



Federation of International
Civil Servants' Associations

CIRCULAR

FICSA/CIRC/1354

Ref: Offorg/ICSC

Geneva, 23 March 2022

OPENING STATEMENT

**DELIVERED BY
THE FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS' ASSOCIATIONS (FICSA)
TO THE 93RD SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (ICSC)
(New York, 21 March 2022)**

Submitted by Cosimo Melpignano, FICSA General Secretary on 21 March 2022

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: Cosimo Melpignano, FICSA General Secretary

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Commission and Distinguished Colleagues,

The FICSA delegation looks forward to working with all members of the Commission over the coming two weeks. We take this opportunity to congratulate Commissioner Winid on his appointment as Vice-Chairman and look forward to working with him in this capacity. FICSA also welcomes Commissioner Flogaitis, Commissioner Misako and Commissioner Olney and congratulates them on their recent appointment. We also congratulate Commissioner Reynaga on her re-appointment and Commissioner Mounts on his re-election. It is a pleasure to see the concrete steps towards gender parity on the Commission that are being made and we look forward to a time when this becomes such a normal occurrence that we won't even need to make a specific mention of it.

FICSA welcomes the comments made by the USG, Ms. Pollard, on behalf of the Secretary General on the most important resource we have, the UN staff, and appreciates the collegial

working relationship and respect shown by you Mr. Chair, the members of the Commission and the Organizations. From our side, FICSA will continue to maintain a constructive and healthy dialogue with the Commission in an atmosphere characterized by mutual trust and count on a collaborative relationship to address issues that are of profound concern to staff.

We would also like to thank the entire staff body of the ICSC Secretariat for their work in preparation of this session and in providing technical and logistical support to the various working groups over the past months. In the heat of discussion there may be times when we forget to make a point of thanking them for their work, so we would like to note our appreciation at the outset.

As we gather today in hybrid session, it is a relief to feel that the cloud of the global COVID pandemic seems to be finally lifting. However, we call on all members of the Commission to keep in mind during our discussions the effect the last two plus years have had on the staff of our common system, particularly the effects on mental health and general wellbeing, as we have often mentioned.

Of course, as one crisis comes towards an end another raises its head. Global crises come and go, but UN staff continue to work in extreme and sometimes dangerous situations to ensure the delivery of the various important mandates of our organizations to the people we serve the world over. We, in FICSA, pay our respects to all those affected by the numerous ongoing conflicts and humanitarian crises, in particular our thoughts are with our UN colleagues, and their dependents, that are caught up in conflicts while in the line of duty.

Mr Chair, with your permission, FICSA will make interventions as necessary on each of the specific agenda items up for discussion during the coming days. Before starting on the programme of work, we would like to offer some general observations on the documents before us.

With regard to document R.2, on the resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its 76th session, we note with appreciation the GAs approval of the ICSC's recommendations regarding:

- i) adjustment to the salary scale for staff in the Professional and higher categories.
- ii) ii) adjustment to the education grant sliding scale upward by 14 percent and increase of the boarding lump sum to \$5,300 for implementation from the academic year in progress on 1 January 2022.
- iii) and iii) continuation of the pilot in category E duty stations not designated as non-family, as well as a pilot for granting \$14,000 annually for eligible staff members in category D duty stations not designated as non-family through to 31 Dec 2024.

These are good examples of our collective achievements and constructive dialogue. While approving these requests, the UNGA also requested the Commission to report in 2022 on the impact of the adjustment of the base floor salary on post resources, including separation payments, post adjustment and pension contributions. It is understandable that member states want to ensure oversight on the cost implications of all decisions, particularly in the context of the current economic climate. However, we hope that our member states will bear

in mind that there is a cost to doing business and nobody can reasonably expect a zero growth in staff costs, anywhere in the world, when the cost of living is rising dramatically for us all.

In addition, FICSA notes that as the Commission has concluded its comprehensive review of the compensation package that required a huge amount of work by organizations to adapt and implement not to mention the impact on staff, the General Assembly requested the ICSC to maintain a comprehensive oversight of the UN Common System compensation package, and to undertake a comprehensive assessment and review of the compensation package on a five-year cycle.

FICSA will continue to represent the views of staff on this important issue and looks forward to contributing to the development of a terms of reference for the review with the aim to ensure that changes to the compensation package would support the delivery of the organizations' mandates while remaining competitive, fair and equitable, **transparent**, simple in design, easy to administer and easily understood by staff and stakeholders, reward excellence and manage underperformance, as well as **being grounded in the principles of Article 101 of the UN Charter related to the independence of the international civil service** and the need for the organizations to secure staff with the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity.

FICSA will also continue to reiterate our position that cost efficiency should be achieved through comprehensive reviews of ways of working that ensure the independence of the international civil service, as per the UN Charter, which may not be achieved through a continuous, ongoing cycle of resource-intensive reviews of the compensation package.

FICSA supports the conclusions of the WG on the review of the framework for contractual arrangements which states that the current ICSC Framework for Contractual Arrangements are adequate and provide sufficient flexibility for the organizations. We also note that the intense discussions during the working group brought realization of the fact that perhaps the real issue of concern here is the lack of core funding, which FICSA acknowledges is outside the mandate of the Commission. However, we welcome any effort by the Commission to bring this to the attention of the member states. We look forward to participating in tomorrow's discussion on that topic.

Finally, FICSA would like to commend the work of the working group on GS salary survey methodologies which is presented in document 93/R.10. In particular, during the last meeting in Bonn, there were considerable efforts by all stakeholders to deliver a process for piloting the use of external data which takes the views of all stakeholders into account.

Thank you for your attention and we wish us all every success in our deliberations in the days to come.

Note: all members would be able to review the ICSC annual report once it is published at <https://icsc.un.org/Home/Library/AnnualRep> in due time.