



**STATEMENT BY
THE FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS' ASSOCIATIONS (FICSA)
TO THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AT ITS 74th SESSION**

**AGENDA ITEM 142: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM
(New York, 25 October 2019)**

Delivered by the President of FICSA, Mr. Brett Fitzgerald

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Members of the Fifth Committee,

I have the honor to address you today on behalf of the thousands of international civil servants whose staff associations and unions are members of FICSA, a membership primarily composed of 29 staff associations and unions from specialized agencies adhering to the common system and a further 15 from institutes, treaties and conventions directly linked to the UN and common system scales and allowances.

We therefore look to the ICSC as the main body entrusted with the responsibility of regulating the conditions of service of the common system. In so doing, staff also expect the ICSC and this esteemed body to adhere to the rule of law by ensuring the separation of powers between the legislative and the judiciary and by respecting judgments delivered by the Tribunals having jurisdiction over the respective organizations within the common system. To do any less would fail to serve as an example of the moral values and principles which the organizations of the common system promote and would leave no other alternative but for staff to turn to the national courts for the resolution of arbitrary decisions.

While considering the matters of the common system, we trust that you will consistently keep in mind the purposes for which the system was created, including the need to avoid discrepancies in conditions of employment, to prevent competition, and to ensure equity and fairness by avoiding situations in which staff working side by side have different conditions of service. The system was established to remove the barriers between organizations and bring them up to the same standards to facilitate mobility within the system and career development. Failing to do so, would jeopardize the “raison d’être” of the ICSC.

As we turn to the work of the ICSC for the year 2019, and the recommendations and decisions emanating therefrom, FICSA would firstly like to report that staff were disappointed to learn last year that the General Assembly had not approved the

Commission's proposals regarding the establishment of an end-of-service grant and the level of the children's and secondary dependant's allowances.

With this in mind, we note that the financial implications of the decisions and recommendations of the ICSC this year are relatively minimal and should be viewed within the context of significant savings already made elsewhere, for example the earlier review of the total compensation package.

FICSA and the expert statisticians have been actively involved in the ICSC's review of the post adjustment methodology and its operational rules, at which time I personally understood that the margin of error when conducting cost-of-living exercises can be far greater than the 5% gap closure measure which the Commission had eliminated, then later reintroduced but at only 3% without any statistical, mathematical, methodological or other explanation as noted in ILOAT judgment number 4135. FICSA strongly believes that had the Commission maintained the 5% gap closure measure in line with the purpose for which it was initially created, we all could have avoided the expenditure of an enormous amount of time and resources as well as the strain in relations. FICSA will continue to request that the gap closure be reinstated at 5%, the percentage which had been in place for many years to protect staff salaries against sharp decreases as the result of a single negative cost-of-living survey.

Allow me to close with a reflection on the foresight of the former League of Nations which saw the need to create a "career" non-political international civil service in order to service its secretariat. As staff of the UN our duties are not national, but international, and our loyalty is to the UN and the people it serves. People's expectations of the UN are great, and staff are doing their utmost to meet those expectations while, at the same time, the UN Secretary-General is urging Member States to pay their contributions and financial obligations to the UN on time and in full. Please allow us, the staff, to join that call so that we can live up to the people's expectations.

I thank you for your attention.
