



## **OPENING STATEMENT BY CCISUA AT THE ICSC'S 89th SESSION**

Vienna, 29 July 2019

Mr. Chair, Commissioners, Colleagues,

I am honoured to speak to you today on behalf of the CCISUA staff federation.

As we speak today, allow us to join you in expressing our condolences for the passing away of Director-General Amano.

Mr. Chair, the ICSC has a crucial role to play in ensuring that the UN Common System is able to offer a unified and competitive compensation package. And allow me Mr. Chair to quote your wise words following your election, where you said: "After a decade of austerity, it is important that organizations are able to enhance staff satisfaction and morale and maintain their capacity of engagement and commitment".

You rightly recognized the feelings of staff, who while being asked to work harder and serve in more dangerous locations, also witnessed steady cuts to their compensation and conditions of service.

But it isn't just staff. Many organizations have also voiced their concerns at their inability to provide the kind of pay and benefits they think will best serve the kind of common system envisaged by the Secretary-General in his reform agenda.

And all this at a time when we must all work together to deliver on the vision of Agenda 2030.

Mr. Chair, you brought our attention to the recent judgements of the ILO AT. These judgements rightfully don't question the mandate of the ICSC awarded by the General Assembly, nor its important role to establish post adjustment rates and other conditions of service. However, they do challenge the automaticity with which organizations were once expected to implement the Commission's decisions, faced as these organizations are now with the threat of legal challenge.

And this has dangerous implications for the common system that we hold dear.

Already we have witnessed a parting of ways in Geneva with specialized agencies establishing their own rates of post adjustment, independently of the ICSC, thus undermining the fundamental principle of equal pay for equal work.

As cost of living surveys are implemented in other duty stations and some with negative results, particularly in the field, we could witness the ILOAT being petitioned to act on precedent and annul those as well. With the same precedent, reclassification of duty stations

may also be challenged. And as matters diverge, some agencies may find they can better attract staff to the field by providing field benefits that are more generous than at the UN.

In time, specialized agencies may unfortunately turn their temporary arrangement for establishing post adjustment in Geneva into a permanent secretariat that runs in parallel to the ICSC and makes determinations on broad swathes of compensation across all duty stations, leading to unhealthy competition.

From a federation perspective, we do not favour such an end to the common system and we will fight hard to prevent it from dying. But neither should we ignore the new reality in which specialized agencies now find themselves, caught as they are between the ICSC and the very real threat of legal action for ignoring their duty of care towards their staff. In all this we must therefore find a way to ensure convergence rather than divergence. The dual rates of post adjustment in Geneva are the thin end of a dangerous wedge. The longer that gap stays open, the worse things will become across the system.

With the hands of agencies tied by the courts, we must all find a way to come closer together to strengthen our consensus-building under the process begun under your leadership and fully implement the fundamental principle of equal pay for equal work across the UN system for all staff categories, and ensuring compensation is foreseeable, stable and transparent.

Mr. Chair. Over the next two weeks we will be considering some very important issues that affect the ability of organizations to attract staff, enable them to be mobile and provide an equal platform regardless of family status or gender. Under your leadership, the Commission has set itself the noble task of bringing harmony to the Common system. As we deliberate on the shores of this beautiful blue Danube, we must now decide how, as the Commission, staff and organizations, the orchestra that is the common system, can and must continue to waltz in tune.

Thank you Mr. Chair.