



Statement by Ms. Paulina Analena, President of the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System - CCISUA.

26 Nov. 2012

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates, Colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of our Federation, the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA), made up of 17 Staff Unions and Associations throughout the world, and representing almost 60,000 members

Let me first underline that CCISUA - agrees with the many statements, including by the Secretary-General, that the staff of the United Nations constitute the organization's most valuable and important asset.

Because the UN organizations are carrying out the work decided by you, Member States, and their staff are entrusted to deliver those decisions, no matter the challenges they face (sometimes even to their own security and safety), it is incumbent upon all of us - Member States, Administration and staff representatives - to ensure that the United Nations system continues to attract and retain the best, the brightest and the most dedicated of the world's citizens, to manage the critical and complex tasks you have given us. Particularly in times of crisis, the Common System and its tried and true methodologies constitute the best instruments to secure the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity to deliver on the programs you are demanding from us.

The United Nations Common System is designed to ensure consistency in the conditions of employment throughout the system, and to promote coherence and equality; it can only do so if its methodologies are respected. The common system promotes efficiency and harmony, and allows individual organizations to focus on the delivery end of the work, rather than on the initial administrative steps.

Therefore I would like to seize this opportunity to reaffirm that we continue to believe in and support the technical role played by the International Civil Service Commission - ICSC, which can only be fully achieved if the Commission retains its independence to apply agreed methodologies and to adjust, in consultation with the management and staff of the UN system, as required to attract and retain the high-quality staff to address grave international challenges identified by the world's governments.

As I mentioned before, the Organization must attract and retain highly qualified staff and,

with that aim, the conditions of service must be competitive worldwide, taking into account the unique role of the United Nations.

The Noblemaire principle is a useful tool to this end, but we note with consternation that a technical principle such as that may be set aside to address short-term political considerations.

We are very concerned that the United Nations staff members, who come from the very Member States who set the UN's agenda, and who are serving at UN Headquarters in New York, are yet to have their post adjustment multiplier, raised based on technical methodology from 1 August 2012, reflected in their compensation.

The financial implications are small; moreover, you have received experts' reports that the UN is not in a financial crisis. Steps that erode the very core of the UN's work by negatively affecting and demoralizing its most important resource (the staff), can damage agreed methodologies and cause long-lasting disruptions to achieving your work plan for the UN organizations.

Regarding the corrigendum 1 of A/67/30, comparing the average net remuneration of the UN officials and the US officials in Washington, D.C., we simply ask that this be read in the context of the work that UN officials are asked to undertake as they move about the world to face difficult and dangerous challenges.

The decisions that you make these days will affect all UN staff and their choices about whether to take on international careers and to sacrifice personal and family concerns. The agreed methodology for UN professional salaries needs to be safeguarded by you and your decisions this year.

We look to you with hope and ask that this sad and unfair situation be corrected on 1 January 2013, and that there never again be political considerations that influence decisions by a solid technical body such as the ICSC. Staff members of this organization come to work every day, sometimes putting their lives at risk, to fulfill the mandates agreed by you, Member States. We ask only that we receive a just treatment - no more, no less.

Mr. Chairman,

We had a very busy year as far as matters related to the UN Common System go and we would like to seize this opportunity to highlight a few of those items.

CCISUA looks forward to the time when systems will be in place to allow staff to move easily through a UN career that includes more than one agency, and allows them to receive recognition of their skills and career advances received in new learning environments, should they want to return to a home agency or even to yet another new learning environment in another agency. To achieve the Secretary-General's goals of a flexible workforce, there should be proper procedures for staff to retain promotions related to their experience gained from exposure to work in another UN organization, and recognition of experience gained.

CCISUA notes the UN Joint Pension Fund Board's readiness to raise the Normal Retirement Age for new participants of the Fund to 65 years of age with effect no later than January 2014. This is a sound recommendation to ensure the health of the fund and is in keeping with changes in the world's workforce as people live longer and healthier and can be

productive for a longer period of time. It is also in keeping with the shifts in workplace policies worldwide.

We are pleased with the decision by the ICSC to support the Pension Board's recommendation and to ask for an increase in the Mandatory Age of Separation for new staff. We further advocate that it is time to extend the increase in the Mandatory Age of Separation as an option for existing staff as well, both to further the health of the pension fund, and to ensure equity and to recognize the world's shifting demographics.

We stand ready to work with the ICSC Secretariat, organizations and fellow staff representatives on a strategic review of the implications of applying the increased mandatory age to current staff members while maintaining their normal retirement age. We expect that this will provide a boost in morale and ensure productivity from experienced UN staffers, while contributing to the health of the Fund and the organizations themselves.

Staff members in principle support an increase in the mandatory age of retirement, but without prejudice to the acquired rights of those who are currently in the system to retire with full benefits at their current mandatory retirement age of 60 or 62.

An increase in the mandatory age of retirement for all staff on an equivalent basis, without discretionary decisions by organizations, would place the UN in a situation more similar to national government services, and would support all staff (in particular professional staff), who often join the UN later in their careers and may need additional years of service to attain a sufficient level of benefits. Due attention should be given, though, to staff members who perform tasks that involve the constant carrying of weight or who are constantly exposed to the elements - Security Staff for instance, who may require a specific retirement scheme.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

In conclusion, we again reaffirm our support for the ICSC and the technical role it plays and hope that their independence is maintained. We look up to you with hope to agree to have the post adjustment multiplier, for our colleagues in New York raised on the basis of technical methodology from 1 August 2012, reflected in their compensation.

I thank you for your kind attention.