

CIRCULAR

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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

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY
THE FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS' ASSOCIATIONS (FICSA)
TO THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AT ITS 75th SESSION

Submitted by Tanya Quinn-Maguire (President),

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Members of the Fifth Committee,

Due to the modified meeting modalities implemented by the Fifth Committee in light of the measures implemented due to COVID-19 pandemic, it has not been possible for FICSA to address you as has been the established practice. Neither has it been possible for me to engage with esteemed members of the Fifth Committee informally as my predecessors have had the opportunity to do over many years. We feel, therefore, that it is important to bring the voice of almost 40,000 international civil servants whose staff associations and unions are members of FICSA to your attention before the closing of this year's session.

The world is facing an extraordinary crisis, and I am sure that this has been the ever-present backdrop to your discussions over the past many weeks. I wish to express on behalf of FICSA a profound sense of solidarity with all countries and communities affected as the pandemic continues to take its toll the world over. In that context, I also pay tribute to all International Civil Servants for their unflagging commitment to the mission and principles of their respective organizations in these unprecedented times. I would like to acknowledge the sacrifices made by our colleagues who have continued to undertake critical missions, even to high-risk areas. Many have gone far above and beyond the call of duty.

UN staff are not immune to the impact of COVID-19 which has been felt the world over. This pandemic has affected the physical and mental health of UN staff in the same way as the global population as they reflect on their future and the fate of their families. FICSA stands with you to “build back better” while ensuring that we continue to respect the concept of decent work and support positive staff-management dialogue to ensure that we can collectively continue to deliver on the ever more important mandates of our Organizations.

Throughout the past year, FICSA maintained a constructive and healthy dialogue with the ICSC and with the distinguished members of the Commission while working in partnership with our sister federations to address many issues of concern to our members and their respective organizations. Despite unavoidable areas of disagreement, we feel that there was genuine positive intent on the part of all stakeholders to resolve some difficult issues to the benefit of the Common System as a whole. The fruit of those discussions were submitted for your consideration and we urge you to keep in mind the high level of expertise involved and the hours of careful deliberations as you consider the recommendations before you.

In particular, we would like to highlight that:

- FICSA continues to support the ongoing review of the Post Adjustment methodology and operational rules as well as 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. As many countries including headquarters duty stations were severely hit by a second wave of COVID infections that led to the

implementation of even harder lockdowns FICSA trusts that the ICSC will 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.

- With regard to the ICSC review of the staff contractual arrangements (implementation of the three types of contracts), staff are of the view that the Commission and UN Common System organizations should focus on maximizing and improving the use of the current contractual modalities in place. FICSA believes that agile workforce can be achieved by improving organizational behavior, practices, processes and structure, by being more strategic, efficient, dynamic and less bureaucratic. FICSA has agreed to participate in the proposed ICSC working group to ensure the optimal implementation of the current three existing staff contracts. At the same time, FICSA strongly believe that it is important to concentrate limited financial and human resources on improving the current framework to address the issues that have been identified in numerous fora over many years as barriers to the good functioning of our common system.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the position of my predecessors that the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund is perhaps one of the strongest pillars of the common system. In that context, I would like to express to the members of the 5th Committee FICSA's formal support for the letter from the Chair of the Pension Board which was supported by all the Pension Fund participant representatives from the specialized agencies. We hope that you will agree that now more than ever, the Pension Board needs your intervention to put an end to the issue of conflict of interest which can be resolved only if you would accept their proposed amendments to the rules and regulations.

In closing, allow me to say that FICSA would welcome the opportunity to interact informally with the distinguished representatives of the Member States to enhance transparent collaboration for the sake of all stakeholders. For this purpose, we will be reaching out to many of you during the next months and hope that we will be able to discuss some of the issues which I have raised here today.

Mr. Chair,
Distinguished Members of the Fifth Committee,

I thank you for taking the time to consider this statement and wish you a successful outcome of your discussions.
