

# CIRCULAR

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Geneva, 29 July 2021

## JOINT WRITTEN STATEMENT BY

**THE FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS' ASSOCIATIONS (FICSA),  
AND UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS' FEDERATION (UNISERV)  
TO THE 69<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS JOINT STAFF PENSION BOARD (UNJSPB)**

**(Virtual meeting, 22 to 30 July 2021)**

*Delivered in Geneva, video conference by Tanya Quinn-Maguire, FICSA President on 28 July 2021*

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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: Tanya Quinn-Maguire, FICSA President

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Mr. Chair, Distinguished members of the Board, Dear colleagues, Dear friends,

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

I would like to start by taking this opportunity to underline 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, and we look forward to continuing to play this role for many years to come.

FICSA and UNISERV appreciate the efforts made by the Chief Executive Pension Fund Administrator (CEPA) and the Secretariat of the Fund to ensure business continuity despite the numerous challenges experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We also note the reported consistent improvements with regard to the prompt payment of benefits compared to the unfortunate situation experienced by some participants just a few short years ago. In this regard, we support all efforts that ensure that no participant has their pension benefit unduly delayed, including proposals to ensure that the CEPA has the delegated authority, i.e. the “necessary tools in her toolbox”, to deal with exceptional cases which continue to be reported. We hope that all members of the Board will also support such proposals.

We take note of the report of the Governance Working Group and urge the Board, in particular the members of the General Assembly, to take into account the fundamental role of the SPCs and their respective representatives in the governance of the Board. We strongly reiterate our position that no member organization should lose their voice or their right to be part of the decision-making processes. We are of the opinion that limiting the participation of Members’ Representatives without voting rights to virtual attendance is not in the spirit of the tripartite nature of the Board. Irrespective of the outcome of the ongoing discussions regarding the size and composition of the Board, all three constituents’ groups should be equitably represented and have a say when important decisions are being discussed and made.

Our federations particularly welcome the establishment of the Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy. This is a great step towards a new culture of strong accountability. FICSA and UNISERV hope that with the approval of the Code of conduct and Ethics Policy, the General Assembly would consider the amendment of Article 6 to put an end to any outstanding issues of conflict of interest.

With regard to the proposal to lift the cap under Article 28 of the Regulations of the UNJSPF, our federations believe that while the world is going through a serious economic crisis due to the negative impact of COVID measures, this may give the wrong perception which may in turn lead to reputational damage for the United Nations. Furthermore, this proposal still needs to be evaluated and fully dollarized to obtain a clear overview of the financial implication on the Fund.

Our two federations also take note of Appendix 8, entitled Responsibilities of Members of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board, and appeals to all member organizations to take note that Pension Board members responsibilities are considered official duties. As such, we respectfully request that all organizations will ensure that Pension Board members are supported as necessary to discharge their responsibilities including, but not limited to, sufficient time for preparation and participation to all Board-related meetings.

FICSA and UNISERV were delighted to see that all Participants Representatives have reunited into one group as per previous practice and we look forward to continuing to contribute to the work of that group in the best interest of the Fund and its participants.

In our statement to the Board last year, we welcomed the CEPA’s vision of a modern, fit for purpose Fund with one eye firmly on the future. During the difficult and uncertain times of COVID-

19 investment in technology and communication has shown a positive impact for staff, particularly for those in field duty stations. In line with this new strategy, which will hopefully continue to simplify processes for staff, we would however encourage the Fund to keep in mind that in some deep field duty stations not everyone will be able to deal with the increased reliance on the latest technology.

Many of our members have benefited from online presentations by the Fund's Secretariat to their staff in the last 12 months and we can only encourage a continuation of this approach. We look forward to strengthening our engagement with the Fund to support participants' understanding and to facilitate improved transparency and accountability.

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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