

FICSA CIRCULAR



FICSA/CIRC/1162
Ref: offorg/hlcm

Geneva, 10 April 2014

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: Brett Fitzgerald, General Secretary

**STATEMENT BY
THE FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS' ASSOCIATIONS (FICSA)
AT THE 27TH SESSION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT (HLCM)**

(UNESCO Office in Venice, 3 April 2014)

Mr. Chair, Members and Colleagues of the High-Level Committee on Management,

Having been informed by the HLCM Secretary that, in accordance with the decision taken last year, the dialogue between the HLCM and the staff federations will take place through interventions on the substantive items, FICSA would like to note, with appreciation, this new form of consultation.

FICSA looks forward to sharing its views with the HLCM during today's discussions on items which are of utmost importance to the staff.

Members of the HLCM are no doubt aware that one of the major challenges for both the organizations and staff is the current review of the compensation package, an ICSC led exercise. Representatives of FICSA are fully engaged in the three ICSC working groups created for this purpose, and have noted through the discussions in these groups the interconnection between, and relevancy of, the many elements which comprise the UN system compensation package. Endeavors to delink any of the elements could have serious ramifications on this system which was constructed in the way a house is built, one building block upon another. The removal of one block can create instability in the entire structure of the house.

FICSA is fully aware that certain actions could also have repercussions on staff morale and motivation which would be counter-productive to the organizations' objectives of enhancing efficiency.

We were pleased to hear, during the latest session of the ICSC, participants stress the importance of maintaining the independence of the international civil service.

Within the context of the ICSC's review of the compensation package, the issue of staff mobility remains under discussion. FICSA understands the need of global organizations to be able to deploy staff where needed, and we ask the cost the organizations would be prepared to pay in order to fully achieve this objective, bearing in mind that mobility also frequently implies family members of the affected staff. In this respect, we would request that this issue be treated within the wider framework of best practices and labor standards.

Some of the other matters which were already raised by FICSA last year at the HLCM and which continue to preoccupy staff are: 1) the lack of a career development plan which would provide equal opportunities to staff while taking into account the need for diversity and gender balance; 2) the frequently repeated call to do more with less; 3) the increasing use of non-staff contracts; and 4) the lack of succession planning.

In reviewing the briefing note relative to the establishment of WHO's Global Service Centre, we noted that 14 per cent of the 201 staff are National Professional Officers. This raises a concern with regard to the required independence of the international civil service.

FICSA welcomes the briefing note provided by UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) which clearly describes the challenges confronting UN staff who are working in conflict zones. As UN security systems have been reoriented from a risk-avoidance to a risk-management approach designed to enable the continued delivery of vital UN programmes, and with operations being guided by the "How-to-stay" approach, UN staff working in these zones are being subjected to increased attacks. Crisis situations which used to be isolated events are now becoming more frequent global attacks which sometimes occur simultaneously. The loss of life or limb of these UN staff is a very real possibility. As long as the "How-to-stay" approach remains in place, FICSA fully endorses the position of UNDSS which calls for improved policies, operational tools, administrative procedures and sufficient funding mechanisms, all of which would allow for the UN to meet its duty of care for its staff.

FICSA is also deeply concerned about the use of private security services and the outsourcing of numerous activities in an apparent effort to achieve financial savings. However, short-term savings should not take priority over professional and well-trained security staff.

We thank you for providing FICSA with this opportunity to address the HLCM with some of the concerns raised by the staff we represent, and we look forward to continued dialogue not only with the HLCM, but also with the ICSC, the HR Network and the UN Pension Board.
