which ICSC would need to return. As to steps in salary grades, they were adjusted along with salary scales, but they were only relevant to staff who reached particular steps before survey conducted.

16. **Question:** As staff do not understand FWA as a benefit or entitlement, what is rationale for the 5th Committee and General Assembly looking at it?

The Acting Executive Secretary, ICSC thought that FWA could be considered a non-financial benefit. Working group I of the compensation review would review FWA, but individual organizations would still decide how to run them. ICSC was concerned with the issue of benefits for people working outside their duty stations.

17. **Question:** Was it possible to classify staff outside the status of G, P and D?

The Acting Executive Secretary, ICSC explained that organizations joining UN system had to classify jobs according to the common standard; a separate system was not a good idea. Nevertheless, there were non-staff categories, and ICSC had no mandate related to them. ICSC would not welcome organization-specific categories of staff outside those used in the common system.

The ICSC Chair reiterated the need for common standards. While ICSC Commissioners varied widely in their views, all decisions so far had been made on the basis of consensus, and many were interested in protecting staff. The compensation review had been forced on ICSC, which had to deliver on it by 2026. He thanked FCISA for its work with ICSC and positive engagement in the debate.

The FICSA General Secretary gave his personal thanks to the ICSC Chair and the Acting Executive Secretary, ICSC, for their willingness to engage with and support staff representatives.

Annex 3. Q&A session with the Vice-Chair of the High-Level Committee on Management

Effectiveness of UN organizations

1. **Question:** With a seemingly decreased appetite by Member States for the UN overall and its purpose and effectiveness, how can the common system organizations demonstrate their effectiveness? Is there an overall strategy to ensure the common system prevails and that organizations stop competing for scarce resources?

The HLCM Vice-Chair replied that the UN needed to focus relentlessly on impact, efficiency and the power of the system to change lives and contribute to world peace. As an interagency coordinating mechanism, HLCM tried to be efficient in its efforts to build a system that could withstand current shocks and respond to the needs of the world's people wherever they were. This was behind the UN Secretary-General's vision of [UN2.0](#): modernize and streamline to deliver. The [UN Sustainable Development Group Business Innovations Group](#) focused on innovation to secure cost savings through evidence-based leadership. UN organizations needed to show value for money and that the UN was transforming itself to fit the current landscape, and have common messaging and unity.

HLCM would redouble its efforts to improve mutual recognition (reusing successful approaches across the system: an efficiency effort), a UN digital identification solution for staff across the system, and ideas such as global services and common back offices for the whole system.

Donor conditionalities

2. **Question:** Can you please update us on ongoing work relating to conditionalities in UN donor agreements? What steps have been/will be taken at the political level to tackle the issue of donor conditionalities as a part of UN common system efforts for diversifying funding?

HLCM had focused on that issue, owing to the growing complexity of funding in UN system. Current trends in the quality of support for UN system were concerning: e.g. conflicts between donor requirements and UN standards. HLCM had considered a number of options for dealing with that, including strategic engagement with donors, operational changes employing system-wide principles and an action plan for addressing key challenges, such as legal requirements. Key principles would inform a common UN approach to systematically and collectively handle donor conditionalities; that approach would also be aligned with some agencies' efforts in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on humanitarian issues.

Rollout of common back offices and global services

3. **Question:** Could you please give an update on the progress of the rollout of common back offices and global services across the UN common system?

A number of common back offices had been planned in 2016, and the rollout was under way but facing some challenges. HLCM had supported that work. The common UN back

office in Kenya had been launched and provided 100 services to 25 involved organizations. The next planned back offices were in Brazil, Tanzania and Viet Nam. They had demonstrated proof of the concept. For global shared services, several lines had been launched and saved millions of dollars: e.g. transport, mobility, accommodation, wellness and health services, web buy, and human resources benefits and payroll. That work needed to be broadened and accelerated quite quickly.

UN judicial framework

4. **Question:** What is happening with the UN judicial framework and how is it being rolled out?

The framework was a big part of [UN2.0](#), and HLCM would take it forward.

Annex 4. [Report of the Standing Committee on Legal Questions](#)

Annex 5. [Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Management](#)

Annex 6. [Report of the Standing Committee on Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety](#)

Annex 7. [Report of the Standing Committee on Field Issues](#)

Annex 8. [Report of the Standing Committee on General Service Questions](#)

Annex 9. [Report of the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances](#)

Annex 10. [Report of the Standing Committee on Staff–Management Relations](#)

Annex 11. Report of the Standing Committee on Programme Budget, Administration and Strategy (internal document – by request only)

Annex 12. List of Participants (internal document – by request only)