



Federation of International
Civil Servants' Associations

REPORT OF THE 74TH SESSION OF THE FICSA COUNCIL

9-11 February 2021

Embracing change & resilience
Promoting protection & solidarity

Geneva, 9 March 2021

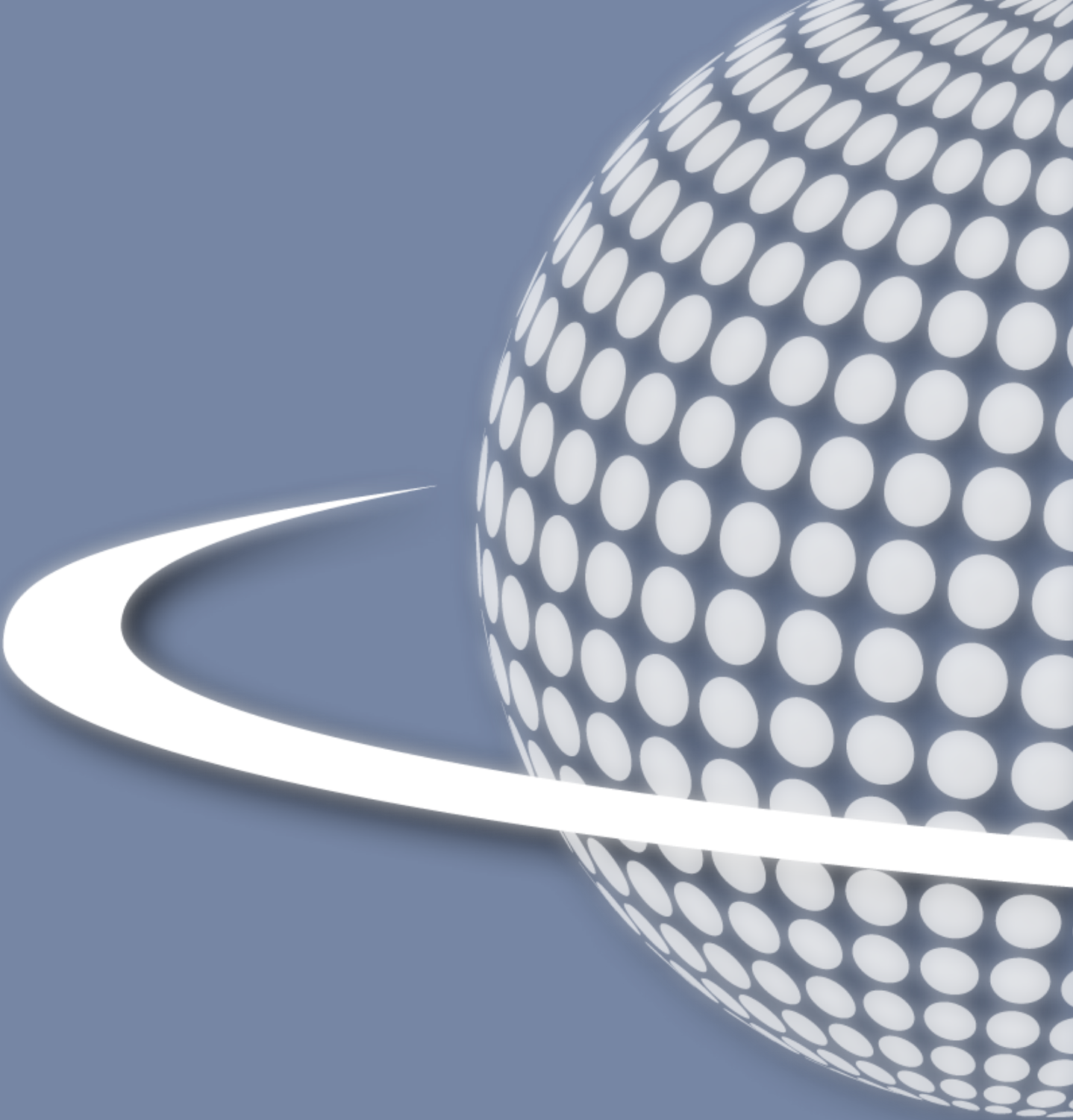


TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS	5
OPENING OF THE COUNCIL SESSION	7
• WELCOME FROM THE FICSA PRESIDENT	7
• QUESTION AND ANSWER (Q&A) PANEL WITH ICSC AND HLCM	8
CREDENTIALS	13
ELECTION OF COUNCIL OFFICERS, ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA	13
QUESTIONS RELATING TO MEMBERSHIP STATUS IN FICSA	14
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR FEBRUARY 2020–JANUARY 2021	14
FICSA COOPERATION WITH THE OTHER UN STAFF FEDERATIONS	17
ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICERS AND REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES FOR 2021–2022	18
APPROVAL OF THE DECISIONS FROM THE REPORTS AND THE ELECTIONS OF CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS OF FICSA STANDING AND AD-HOC COMMITTEES	19
• LEGAL QUESTIONS	19
• HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	21
• SOCIAL SECURITY/OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY	22
• CONDITIONS OF SERVICE IN THE FIELD	23
• GENERAL SERVICE QUESTIONS	24
• PROFESSIONAL SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES	25
• STAFF-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS	26
• JOINT SESSIONS ON THE FUTURE OF WORK	27
• AD HOC COMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT	28
• ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS	28
• DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET 2021–2022 AND MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS TO FICSA FOR 2021	30
DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT COUNCIL SESSION	31
OTHER BUSINESS AND THE CLOSING OF THE SESSION	31
ANNEXES	32



Federation of International
Civil Servants' Associations



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 12 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
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
ETA	Emergency Telecommunication Application
FWA	flexible working arrangements
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
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
LGBTQI	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (one's sexual or gender identity) and intersex
LSSCs	local salary survey committees
MEDEVAC	medical evacuation
MEDEVAC TF	MEDEVAC Task Force
MoU	memorandum of understanding
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OSLA	Office of Staff Legal Assistance
P staff	Professional staff

Q&A session question-and-answer session
SWOT strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
TWG Tripartite Working Group
UN United Nations
UNAT UN Appeals Tribunal
UNDT UN Dispute Tribunal
UNICC UN International Computing Centre
UNISERV United Nations International Civil Servants Federation
UNJSPB UN Joint Staff Pension Fund Board
UNJSPF UN Joint Staff Pension Fund
UNSMS UN Security Management System
USAID United States Agency for International Development

Terms for FICSA structures

ExCom Executive Committee

Standing committees

FIELD Standing Committee on Field Issues
GSQ Standing Committee on General Service Questions
HRM Standing Committee on Human Resources Management
LEG Standing Committee on Legal Questions
PSA Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances
SMR Standing Committee on Staff-Management Relation
SocSec Standing Committee on Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety

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

Ad hoc committees

A&B Ad Hoc Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
SD Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Development



OPENING OF THE COUNCIL SESSION

Opening of the Council session

1. FICSA President Tanya Quinn-Maguire (UNAIDS) welcomed both experienced and new delegates to the 74th session of the FICSA Council, held virtually owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The President thanked the FICSA Secretariat, as well as the staff association of WHO/EURO, which had originally planned to host the Council, for their preparatory work. In continuing to deliver through the pandemic, FICSA members had proved, once again, their value to their organizations, despite the limitations imposed by the pandemic and, in some cases, the loss of friends and loved ones.
2. The Council observed a moment of silence to honour the memory and service of colleagues who had passed away or lost their lives while serving the United Nations (UN) and its specialized agencies.

Opening statements from sister federations

3. In July 2020, FICSA had signed its first tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) with its sister federations, the Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA) and the United Nations International Civil Servants Federation (UNISERV), in addition to its previous cooperative agreements with each. UNISERV President Steve Towler valued the privilege of speaking to the Council, and noted that partnership among federations enabled each to work more effectively than it could on its own. UNISERV would continue to work as one with its sister federations on such issues as salary-survey methodologies, parental leave and a possible new contractual framework, aiming to ensure that no changes were made detrimental to staff interests. UNISERV would also continue to work closely with the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM). He wished FICSA a successful Council meeting.
4. CCISUA President Stefan Brezina was prevented from addressing the Council as planned, and sent best wishes.

Question and answer (Q&A) panel with ICSC and HLCM

ICSC

5. Attending the opening session as guests, ICSC Chair Larbi Djacta and HLCM Vice-Chair Kelly Clements addressed the Council, answering questions submitted by FICSA members before the session. The full statement of the ICSC Chair is available [here](#).
6. The ICSC Chair described 2020 decisions of the UN General Assembly in response to ICSC recommendations, and outlined ICSC's upcoming activities. The Assembly had: approved the recommendations regarding the net remuneration margin and the base/floor salary scale; noted ICSC's decision to increase danger pay for both internationally recruited and locally recruited staff; not increased the children's and secondary dependents' allowances; and decided to continue the pilot payment for duty stations with extreme hardship in 2021 and requested ICSC to submit a further recommendation on it in autumn 2021.
7. The next ICSC session had been tentatively postponed to May 2021; ICSC would share information on its format and final dates as soon as plans were complete. At the session, ICSC would consider topics including the pilot payment for duty stations with extreme hardship, review of the salary-survey methodologies for locally recruited staff, review of the post adjustment methodology and the operation rules, the education grant, geographical diversity, gender parity, age distribution of the workforce and measures to address non-compliance with ICSC decisions and recommendations. In the first half of 2021, ICSC had scheduled a number of virtual meetings including those of: the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions (ACPAQ) (March); working groups on salary-survey methodologies for locally recruited staff (February), parental leave (May) and contractual arrangements (June); and the hardship mid-year review (June). If conditions permitted, ICSC would conduct the cost-of -living survey in New York in summer, which would become the basis for the 2021 round of surveys.

Q&A: salary surveys

8. Addressing questions submitted by FICSA members, the ICSC Chair listed the temporary measures taken by the UN to address the impact of COVID-19 on the process of updating local salaries in the common system. These included expanding the use of telephone, email and virtual contact with employers when face-to-face interviews were not an option, but

comparators were willing to participate in UN surveys. When a minimum number of comparators did not agree to participate, both comprehensive and interim surveys had been postponed and salaries had been updated through the use of a wage or a price index or a combination of indices whose change over time paralleled the movement of local salaries. Different modalities in the methodology were used to achieve the goal of reflecting local conditions in the level of salaries in accordance with the Flemming Principle.

9. ICSC saw local salary-survey committees (LSSCs) as essential in the salary-survey process; they maintained their relevance by adjusting to developments in the methodology. As the full details of the revised process had not been finalized and the review of the methodology continued, outlining LSSCs' specific responsibilities in detail was impossible. Nevertheless, ICSC had consistently confirmed that the important roles of the LSSC and other stakeholders would be adapted to incorporate any changes in the process. The working group on the review of the salary-survey methodologies had made the issues identified by stakeholders the basis for its agenda, was systematically reviewing those issues, was developing possible solutions that took account of stakeholders' views and would address every issue identified in its recommendations to ICSC.

10. Once the new methodology was approved, training materials would be developed for and training offered to LSSCs. The ICSC secretariat would train LSSCs at headquarters duty stations, and provide some general training workshops on revised General Service (GS) survey Methodology 1 for those who would be involved in the upcoming surveys. The UN would be responsible for training LSSCs at field duty stations, and conducting regional workshops for duty stations surveyed under Methodology II.

Q&A: child allowance

11. A 50% decrease in child allowance for GS staff that did not apply to all duty stations in the same location (Brindisi, Italy) was a legacy issue. Different scales were operating at that duty station, based on those used in Rome and in Brindisi. While ICSC had established the Rome scale, the UN administered the Brindisi scale and the interim adjustments for both. Accordingly, should further clarification on that matter be required, the UN Secretariat could be contacted for further details as necessary.

Q&A: post adjustment and cost-of-living surveys

12. At its next session in March, ACPAQ would make final recommendations on the methodology for the compilation of the post-adjustment index, covering issues such as the post-adjustment index formula and aggregation procedures, weighting schemes for the index and its components, and procedures and guidelines for data collection and processing. ICSC had already approved a revised system of operational rules for application in the 2021 round of surveys. The review of both the methodology and operational rules had been conducted with the active participation of competent representatives of administrations and staff federations of UN organizations.

13. Cost-of-living surveys were carried out every five years; the ICSC Chair believed that the 2021 round was needed to respond to significant shifts in expenditure patterns and price structures. It was time to refresh the data on both to more accurately reflect the cost of living of staff in various duty stations relative to New York. In the absence of a survey, using 2016 data, which did not reflect the current reality, might not be in the best interest of staff.

14. ICSC had taken a range of measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the surveys. Those included special measures to protect the salaries of international staff, which would become unnecessary when cost-of-living surveys could be conducted again. In relation to new surveys, any mitigation measures would derive from the new system of operational rules, which would also target the current situation related to any impact of COVID-19 on the evolution of macroeconomic conditions on salaries. On WHO's recommendation, the ICSC Chair had approved COVID-19-related danger pay for eligible staff. In addition, the mid-year and annual hardship review of duty stations in the African Region in 2020 took account of the impact of COVID-19 on living and working conditions.

15. ICSC expected that conditions would improve sufficiently over the next few months to permit data collection. It had resumed data collection in November 2020 and had successfully conducted several surveys since then.

16. At its next session, ICSC was expected to approve ACPAQ recommendations on the methodology underpinning the post-adjustment system for the 2021 round of surveys. Then the preparations for the launch of the 2021 round of surveys would begin, and those would include active presurvey consultations with all stakeholders. If circumstances were

favourable, the 2021 baseline survey was expected to be launched in New York at the end of summer 2021, and then the full round would be rolled out to the rest of the headquarters duty stations in September/October. As in the past, ICSC would work with LSSCs of the duty stations concerned at every stage of the survey process.

17. The COVID-19 pandemic had created a range of problems, including budget pressures on Member States. ICSC would continue to do its work in a transparent manner and address the issues raised by the pandemic, as well as seizing opportunities to ensure the future of the international civil service. That could only be achieved through complete collaboration among all stakeholders, including the three staff federations.

HLCM

18. In the first-ever address from HLCM to the Council, the HLCM Vice-Chair appreciated the opportunity to talk to staff representatives of UN organizations, particularly during a period of unprecedented challenges to public health. As a result of the pandemic, most staff had shifted to remote working, a medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) framework had been developed and organizations had made business contingency plans. The pandemic also represented opportunities to build back better, however. Member States would be under immense pressure to drive domestic recovery and expected the usual level of support from the UN. Needing to do more with less, UN staff had devised new ways to work and support Member States and staff federations had played a valuable role. There was an increasing need for long-term psychosocial support for staff, to which staff federations could contribute. The full statement of the HLCM Vice-Chair is available [here](#).

19. HLCM had created a Task Force on the Future of Work before the pandemic had hit, but it had tried to strike a balance between its original task and new needs. The Task Force had three work streams – remote work, agile contracts and enabling technology – and some had advanced faster than others, but staff federations’ full engagement in all was very welcome. While the contractual framework needed a reboot, no concrete proposal was on the table, as discussions were still at a very early stage; resources were not the driving factor; and the process would take some time. Any proposal would keep staff’s interests in mind. The Task Force was doing due diligence on all options; this was a long-term process. The UN needed to remain an attractive employer, and any proposal developed would not affect existing staff.

20. Inclusive, multilateral consultation was essential to prepare properly for the future of the UN system workforce. Managers needed to build team spirit, and the work on the future of the UN system workforce needed to intersect with that on, for example, occupational safety and health, and a harassment-free workplace. The Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Task Force on Sexual Harassment was intended to create a zero-tolerance environment across the UN system. It had developed a range of tools and was using new data to seek the right balance between accountability and trust. In 2021, the Task Force would steer the UN to centre the response on victims/survivors, send out training materials to colleagues around the world and insist on their use, insist on UN organizations' using existing tools against harassment, and consult and work closely on sexual harassment and related issues such as abuse of authority. The Task Force and HLCM needed help from staff federations and members on tackling the cultural issues of organizations that were sometimes at the root of sexual harassment.

Discussion

21. In the ensuing discussion, the FICSA President welcomed FICSA's opportunities for cooperation with ICSC and HLCM, through active participation in their task forces and working groups, particularly on such issues as the contractual framework, sexual harassment and the implementation of the [mental health strategy](#).

22. In view of organizations' duty of care towards their staff, a speaker asked what measures would be taken to help staff in duty stations such as Brussels, Belgium, where salary surveys had not been conducted in some time.

23. The UNISERV President welcomed the offers from ICSC and HLCM of cooperation with all staff federations, particularly on the contractual framework, and offered cooperation in turn in finding a way to help staff in Libya who were experiencing difficulties related to huge fluctuations in exchange rates and inflation.

24. Chief of the Salaries and Allowances Division, ICSC Yuri Orlov said that ICSC had been in touch with the agencies responsible for surveys in the duty stations mentioned, and would supply the latest updates to FICSA in writing. While ICSC worked for the consistent application of the methodology in all duty stations, it was also discussing with counterparts and partners the expansion of the special measures to deal with issues such as those illustrated by the situation in Libya.



CREDENTIALS



25. FICSA General Secretary Evelyn Kortum (WHO/HQ) noted that 28 out of 29 full members were present. WHO/HQ had the proxy for WHO/EMRO. UNRWA was the only member in arrears. The list of participants comprises Annex 12. The FICSA General Secretary also welcomed associate and consultative members, as well as observers and guests from ICC, ITLOS, SKAO, UNICTF, and WMU.



ELECTION OF COUNCIL OFFICERS, ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA



26. As officers for the 74th session, the Council elected David Barrett (WHO/EURO) as Chairperson, and Véronique Allain (SBCD) and Rajesh Mehta (WHO/SEARO), as the first and second vice-chairs, respectively. The Council also approved the appointment of Mary Stewart Burgher as rapporteur, and that of Tatiana Parkhomenko and Lionel Shen (IMO) as its polling officers.

27. Further, the Council confirmed the appointment of Imed Zabaar (IAEA) as Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Development and Nizar Zaher (OSCE) as Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Administrative and Budget Questions.

28. The Council adopted its agenda as presented.



QUESTIONS RELATING TO MEMBERSHIP STATUS IN FICSA



29. The FICSA General Secretary welcomed UNFCU as a new member with consultative status as of July 2020. Two members with consultative status had withdrawn – BIPM and the United Nations Women’s Guild – and ITU had withdrawn as a full member subsequent to their stated intentions at the 2020 Council.



REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR FEBRUARY 2020–JANUARY 2021



30. The FICSA President gave an overview of the achievements of the FICSA Executive Committee as described in its annual report (see [FICSA/C/74/4](#)). The Executive Committee had represented the membership at 17 formal high-level meetings, most often of ICSC and HLCM but also of the UN Joint Staff Pension Board (UNJSPB) and the Fifth Committee, along with numerous informal meetings. Work with HLCM had focused on COVID-19: return to offices, administrative guidelines and staff vaccinations. the Executive Committee had worked with the Human Resources (HR) Network on the future of work, addressing agile contracts, remote working and digital solutions. The Executive Committee had participated in two meetings of the Forum on Occupational Health and Safety (OSH), which had so far had limited results to report. The FICSA President was an active member of the Mental Health Strategy Implementation Board, at which relevant standing committee contributions were raised to ensure that the Board provided guidance on practical implementation by organizations. The Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) was a highly technical body, at which UNISERV had represented FICSA’s interests. The Executive Committee sought a focal

point from the membership to develop capacity on issues related to staff security within FICSA so that it could be able to fully contribute to IASMN deliberations.

31. Interaction with ICSC was central to the Executive Committee's work; it had taken part in the meetings of the working groups on local salary-survey methodologies, review of the post-adjustment operational rules and the mid-year and year-end reviews of field duty stations in the African Region to classify hardship/field duty stations. A good compromise had been reached on the operational rules for post adjustment and would be submitted to ACPAQ in March 2021. FICSA had advocated staff interests in a number of issues addressed by ICSC's 90th session, including special measures for the COVID-19 pandemic (such as danger pay), problems with salary and allowance levels in various duty stations, and the contractual framework for UN staff.

32. FICSA was an observer at meetings of UNJSPB and had delivered a statement on behalf of the three staff federations in 2020. One issue in 2020 was the effort to reduce the size of the Board. The Executive Committee advocated fair, equitable and appropriate representation of all stakeholders, and would keep members informed of developments.

33. The review of the jurisdictional set-up of the UN common system was a time-consuming ongoing issue. While responses from the membership had been limited to FAO, IOM and WHO, FICSA had members on both sides of the argument; nevertheless, in principle, the Executive Committee would like to see status quo maintained.

34. To increase cooperation with its two sister UN staff federations, FICSA had signed a tri-federation agreement with CCISUA and UNISERV in July 2020, which functioned in addition to its existing agreements with each. The aim was to enhance the federations' capacity to represent and defend their members' collective interests, including through joint statements and communications to interlocutors. The arrangement was delicate, however, and depended on the willingness of the federation officers involved.

35. Other agreements included MOUs with FICSA lawyers, which had resulted in the resumption of legal tips of the month on the FICSA website. Those were a great training resource and highlighted key areas for staff representatives. FICSA had a long-running partnership with [UN Globe](#); and UN Globe's active members were invited work with the Executive Committee to raise its profile, as per past practice at FICSA Council. Further, more FICSA members should take advantage of its agreement

with ILO ITC, which enabled them to access excellent training and facilities with a 10% reduction in cost.

36. The discussion of cost-sharing for the FICSA President and General Secretary had been under way for over 25 years. The agreement was ready, and had received legal clearance, but its operationalization had unfortunately stalled. The Executive Committee strongly urged all FICSA members to work with their administrations to implement the agreement, to ensure that any FICSA members could nominate candidates to the positions of President and General Secretary, irrespective of size or financial capacity.

37. Finally, the Executive Committee had through the Secretariat upgraded outreach to members and beyond, primarily through the website and social media such as [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Materials on the website included FICSA [communications](#), [circulars](#) and [monthly newsletter](#). The FICSA Secretariat established recurring meetings every second month to increase consultation with standing committees, including regular consultation to follow up on Council recommendations with the General Secretary. The Executive Committee would further refine this process in 2021, to take the greatest possible advantage from new methods such as virtual meetings, and would work with standing committee chairs and vice-chairs to improve communications

38. In the ensuing discussion, the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Development urged FICSA members to inform themselves of issues and raise them with the Executive Committee, to ensure that it could represent staff's views as fully and accurately as possible. Another speaker agreed with that perspective, and others urged the FICSA Executive Committee to engage further with members, perhaps by reporting quarterly rather than annually, as well as through virtual meetings or other forms of communication. A delegate applauded the Executive Committee's efforts and asked whether, now that remote working was possible for all, the Statutes could be changed to allow to the General Secretary to be based outside Geneva. The General Secretary agreed that remote working was possible, stressed that the current [terms of reference](#) of the General Secretary stipulate that the incumbent should operate from the same duty station as the FICSA Secretariat, which was currently Geneva. Face-to-face contact remained vital, however, especially when events were moving as fast as they had in recent years, owing to the upgrading of the office procedures.

39. An Executive Committee Member for Compensation Issues

emphasized the importance of the jurisdictional set-up of the common system and urged more FICSA members to become involved, to keep in touch with the Executive Committee and to ensure their organizations were consulted. The chair of the Standing Committee on Legal Questions endorsed that view and urged the Executive Committee to be very careful in engaging with that sensitive issue.

40. In reply, the FICSA President said that the location of the General Secretary was for the membership to decide, but also stressed the value of physical meetings in the General Secretary's work and the possibility that the implementation of the cost-sharing agreement could settle that issue. Particularly in view of the Secretariat's reduced size, member participation, communication and constructive criticism were more important than ever. While the Executive Committee was indeed very careful in the discussions of the jurisdictional set-up, little negotiation had actually taken place thus far. The Executive Committee would continue to seek legal advice on this issue, but members' advice was even more valuable. She welcomed opportunities for further communication with members, through increased meetings with head of delegations and any other means available.



FICSA COOPERATION WITH THE OTHER UN STAFF FEDERATIONS



41. The FICSA President reiterated that the tri-federation agreement had institutionalized closer cooperation and led to joint statements when all three were agreed. She asked members to communicate their views on and suggestions for the agreement.

42. A speaker agreed that the effectiveness of the agreement depended on the positive attitude of federation officers, and commended FICSA officers for strengthening relationships with those of the other federations, particularly in view the weight of joint statements. Council took note of the cooperation agreement with the other two UN staff federations.

ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICERS AND REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES FOR 2021-2022

43. The Council Chairperson announced the nominations received (in alphabetical order) for election to the Executive Committee for 2020-2021 (see FICSA/C/74/5/Add. 2). 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 (ORGANISATIONS)	THOSE ELECTED (ORGANISATIONS)
General Secretary	Cosimo Melpignano (UNGSC/UGSS)	Cosimo Melpignano (UNGSC/UGSS)
One Member for Compensation Issues	Line Kaspersen (AP-in-FAO)	Line Kaspersen (AP-in-FAO)
Member without Portfolio	Tracy Tollman (UNFCCC) Christine Tretter (WHO/HQ)	Tracy Tollman (UNFCCC)
Regional Representative for Asia	Rajesh Mehta (WHO/SEARWO)	Rajesh Mehta (WHO/SEARO)
Regional Representative for Europe	Juan José Coy Girón (AP-in-FAO)	Juan José Coy Girón (AP-in-FAO)



APPROVAL OF THE DECISIONS FROM THE REPORTS AND THE ELECTIONS OF CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS OF FICSA STANDING AND AD-HOC COMMITTEES



44. Before taking part in the plenary sessions of the 74th Council, all delegates worked in FICSA's seven standing committees and two ad hoc committees: the standing committees on Legal Questions, Human Resources Management, Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety, Conditions in the Field, General Service Questions, Professional Salaries and Allowances and Staff-Management Relations; and the ad hoc committees on Strategic Development, and Administrative and Budgetary Questions. In addition to meeting individually, the standing committees held three joint sessions on topics related to the future of work.

45. Each committee debated relevant issues on their agendas, made recommendations on those issues for the Council to consider and drafted a report for the Council to consider. Comprising annexes 2-11, these reports list each committee's membership, describe its deliberations on its agenda, give its recommendations and list the officers and core-group membership for 2021.

46. As was customary, a member of each committee presented its report, recommendations and future membership to all delegates in the Council's final plenary session. The Council took note of the committee reports, discussed and amended the recommendations submitted, 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 2021-2022.

Legal Questions

47. The Standing Committee on Legal Questions addressed and made recommendations on a range of topics, including: following up on developments with legal-protection insurance for FICSA members; the review of the jurisdictional set-up of the UN common system; opposing

codes of conduct for staff that deviated significantly from the [UN Code of Conduct for Legal Representatives and Litigants in Person](#); reviewing problems with the implementation of organizational rules on outside activities of staff; and taking a legal perspective on remote work. The last of those issues was the most challenging. In addition, responding to the proposed amendments to the FICSA Financial Rules, the Standing Committee on Legal Questions rejected the deletion of Article 10 on emergency funds, and the Ad Hoc Committee on Budgetary Questions approved those comments during its sessions (see document [FICSA/C/74/A&B/CRP.2](#)). The Standing Committee's full report comprises [Annex 2](#).

Decisions

- **Staff associations should become familiar with the issues at stake and should take note of relevant FICSA communications on the subjects discussed, e.g. FICSA/C/73/D/2 on FICSA Executive Committee's guidelines on neutral appeal instance process within the internal justice system.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should prepare an updated list of organizations and agencies under the jurisdictions of the ILO Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) or the United Nations Dispute Tribunal (UNDT)/the United Nations Administrative Tribunal (UNAT) and send it to staff representatives.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should prepare a letter encouraging FICSA members to ensure that they are consulted by their respective managements on the review of the jurisdictional set-up of the UN common system, and to designate formal focal points to follow up matters relating to the review.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should send a formal letter to all presidents/chairs of member staff associations/unions, encouraging them to secure legal protection insurance through FICSA where possible, and underlining that those FICSA members that signed a contract with Fortuna should be aware of the need to exercise due diligence in controlling ongoing cases, to ensure that no frivolous cases were filed.**
- **Staff associations whose organizations fell under UNAT jurisdiction should insist that staff members have access to full Office of Staff Legal Assistance (OSLA) services, such that OSLA prepares their cases and pleadings for UNAT.**
- **Staff associations should ensure that the [UN Code of Conduct for Legal Representatives and Litigants in Person](#) was used as a basis for**

their organizations' codes of conduct. Should an organization seek to introduce an onerous code of conduct that departed significantly from the UN Code of Conduct, staff associations should consult the Standing Committee on Legal Questions, through the FICSA Secretariat, for assistance in raising objections against it.

- **Staff representatives should be aware of their organizations' policies on outside activities of staff members, ask for clarification on the criteria for the process of timely review and approval of those activities, and insist on transparent and consistent application of those criteria.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should consistently advocate the development of overall administrative guidelines on arrangements for remote working, to cover issues relating to, for example, occupational health and safety, teleworking away from the duty station, changes in the terms and conditions of the employment contract, reimbursement of staff expenditures, insurance and post adjustment.**

Human Resources Management

48. The Standing Committee on Human Resources Management tackled a range of important topics, such as agile contractual modalities and the value of the current contractual framework for the international civil service; the risks and rewards of enabling technologies and the need for a “human in control” principle; and the need for the harmonization of flexible working arrangements across the UN common system. The Standing Committee’s planned work for 2021 included cooperating with the Executive Committee to produce two one-page guides on flexible working arrangements and enabling technologies that would be available on the FICSA website. The Standing Committee’s full report comprises [Annex 3](#).

Decisions

- **FICSA and its member organizations should continue supporting the position that the current contractual framework in the UN common system was fit for purpose when participating in the discussions of both the HLCM Task Force on the Future of Work and ICSC. FICSA and its members should continue to dismiss the idea of the UN adopting any precarious contract modalities.**
- **FICSA leadership should continue discussions on contract modalities with all stakeholders throughout the year and with FICSA**

members at the 75th Council, based on the white paper to be developed by the Executive Committee and the Standing Committee on Human Resources Management, using the Standing Committee’s research into organizations’ use of non-regular personnel.

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should, with the support of the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Management, produce a one-page document with relevant angles for FICSA to use in negotiations with the HR Network and HLCCM on the enabling technologies work stream of the Task Force on the Future of Work.**

Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety

49. The three main topics for the Standing Committee’s discussions were the implementation of the [UN strategy on mental health](#), made even more important by the effects of the pandemic; the governance of the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund, including the current effort to reduce the size of UNJSPB; the need for a survey of UN organizations’ medical insurance plans, in order to determine minimum standards; and the continuing importance of after-service health insurance. A Standing Committee working group planned further to refine the questions proposed for the survey on medical insurance plans. In view of the Council’s decision on the survey below, the working group would continue its work to finalize the survey throughout 2021. The Standing Committee’s full report comprises [Annex 4](#).

Decisions

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should continue its collaborative efforts with UNJSPF and maintain its proactive participation in the meetings of the UNJSPB Participants’ Representatives Group.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should maintain a presence on all relevant committees and engage at all levels in discussions related to the subject of staff’s mental health and well-being.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should continue to follow up with the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund Secretariat to provide training for staff representatives on pension-related issues.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should:**
 - o **encourage staff representatives to join the pension committees of their organizations and to stay informed of developments; and**

- o **invite such staff representatives to attend meetings of the Standing Committee on Social Security/Occupational Health and Safety, which would permit it to report updates and developments to FICSA members.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should launch a survey to determine standard procedures and best practices in place at the UN level to support staff representatives in their negotiations related to their organizations' medical insurance plans.**

Conditions of Service in the Field

50. The Standing Committee on Conditions of Service in the Field tackled four topics: the classification of duty stations by level of hardship, following on the work of the ICSC Tripartite Working Group; the results of the 32nd session of IASMN; the MEDEVAC framework during the COVID-19 pandemic; and the ICSC mobility framework, with emphasis on hardship duty stations. The Standing Committee's full report comprises [Annex 5](#).

Decisions

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should continue its active involvement in all the meetings of ICSC and other stakeholders that are held to classify field duty stations according to their level of hardship. Further, in coordination with the FICSA standing committee chairs and vice-chairs and the regional representatives, the Executive Committee should launch a survey on specific issues related to local living conditions at hardship duty stations, taking care that colleagues based in the field, as well as staff representatives at headquarters, would have access to the survey.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should include questions on local health facilities and services in the survey mentioned above, and provide FICSA members' responses and experience to the ICSC Tripartite Working Group (TWG) on Hardship Classification of Duty Stations, aiming to support an improvement of the assessments of health in questionnaires used in the annual review of hardship classification.**
- **FICSA representatives should raise the issue of minimum standards for the security and accessibility in UN common buildings in all fora, including IASMN, as the opportunity arises.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should work with [UN Globe](#) to identify key issues of concern related to security for lesbian, gay,**

bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (one's sexual or gender identity) and intersex (LGBTQI) staff that might be raised during IASMN meetings.

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should request membership in the MEDEVAC Task Force, and support the establishment of a UN-system-wide communications mechanism to ensure that staff improve staff knowledge of the MEDEVAC process, and to ensure that the MEDEVAC processes are adequately included in and aligned with the hardship-classification framework. This should form an information packages for FICSA members based in the field.**
- **In view of the discussion of the ICSC mobility framework, the FICSA Executive Committee should ascertain through a survey what mobility policies and processes FICSA members' organizations have.**

General Service Questions

51. The Standing Committee on General Service Questions discussed the progress of ICSC's working group on review of salary-survey methodologies for GS and other locally recruited staff; and prepared its input for the joint sessions on remote work, agile contract modalities, and enabling technology (see below), particularly in the light of a study on the implications of digitalization and artificial intelligence for the international civil service. It adopted the recommendations made by the Permanent Technical Committee of the Standing Committee on General Service Questions (PTC/GSQ) on the former. The Standing Committee's full report comprises [Annex 6](#).

Decisions

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should pursue the discontinuation of the use of dual salary scales in case of negative results of the salary survey.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should; continue monitoring developments related to salary surveys globally, survey FICSA members to identify the duty stations lacking a mechanism for interim salary adjustments between surveys, and conduct research and provide technical assistance on putting forward proposals to establish such interim adjustments.**
- **Although all LSSC training had been suspended pending the finalization of the review of the methodologies, FICSA members should**

identify LSSC participants in their organizations and start their training well in advance, at least a year before the date of a salary survey, once the new methodology was approved and the schedule had been made available.

- **As soon as the methodology for salary surveys was finalized, FICSA should update its training materials and organize training sessions according to the new survey schedule.**
- **In view of the impact on staff of digitalization and artificial intelligence (AI), the FICSA Executive Committee should advocate during discussions at high-level fora:**
 - **equitable access to technology for all staff across the UN system, irrespective of grade or location;**
 - **a multidisciplinary approach to this issue by all relevant actors identified by the Executive Committee.**

Professional Salaries and Allowances

52. The Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances focused on decisions made at the 90th session of ICSC, particularly on the gap-closure measure, compliance with ICSC standards for qualification requirements for Professional (P) staff positions, agile contracts and entitlements of staff working remotely. The Standing Committee's full report comprises [Annex 7](#).

Decisions

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should:**
 - (a) **prepare, preferably in a tabular format, a document highlighting the differences between the old and the new operational rules agreed, by the ICSC at its 90th session, once ACPAQ adopted it;**
 - (b) **organize training in the methodology and operational rules for post-adjustment calculation for interested members of the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances and share with them the example simulations available;**
 - (c) **encourage FICSA member organizations to actively participate in and provide input to cost-of-living surveys and related matters.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should participate in the discussions of the ICSC TWG and the HR Network, remain vigilant,**

actively keep the membership informed of the proceedings of ICSC and HLCM on this matter, and seek input from members on any type of proposed contracts that might affect staff benefits.

- **To the extent possible, the FICSA Executive Committee should reject any proposal made by ICSC or HLCM that would negatively affect the conditions of employment and relevant benefits, entitlements and allowances of staff.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should provide information to member organizations on the status of the changes to the education grant proposed by ICSC, as part of its workplan for 2021.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should discuss in detail with affected members in Montréal their specific concerns related to the education grant, with a view to identifying options to raise with the relevant bodies.**

Staff-Management Relations

53. The topics addressed by the Standing Committee included a report on the results of FICSA survey on arrangements for staff associations, the cost-sharing scheme for release of FICSA officers, the state of staff-management relations in various UN organizations, and staff associations' potential to serve as a bridge between staff and management in relation to remote working arrangements and to help their organizations deal with financial issues. It also discussed collaboration with management on policies dealing with whistle-blowing, bullying, abuse of authority and fear of retaliation. The Standing Committee's full report comprises [Annex 8](#).

Decisions

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should send a standard form, created by a working group of members of the Standing Committee on Staff-Management Relations, to member organizations for completion on a recurring/annual basis. The form would: provide feedback on the status of a staff association's arrangements within its organization, monitor developments in staff-management relations (deterioration, stability or improvement), help to identify best practices and provide useful statistics.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should continue to work with the HLCM working group on sharing the costs of securing the release of the staff serving as FICSA's two full-time officers – President and**

General Secretary - and encourage members whose organizations were not participating in the agreement to contact the FICSA Secretariat for more information on how their organizations could become part of that agreement.

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should advocate to HLCM and in other fora the consistent implementation across all UN organizations of the best practice of 60 days accrued leave payable upon separation.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should encourage staff association representatives to be an integral part of their administration's decision-making processes on all alternative/remote working arrangements to ensure the interests of staff are well represented.**
- **The FICSA Secretariat should alert the membership to the need for all staff association representatives to ensure they proactively seek information on the financial status of their organizations, in order to play an active role and be part of any potential solutions.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should collect good practices via a survey developed by the SMR working group on bullying, misconduct, and unethical behaviour.**
- **FICSA member organizations should take advantage of all available training related to bullying and harassment, including that offered through FICSA.**

Joint sessions on the future of work

54. The FICSA standing committees held joint sessions to discuss issues of concern to all, the three work streams of the HLCM Task Force on the Future of Work: remote work, agile contracts and enabling technologies. HLCM had already issued a draft policy on the first of the three. As to contract modalities, the standing committees found that the current framework was still fit for purpose. The full report on the joint sessions comprises [Annex 9](#).

Decisions

- **FICSA members should inform the FICSA Secretariat of developments related to the future of work in their organizations.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should formalize the relationship with the UN International Computing Centre (UNICC).**
- **The FICSA Secretariat should organize virtual "Ask the FICSA**

Expert” sessions on the three work streams of the HLCM Task Force on the Future of the UN System Workforce.

- **The FICSA Executive Committee should propose to HLCM that it develop guidance for the UN common system that is based on the European Social Partners [Framework Agreement on Digitalization](#).**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should continue to raise the importance of the consistent implementation of the [UN strategy on mental health](#) across the common system in all fora.**

Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Development

55. The Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Development reviewed the structural changes in the FICSA Secretariat as a result of the functional review; explored FICSA’s need to call upon the resources in the wider membership, as well as those of the Secretariat; welcomed FICSA’s closer cooperation with its two sister staff federations, CCISUA and UNISERV; and reviewed FICSA communications and the need for stronger engagement by staff in their staff associations/unions. The Ad Hoc Committee’s full report comprises [Annex 10](#).

Decisions

- **As the unprecedented circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic made proposing any changes to FICSA’s budget structure premature, the FICSA Executive Committee should monitor budget performance in 2021 and provide an analysis and recommendations for consideration by the heads of delegations before the 75th FICSA Council.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should survey the membership and use the results to establish a knowledge inventory, which should be updated at least every two years.**
- **The FICSA Executive Committee should establish a working group to analyse the causes of staff members’ lack of engagement with staff associations/unions and to develop a strategy to help motivate staff to become more involved.**

Administrative and Budgetary Questions

56. The full report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions comprises [Annex 11](#).

57. The Ad Hoc Committee considered developments since the 73rd Council; proposed amendments to Articles 2, 9, and 13 of the Financial Rules, as shown in Appendix 2 of Annex 11, in order to complete the implementation of 73rd Council decisions 33–35; addressed the establishment of the FICSA Training Fund, including establishing its [terms of reference and guidelines](#) for the level and use of the Fund and their incorporation into the Financial Rules; and reviewed the financial reports for the year: the audit report for 2019 ([FICSA/C/74/A&B/1](#)), the Treasurer’s report for 2020 ([FICSA/C/74/A&B/2](#)), the report on all funds ([FICSA/C/74/A&B/3](#)) and the report on contributions received ([FICSA/C/74/A&B/5](#)).

58. The Ad Hoc Committee agreed to set up a working group to improve the formatting of the financial statements.

59. The Ad Hoc Committee presented to the Council the proposed budget and the scale of contributions for 2021 (documents [FICSA/C/74/A&B/4](#) and [FICSA/C/74/A&B/6](#); see also Appendix 3 and 4 to Annex 11, respectively). The budget of CHF 431,179 proposed for 2021 showed a reduction of 16% from 2020, owing to the impact of the pandemic and as a result of more efficient use of available resources. The budget for 2021 was exceptionally low, due to COVID-19, and an increase of 20–25% could be expected in 2022, as new norms were adopted.

60. The Ad Hoc Committee also discussed other possible revenue streams for FICSA, in addition to membership dues, including sponsorship and activities.

Decisions

- **The 74th Council renamed the Terminal Indemnity Fund as the Termination Indemnities and Installation Fund.**
- **The 74th Council would write off a total of CHF 34,000 spent on financial support for legal costs, as these funds would not be recoverable (see document [FICSA/C/74/A&B/3](#) for a detailed explanation).**
- **Further to the 73rd FICSA Council’s decision D/34, the 74th Council set up a new Reserve Fund separately, as per the [terms of reference](#) defined, and approved the changes to the financial rules proposed in Appendix 2 to Annex 11.**
- **The Council agreed that FICSA should write off the outstanding CHF 2,300 of outstanding membership dues of UNWG Rome, which had resigned its membership.**

Draft programme and budget 2021-2022 and membership contributions to FICSA for 2021

61. The Council took note of the proposed budget, and adopted the budget shown in Table 2 (see also Appendix 3 to Annex 11) and the scale of contributions (see Appendix 4 to Annex 11).

Table 2. SUMMARY OF FICSA BUDGET FOR 2021-2022

CHAPTER	CONTENT	AMOUNT (CHF)
1	FICSA representation	53,600
2	FICSA Council and the Executive Committee	6,000
3	FICSA administration	371,579
	TOTAL BUDGET	431,179

62. In addition, the Council approved the use of CHF 25,000 to cover the cost of discounts offered for early payment of dues, which was reflected in the budget, and the use of a further CHF 50,000 from the fund balance against the budget proposed for 2021, which would result in membership dues for 2021 being kept at a similar level to 2020.

63. In view of the anticipated increase in membership dues for 2022, The FICSA Executive Committee would meet with heads of delegations on that topic before the 75th Council.



DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT COUNCIL SESSION



64. The General Secretary announced the date and venue for the 75th Council session: 1-4 February 2022 at the IAEA premises in Vienna. Pending further discussions with the FICSA membership, the 75th Council was likely to be a hybrid, combining virtual and face-to-face sessions. Various possibilities were raised for the venues of the 76th and 77th Council sessions, and would be followed up during 2021.



OTHER BUSINESS AND THE CLOSING OF THE SESSION



65. As the Council had no further business, the FICSA President thanked the General Secretary, the members of the Executive Committee, and the Secretariat for their work, including efforts to prepare for the session; the Chairperson for his hard work; and the delegates for all their efforts. In particular, she thanked the outgoing General Secretary for her considerable contribution to FICSA's work, as well as to the outgoing Member for Compensation Issues and Member without Portfolio. Special thanks were owed to the officers and members of the standing and ad hoc committees for adapting to work in virtual meetings.

66. The FICSA General Secretary extended her thanks to all for their cooperation and contributions, including the FICSA interns, and welcomed the new General Secretary and the Executive Committee members. She suggested, for example, that standing committee chairs should meet with officers and members between Council sessions.

67. The Chairperson thanked the Council members for their contributions to the success of the session. and closed the 74th session of the FICSA Council.



ANNEXES



[Annex 1. Plenary Programme for the 74th FICSA Council](#)

[Annex 2. Report of the Standing Committee on Legal Questions](#)

[Annex 3. Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Management](#)

[Annex 4. Report of the Standing Committee on Social Security/OHS](#)

[Annex 5. Report of the Standing Committee on Field Issues](#)

[Annex 6. Report of the Standing Committee on General Service Questions](#)

[Annex 7. Report of the Standing Committee on Professional Salaries and Allowances](#)

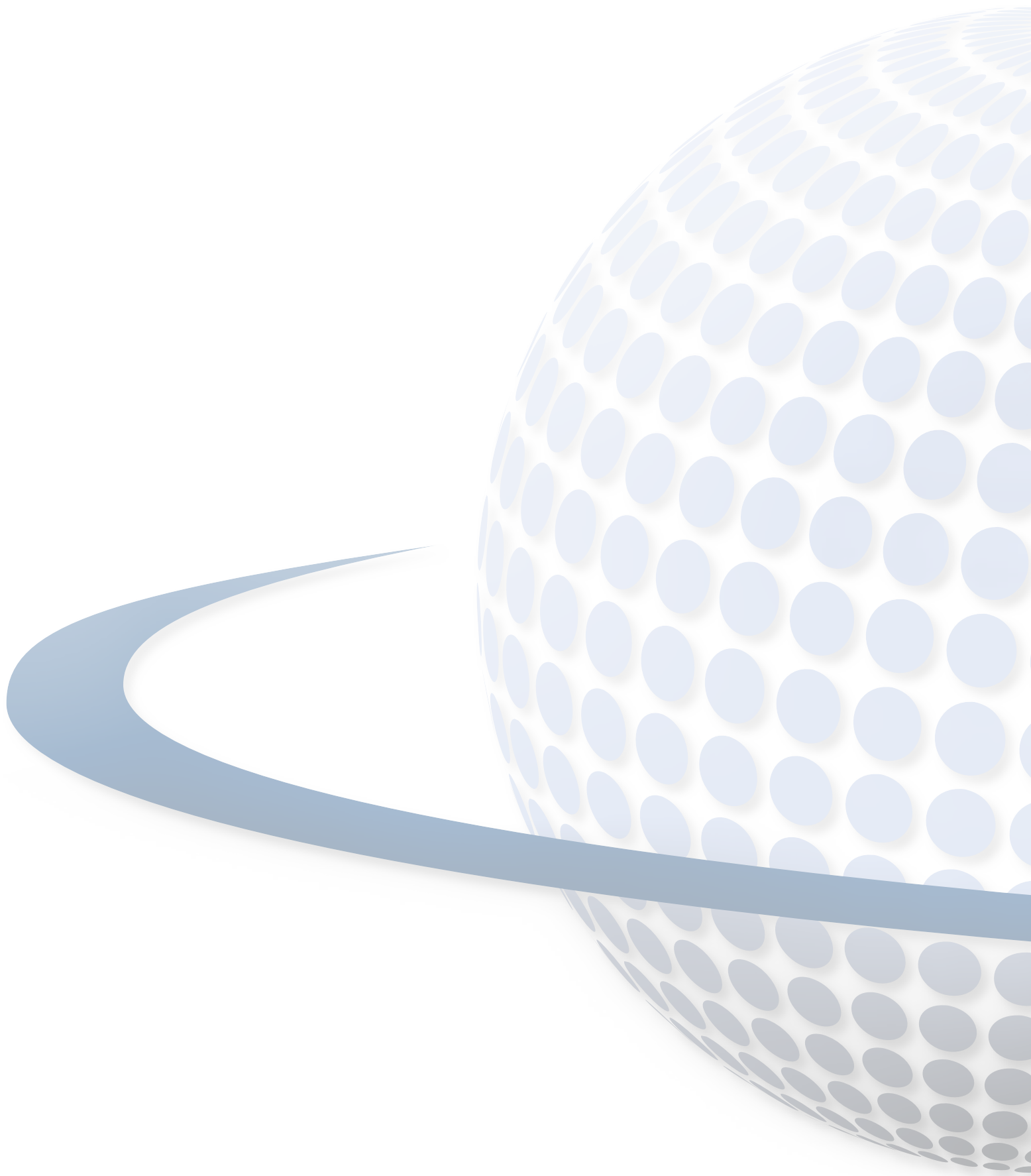
[Annex. 8. Report of the Standing Committee on Staff-Management](#)

[Annex 9. Report of the joint standing committee sessions on the future of work](#)

[Annex 10. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Development](#)

[Annex 11. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on A&B](#)

[Annex 12. Council Participants](#)





Federation of International
Civil Servants' Associations