

# CIRCULAR

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Geneva, 27 July 2020

## JOINT WRITTEN STATEMENT BY

**THE FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS' ASSOCIATIONS (FICSA),  
THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF INTERNATIONAL STAFF UNIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS  
(CCISUA) AND UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS' FEDERATION (UNISERV)  
TO THE 67<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS JOINT STAFF PENSION BOARD (UNJSPB)**

**(Virtual meeting, 16 to 24 July 2020)**

*Delivered in Geneva, video conference by Tanya Quinn-Maguire, FICSA President on 24 July 2020*

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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: Evelyn Kortum, FICSA General Secretary

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Mme. Chair, Distinguished members of the Board, Dear colleagues,

On behalf of the three staff federations FICSA, CCISUA and UNISERV, I thank you for granting me this opportunity to address you today. My name is Tanya Quinn-Maguire and I am the President of FICSA.

I am sure that we have no need to reiterate to you the importance of the Pension Fund for our members who see this as their primary source of social security. As such, on behalf of our members, we appreciate the opportunity to participate in the meeting of the Board as observers. We hope that our role serves to improve staff members trust and belief in the

stability of the Fund, and we look forward to continuing to play this role for many years to come.

Mme Chair allow me to begin by congratulating Rosemarie McClean on her appointment as Chief Executive of Pension Administration in January this year. Despite a difficult start to her tenure, we are pleased to report that Ms Mc Clean has initiated a frank and, so far, constructive dialogue with the staff federations. We look forward to continuing to build on this positive new relationship with a view to increasing transparency and accountability in the Fund.

With regard to the vision presented by the Chief Executive of Pension Administration in her opening statement and reflected in the document JSPB/67/R.16 as well as in the budget proposal document JSPB/67/R.15, we note with interest the focus on investment in the three core pillars of communication, strategic direction and client focus which will include much needed investments in IT. We welcome this vision of a modern, fit for purpose Fund with one eye firmly on the future. We will rely on the members of the Board, in particular the participants representatives, to monitor the implementation of this strategy, as will we, in the form of timely, constructive criticism and feedback as well as positive support as necessary. During the difficult and uncertain times of COVID-19, Investment in technology and communication has already shown a positive impact for staff, particularly for those in field duty stations. We strongly encourage this approach and hope that pilots similar to the one for the electronic certificate of entitlement will continue to be used so that staff can be confident that any technology deployed is accessible to all participants, and will include the participation of staff and retirees to attain that goal.

The staff federations commend the Pension Administration for its report that 90% of cases have been dealt with within fifteen days despite the recent circumstances related to COVID-19. We hope that this can be further improved upon and hope that the intended investments in communications and client service presented in budget document JSPB/67/R.15 will assist the Fund to maintain these results and improve services in other areas such as multilingual support for participants in all regions. More specifically, in this regard the federations would also like to advocate strengthening customer service operations of the UNJSPF, particularly in the African region, potentially using existing capacities and resources. We understand that there may be some reluctance to increasing financial resources in the current climate. However, we see this investment as necessary to support the sadly almost inevitable surge in staff separations and resultant benefit payments by the Fund in the coming years, not least due to the impact of COVID-19. Those staff members affected will have suffered enough, they will not need the added indignities of possible delays in accessing pension benefits due to lack of communication, lost documentation and lack of relevant accessible technology.

The staff federations read with concern the comments of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). In this regard, we applaud the honest response by the acting Representative of the Secretary General (RSG) in accepting the observations and recommendations of the

OIOS and in initiating a 120-day plan which we see as a good first step in addressing some of the concerns highlighted. We look forward to those initial actions being built upon by the incoming RSG and offer our support to that person in the form of open dialogue. We hope that steps taken to stabilize and strengthen the team will be continued by the incoming RSG as well as steps to improve reporting and disclosure. We encourage this approach and hope for its success.

Regarding the study conducted by the external entity, the Staff Federations strongly suggest that further analysis is needed to enable sufficient time for the Board and its Governance Working Group to review and provide valuable input for consideration. We were pleased to note the references to professionalization of the Board that follows a fiduciary framework and will follow closely any future recommendations in this regard. We would also like to stress the need to ensure fair, equitable and appropriate representation of all stakeholders on the Board going forward.

Considering the large number of staff in field duty stations, the Staff Federations urge the UNSPC Participants Representatives to ensure an electoral system which would allocate designated seats on the UNSPC in order to guarantee those field-based participants sufficient opportunities to voice any concerns that they may have to the Board and its subsidiary bodies.

In closing, I would like to express the staff federations' appreciation to both the staff and management of the Pension Fund for their efforts and dedication in serving both participants and beneficiaries.

Thank you for your attention.

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