



Federation of International  
Civil Servants' Associations

# CIRCULAR

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## OPENING STATEMENT

**DELIVERED BY THE PRESIDENT OF  
THE FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS' ASSOCIATIONS (FICSA)  
TO THE 96TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (ICSC)  
(ICAO, 10 July 2023)**

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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. Chairperson, Distinguished Members of the ICSC, Colleagues,

FICSA would like to thank Mr. Larbi Djacta, ICSC Chair for his opening statement. We also thank The Chair, Vice Chair and Executive Secretary for enabling a collegial working environment between the Secretariat and FICSA. Our thanks also go the entire staff body of the ICSC Secretariat for their work in preparing for this session and for their support to the work of the Commission throughout the year.

FICSA would like to express our thanks to our host ICAO and in particular to the Secretary General of ICAO, Mr. Salazar, for his statement this morning in his capacity as the most senior UN official here in Montréal. I think many of us saw the importance of the work of ICAO as we experienced climate related issues with flights over the weekend – we thank you for your work. We are pleased to hear from our ICAO SA colleagues that the implementation of the new parental leave policy has just been agreed to by the ICAO governing body with an effective date of 1 January 2023. Thank you on behalf of ICAO staff and for the good example to other organizations who have not yet made the decision to implement as per the ICSC recommendation, supported by the General Assembly.

FICSA is very proud of the fact that the ICAO staff association was a founding member of FICSA in 1952, and we are honored to have as part of the FICSA delegation members of the ICAO staff association along with members of the SCBD staff association, also long-standing members of our federation. I would like to thank them for the trust they have placed in their Federation as we endeavor to adequately represent the voices of staff here in Montréal along with the those of the thousands of UN common system staff represented by FICSA member staff associations and unions.

Those individuals, along with the thousands of others represented by our sister federations are the reason we are here.

Distinguished Commissioners, I know that you do not need to be reminded of the enormous responsibility you bear over next two weeks as you reflect on options that will affect the lives of over 100,000 currently serving UN staff and their dependents. We heard during the last session from the President of the General Assembly, the Chef de Cabinet of the UN Secretariat, and the ICSC Chair about the severe challenges of the last three years. The ongoing state of global financial and political permacrisis that we have been experiencing, has resulted in the consistent lack of adequate financial resources to our organizations. This not only has an impact on programme implementation, it also incrementally adds to the ever-increasing pressure on staff which results in a direct impact on their mental health and wellbeing – even if you don't see the human cost, you must acknowledge at the very least the financial cost in loss of productivity and days lost to long-term sick leave. motivation and trust in the system.

As referenced by both the ICSC Chair, and the Assistant Secretary-General, Ms. Lopez, on behalf of the CEB, the review of the compensation package this by Commission is the most important item before this Commission not just in the next two weeks, but over the next two years.

The Commission has been requested to assess, a mere five years after the end of the last review, if the current salaries, benefits and entitlements continue to be fit for purpose and will attract the next generation of international civil servants. While FICSA fully agrees that the attraction of the next generation of international civil servants is an imperative to ensure the sustainability of the International Civil Service for generations to come. However, this should never be at the expense of the retention of currently serving staff who continue to perceive every meeting of the ICSC as a threat to their income and benefits, despite their many years of loyal service, and in many cases sacrifices, to deliver on the mandates of the organizations of the UN Common System. FICSA looks forward to hearing during the upcoming session how the ICSC will ensure that those fears are addressed and how they will work to re-build staff understanding of and trust in this system. The review of the compensation package and the consultation process for the all-staff survey present excellent opportunities in this regard. From our side, FICSA gearing up its activities, committees, and resources to actively participate in the review. We also continue to reiterate our position that cost efficiency could be achieved through a parallel comprehensive reviews on ways of working, with the review of the compensation package focused on stability, transparency and predictability to ensure the continued independence of the international civil service which remains fit for purpose to serve its mandate.

As already referenced a few times this morning, our organizations are continuing to receive increasing pressure to deliver on their mandates with less and less resources. Even when those resources are provided, they are increasingly earmarked by donors. The pressure then falls on diminishing numbers of staff to deliver on bigger and more ambitious mandates. While staff have repeatedly demonstrated that they are dedicated to the principles enshrined by the UN Charter, they cannot continue to deliver

at their best while distracted by lack of job security, downsizing, realignment, ever present cost cutting measures and constantly being asked to do more with less. Those are exactly the areas that the WHO / ILO guidelines on Mental Health at work have identified as risks to staff health and wellbeing. High-level statements about support to mental health and wellbeing in the workforce are all very well and good, but our staff need to know that they are not just empty promises. The ICSC must grasp this opportunity to demonstrate that those high-level statements are being implemented in a holistic approach both at all steps of the review of the comp package, as well as when considering the recommendations to the General Assembly on all the items under consideration during the next two weeks.

As we will be going into all the issues during the session on each of the agenda items, I will not go into these details at this juncture and look forward to more in-depth discussions at the appropriate times over the next two weeks. I will just note that post adjustment, hardship classification, mobility incentive, dependency allowance and all the intricate methodologies behind them are issues which UN staff members follow-closely as they are the ones that have the most immediate effect on them and their dependents. I would make a plea for due consideration to be given to the potential impact of those issues and the commission allows adequate time to take genuinely informed decisions with consideration the principles of fairness, equity, and equal pay for work of equal value. We would like to reassure the Commission of FICSA's full involvement therein, as always.

Mr Chair, Distinguished Commissioners, I wish you, and indeed all of us, the very best of luck in our endeavors over the next two weeks.

Thank you for your attention.

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