



Federation of International  
Civil Servants' Associations

# CIRCULAR

FICSA/CIRC/1396  
Ref: UNISERV

Geneva, 15 September 2025

**STATEMENT  
DELIVERED BY THE PRESIDENT OF  
THE FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS' ASSOCIATIONS (FICSA)  
TO THE UNISERV ANNUAL MEETING**

**12 September 2025 - Virtual meeting – delivered by FICSA President**

---

To: Chairs, Member Associations/Unions  
Members of the Executive Committee  
Chairs, Members with Associate Status  
Chairs, Associations with Consultative Status  
Presidents, Federations with Observer Status  
Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Standing Committees

From: Wadzanai Garwe, FICSA President

---

Dear colleagues,

Good afternoon from Rome.

I would like to express my gratitude for the invitation to speak at the 2025 UNISERV General Assembly on behalf of FICSA, its Executive Committee, and the resolute staff we represent.

Our presence here today underscores FICSA's unwavering commitment to strengthening ties within the staff representation community. Together, we strive to protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of staff across our system.

Our federations represent thousands of staff who rely on us to amplify their concerns and defend their rights.

In recent months, we have faced a landscape of unprecedented uncertainty within the multilateral system, financial crises affecting many organizations, intensified by decisions from key donor Member

States, delays in funding, and, in some cases, severe budget cuts. During the 100<sup>th</sup> session of the International Civil Service Commission, we witnessed a further deterioration in the relationship between staff and representatives of member states. As per its Statute, the ICSC is expected to function as a neutral, technical, and independent body, providing objective recommendations on the regulation and coordination of conditions of service across the United Nations common system in the interest of maintaining a unified international civil service.

Instead, we were told to “know our place” and to understand that we were in the session at the behest of the member states and should thus moderate our behavior and “tow the line.” These representatives even took a decision based on their desire and not in accordance with the technical work that had been done by the task force comprising the HR network, ICSC colleagues, and the staff federations for the personal transition allowance. This was clearly a deliberate act to show the power of the member states.

It increases the level of concern that we, as Federations, are feeling. The ripple effects of ongoing geopolitical challenges are already being felt and threaten to deepen, disrupting programs, constraining operations, and diminishing our collective ability to deliver as we once did.

These developments are not just abstract; they have a direct impact on staff security, morale, and contractual stability.

The Staff Federations have a crucial role in advocating for our members, ensuring that Member States understand the serious implications of staffing reductions. As we prepare to make our statements at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), we do so resolutely. UNGA resolutions 34/220 (December 1979) and 35/213 (December 1980) explicitly reaffirm the Assembly’s readiness to receive and fully consider the views of staff, as articulated through the Staff Federations.

Over the years, our collaboration has yielded tangible successes across a range of critical areas. This partnership, built on mutual respect and shared purpose, must be more vital than ever as we navigate the complexities of the future.

Our shared purpose is clear: we must stand with those facing career disruptions and the many others who are anxious about what lies ahead.

Dear Karin, as Samar aptly highlighted during your address to the FICSA Council earlier this year, we need to adopt a staff-centered approach that prioritizes duty of care, safeguards essential services, and ensures that staff in hardship and high-risk duty stations are not left behind.

FICSA shares your concerns about the mental health toll these uncertainties are having on colleagues worldwide.

We are witnessing rising levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout across duty stations, exacerbated by the demands placed on staff working in perilous contexts. We echo your call for enhanced response mechanisms and unified advocacy for occupational safety and mental well-being.

Our collaboration through the Compensation Review Working Groups remains a cornerstone of effective tri-federation action.

We are committed to representing our members' perspectives in these discussions, particularly as we confront increasing pressure to streamline or reduce the current compensation framework. Together,

we must ensure that staff voices remain central in these conversations and that reform efforts prioritize fairness, sustainability, and operational realities.

We all know that the United Nations system is not without its flaws. However, it is our duty to defend the mechanisms that have withstood the test of time.

We owe it to future generations to safeguard a system that is capable, resilient, and continues to be an employer of choice—championing the values we have long fought to uphold.

Lastly, let us address the issue of solidarity. The past year has demonstrated that coordinated responses between Federations can be challenging, but they are essential.

In the face of conflict, injustice, or violations of staff rights, our collective voice carries far greater weight when united.

FICSA welcomes the opportunity to reflect with you and CCISUA on how we can enhance our responsiveness in critical moments and ensure that our Federations present a united front when it matters most.

We cannot afford even the appearance of division in front of Member States. That is why we stand together today—to reaffirm our commitment to cooperation and solidarity.

Now, more than ever, it is crucial for all voices representing staff to speak as one.

Dear colleagues, I wish you strength and success in your deliberations.

In solidarity,