



Coordinating Committee for  
International Staff Unions and Associations

# Report of the CCISUA General Assembly Geneva, 17-20 May 2022





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## **I. CCISUA GA: Tuesday 17 May 2022**

### **1. Election of the Presiding Officer and rapporteur**

Following the usual practice, the CCISUA members elected a representative from the hosting union, Ian Richards, as Presiding Officer of the General Assembly. Brad Smith from the same hosting union was appointed as rapporteur.

### **2. Adoption of the agenda**

The General Assembly adopted its agenda as reflected below.

### **3. Organizational matters**

The President reminded the members that resolutions would normally be adopted on the last day of the GA and would relate to priority substantive issues that would be discussed during the General Assembly. The President requested volunteers to form a drafting committee to that effect.

### **4. Opening by CCISUA President and UNOG Director-General, Ms. Tatiana Valovaya**

The President gave a welcoming statement noting this year marked the 40th anniversary of the federation and the importance of its work for staff, especially those serving in the field.

The Director-General (DG) of UNOG shared welcoming remarks with the membership, congratulating the federation on its anniversary and commending its work on protecting staff. She highlighted the importance for the UN to provide a good example of healthy working relations despite the challenges present, notably referring to gender equality and racism where recent progress had been achieved. The DG noted the difficult Covid-19 period and its uncertainties, reminding of the importance to ensure the safety and security of staff as well as business continuity and mandate delivery. She shared personal experiences on the nature and importance of the independence of the international civil service.

The President thanked the DG for her presence and reaffirmed the federation's confidence that she as a senior manager will be fighting job precarity at the UN.

The membership noted that the UN Secretary-General (SG) was asked twice to address the CCISUA General Assembly, but no reply was received from the SG's office. Concerns were raised as to the SG's interest in staff-management relations.

### **5. Report of the President**

The President reported to the membership on the federation's work for the past year, indicating that the main issues would be covered separately as individual agenda items. She thanked all the members of the CCISUA Bureau, noting the past year showed very good collaboration and support to the federation's work. Minutes of Bureau meetings had been shared with the membership throughout the year as well as reports on missions and meetings attended.

Items on which the President reported, included:

- Representation of the federation at the 92<sup>nd</sup> and 93<sup>rd</sup> ICSC sessions and HLCM meetings.
- Participation in the ICSC working groups on general service salary survey methodologies on parental leave and on contractual arrangements.
- Staff survey on the compensation package.
- Petition against outsourcing of the fixed-income portfolio of Pension Fund.



- The review of the jurisdictional set up.
- The federation's budget.
- New website for the federation.

A discussion ensued noting the following salient points:

- The success of CCISUA to oppose the attempts to adopt a new contractual framework which would lead to more precarious contracts.
- Concerning the compensation package review for 2025, the request for review emanated from the UN General Assembly where the Member States asked that such a review be conducted on a regular basis every 5 years.

## 6. Amendment of the statutes

A number of amendments were presented to the membership (see annex) as per the statutory procedure. The number of unions present to vote was identified as 12 and the minimum required number of favorable votes for the passing of an amendment was 8 (two-thirds majority) as per Article 57. The members discussed the context and merits before proceeding to vote on each amendment separately.

A procedural vote was carried beforehand on the interpretation of Article 57, on whether or not the members were allowed to make modifications to the proposed amendments during the debate at the General Assembly. With 7 votes out of 12 in favour of a strict interpretation, thus reaching the required simple majority as per Article 18, it was decided to interpret Article 57 as not allowing to make modifications to the amendments presented.

<b><i>Amendment under consideration</i></b>	<b><i>Votes in favour</i></b>	<b><i>Result</i></b>
<i>Article 13</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>The amendment was not adopted</i>
<i>Article 19</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>The amendment was adopted</i>
<i>Article 20</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>The amendment was adopted</i>
<i>Article 24bis (new Article 25)</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>The amendment was adopted</i>
<i>Article 36</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>The amendment was adopted</i>

## 7. Explanation of the CCISUA election process

The membership was reminded that the election of Bureau members would take place on the last day of the General Assembly, as well as the statutory requirements for nominations. Brad Smith from UNOG and Messkir Lemma from ECA were appointed as polling officers.

## 8. ICSC matters: Cost-of-living (COL) surveys

The President recalled her report on the discussions during the 93rd ICSC session; the Commission had completed all baseline COL surveys in all duty stations, and it was currently working on the results. It was recalled that CCISUA had warned against any COL being conducted during the pandemic. It was noted that two independent experts would be working with ICSC on reviewing those results. ACPAQ was set to conduct a final review by its June session and submit recommendations to the ICSC 94th session in July. It was still too early to enter into debate on the results.

## 9. ICSC matters: General service salary survey methodology

Members noted that a working group within the ICSC, where the federation was represented, had reviewed the general service salary survey methodology and adopted a number of revisions that would



be submitted to the ICSC, namely on issues concerning the participation of employers in the survey, multiple salary scales, retention of employers for the survey, among others. Among the most important victories for staff was the abolition of the possibility to have multiple salary scales in one duty station which created inequality and denied the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. If a negative result were to happen, the current salary scale would be frozen instead of establishing a dual salary scale. The changes in the methodology would provide for a mechanism to phase out existing multiple salary scales and expedited gap closures, namely a gradual implementation of positive results at 3 times the market movement until the gap is closed. This was supported by the organizations who considered the multiple salary scales to be a costly administrative burden.

The working group also agreed on the purchase of external salary positioning data for the survey in certain cases from reputable market vendors. Protection measures were also agreed upon, such as expanding the scope of comparator national civil service salary data beyond the foreign affairs ministry to other ministries. Local salary survey committees (LSSC) would have at least 6 months to gather survey data, after which they would be able to obtain it externally but maintaining the prerogative to outsource the data before the 6-months' period if it was deemed necessary.

Following rounds of discussions, questions, and comments, the following salient points were noted:

- Once adopted, the new methodology would be in place for a 5-year pilot period.
- UN-related agencies would not be included as comparators as they indirectly use the same salary system.
- Terms of reference and responsibilities of LSSC members would be made clearer.
- The staff side in the working group was not able to remove the requirement of having a staff at the Professional category chairing the LSSC, but the Vice-President will be nominated from within LSSC members and will have increased ability to reach out to potential comparators.
- Indexation is expected to be included in the revised methodology which would prove very beneficial for salaries vis-à-vis inflation.
- The federation will continue to strive at ensuring the shortest possible catch-up periods between currently lower and higher salary scales within the same duty stations.
- Benchmark jobs continue to be the pre-established ones. When procuring external data it will fall on the job classifier to make a particular case.
- Local entitlements will be factored in and translate into the 12-months' UN salary.

## 10. ICSC matters: Jurisdictional set-up

The President thanked all those who participated in the CCISUA taskforce that reviewed and submitted comments on the initial proposals by management to review the jurisdictional set-up concerning ICSC-related issues. The comments were critical on many of the proposals but forth by management, and members regretted that management's final submission barely took into account the federation's feedback. A discussion ensued on management's proposals, namely the creation of a joint UNAT-ILOAT chamber.

The position of the federation was to maintain the status quo of the jurisdictional set-up. The matter would be presented to the UN General Assembly for a decision, which requires efforts by CCISUA to reach out to Member States on the matter.

While the federation agreed overall that having uniform standards between jurisdictions was ideal, the proposals were geared more towards favoring management, were not simply an exercise in harmonization, and as such, were not in the best interest of staff.

A suggestion was raised to draft a resolution on this matter and clear communication of CCISUA's position to stakeholders, including Member States. Said position would be focused on pointing out that



management's proposals are trying to fix problems that do not exist, and on the federation's adherence to the independence of the different tribunals as they stood. A study could also be undertaken to complement CCISUA's position and support outreach efforts. This suggestion was agreed by consensus.

## **11. ICSC matters: Review of the compensation package**

The members made reference to the earlier discussion under 'Report of the President' whereby the UN General Assembly wishes to review the compensation package on a regular basis which would likely lead to cuts. Based on the Member States' request, the ICSC was set to begin a review in the coming months. The members discussed the approach to take.

The overarching position as a federation was upheld, to protect current entitlements and conditions of service. A suggestion was raised to approach the review of the compensation package with the future of the international civil service in mind, including the notion of "future of work", as well as being mindful of affiliate personnel.

The members agreed to monitor any events and maintain continued discussions within the federation.

## **12. Evacuation of national staff**

The CCISUA General Assembly welcomed the remote participation of Gilles Michaud, USG UN-DSS, and representatives of the OHR Jonathan Ball and Sumiyo Sudo Rao. The members of CCISUA asked the USG to brief the federation on the determining factors to decide who can be evacuated in warranted cases, with particular focus on nationally recruited staff.

The USG commented on the Afghanistan experience, noting UN-DSS had to come up with a process to determine who was at risk beyond the many demands from staff who felt unsafe and wanted to be evacuated. A personal security risk assessment (PSRA) was put in place to identify individual, work-related risks stemming from affiliation to the UN. All staff who fell under a clear risk category were recommended for evacuation.

UN-DSS conducted ongoing risk assessments and identified national staff who had been evacuated whose risk was the same as staff currently operating in Afghanistan, which meant those individuals would be asked to return to the country; a number of reviews were pending for recommendation to lift their evacuation status and allow them to go back. However, some policy issues had to be addressed first before any decision was taken, which management would soon be discussing.

The UN-HRMS representatives added that staff had been divided into three categories: those for whom the risk had been reduced and were to be asked to return to the country, those who refused to go back, and those who could not go back for security reasons. UN-HRMS would act depending on the case, e.g. contractual renewal or non-renewal, extension of certain entitlements.

The CCISUA members raised various concerns and questions, namely:

- General unawareness and confusion as to the way the UN deals with staff in emergency situations.
- The need for all staff, internationally and nationally recruited, to be fully aware of requirements, procedures and entitlements in case of emergency.
- Lack of involvement of staff federations in decision-making processes.
- The need for established and clear policy concerning evacuations, which should include priority consideration for rehiring. What policies were already being updated? At which level?
- Organizational support to staff who have applied for refugee status.



- On the compendium of lessons learned, were there already proposed policy changes to raise with the SG?
- Can the UN reach agreements with countries to receive evacuated staff?
- Noting upcoming elections in Kenya, was the UN looking at potential situations and how to prepare local staff?

The USG and OHR representatives provided the following clarifications:

- Possible rehiring and in general the status of staff going back to Afghanistan are part of a policy discussion that needs to be held.
- The UN did not have visibility on refugee status; many staff were split across the globe.
- On engagement with the federation, these types of engagements allowed management to take note of staff concerns through their questions and suggestions.
- OIOS was conducting an audit of the management of the Afghanistan crisis.
- Safety and security of staff was the number one priority, and the decision-making process was key in ensuring this through risk assessments.
- Relocation and/or evacuation of national staff could happen on an exceptional basis. Dynamics could be different when it came to evacuation of national staff compared to international staff. In the Ukrainian case, relocation was proven to work.
- On the notion of previous agreement by certain countries to host evacuated international staff in case of emergency, this was already the case, but was more complicated for national staff because of their status with the Organization and as nationals of their country.
- UN-DSS continuously monitors situations around the globe and tries to anticipate possible circumstances and puts plans in place, but actual decisions can only be taken once situations materialize.
- It is important to give due consideration to impacted staff in selection processes. Staff unions were encouraged to remind managers of this.

CCISUA members thanked the USG and OHR representatives for meeting with the federation.

A discussion among the members ensued and a number of issues were highlighted

- Lack of clarity among national staff on what to expect in case of emergency, mostly due to the lack of clear policy.
- Preparation for possible cases of emergency should include foreseeing problems that staff could face, for instance electricity cuts that would prevent them from filling out forms to be evacuated. Preparation was key and it included keeping staff informed of procedures.
- Checking the status of impacted staff, allocating a budget, and checking with neighboring countries that may receive staff in case of evacuation was something that should be part of a continuous exercise.

## **II. CCISUA GA: Wednesday 18 May 2022**

### **1. Racism**

The membership recalled the importance of tackling racism in the organizations, noting the issue had reached a peak of interest in 2020 but had lately cooled down. HLCM had adopted the SG's Strategic Action Plan on racism (SAP) as a baseline for action and established a multi-disciplinary diversity, equity and inclusion group, with diversity experts to deliver on principles and best practices, where staff federation would participate as observers. Multiple levels of racial discrimination were evidenced,



including the lack of any Sub-Saharan African language among the UN official languages). The way forward should include change in the organizational culture, change in operations and management practices, change of policies and existing structures, and the improvement of internal justice processes. A discussion followed and the members raised various points.

The need for guidance in coordinating the dialogue henceforth was highlighted. Training on diversity inclusion should be encouraged, if not made mandatory. Managers should be aware of the issue and training be part of their induction. The way staff interacted with each proved to be an important source of indicators.

Some organizations clearly had policies on racism, whereas others did not have any such policies. CCISUA members noted the organizations were implementing different approaches and actions, where follow-up seemed to be having an effect in some organizations whereas there was complete lack of action or follow-up in others. Centralization of efforts in the common system might prove useful to tackle such discrepancies or at least to encourage organizations to take action. The CEB was known to be working on a document on racism to be circulated through the common system.

Grassroots mobilisation was deemed key in demanding an equal playing field and in calling out discrimination in all its forms but dealing with structural discrimination required to have strong legal complaint procedures in place that could result in accountability. The importance of ensuring proper diversity in any group was emphasized, as well as the need to collect data as early as upon recruitment which could feed into the discussions and solutions.

Humanity and leadership were raised as playing a pivotal role on tackling racism, where even if policies are updated and improved, it was ultimately having the right people in the leadership sending the right messages that would start to produce changes, including on cultural understanding.

The challenge remained for organizations – and by extension the staff unions – to keep the momentum alive in addressing racism. It was deemed important for the federation to monitor the follow-up and implementation of action plans and hold organizations accountable. Compiling and having access to data was said to be key for this, as could be having a detailed listing of inappropriate behaviours. Management was still to provide statistics on disciplinary measures adopted in cases of racism. Organizations should do more at the onboarding levels when it came to preventing racists from entering the organization. The federation should clearly ask for zero tolerance and strong disciplinary processes when warranted. CCISUA's 2020 statement on the matter continues to be relevant.

The fact that the number of racism-related cases denounced to UN-OIOS increased was proof that there was improvement in awareness and empowerment of staff. A suggestion was made for individual unions and the federation to request from heads of entities any information on actions taken and results to foster more accountability. Heads of entities should be accountable for their actions to tackle racism and be part of the performance assessment.

The members agreed to (1) write to the UN-USG for management underscoring the need for accountability of all heads of entities besides the UN Secretariat and re-emphasizing its 2020 declaration on racism; (2) support individual unions in their communications to their administrations to follow-up on actions against racism, t; (3) create a knowledge pool, including source documents and reference materials on the issue of racism (members were invited to share any document and information they may have); (4) engage with other federations to collaborate in communicating to senior management and work with them whenever possible.

## **2. Contractual arrangements**

The President recalled recent positive developments whereby HLCM decided not to pursue a review of contractual arrangements under the “future of work” initiative. The ICSC had held a meeting earlier in October 2021 in Copenhagen on the contractual framework with Commissioners and organizations. CCISUA was also represented and campaigned against the introduction of a new “agile” contract. The



meeting concluded that the current contractual arrangements were fit for purpose and that there was no need to review the framework – a result that was vetted at a subsequent ICSC session. On the current contractual framework, it was mentioned that various organizations were granting much fewer continuing contracts, if not abandoning them completely despite being part of said framework. It was also reported that the GA had recently requested the ICSC to review the compensation package, including conditions of service. al.

Further challenges that existed included the push by a number of organizations for more facilitated hiring and dismissal policies with less obligations, and the contractually precarious situation of many staff, particularly in the funds and programmes. In many cases fixed-term contracts were capped at only 2 or 3 years, and the practice often showed even shorter fixed-term appointments. Contract length and certainty were noted to be very much linked to staff morale, performance, and wellbeing. Furthermore, fixed-term contracts could be considered in fact temporary in nature, and therefore precarious. This precarity had a clear impact on the independence of the international civil service.

An argument was made as to what was the point of having rules on staff contracts if organizations went around them and hired people as consultants or under UNOPS contracts, in many cases to carry out regular functions that should be performed by staff on proper contracts. Such precariousness leads to fear of speaking up for staff rights and is detrimental to long-term staff retention and Pension Fund contributions. The lack of a standard definition of “consultant” type of work across the UN system only worsened the precariousness, sometimes even denying such personnel proper insurance schemes and forcing them to pay into national social security systems in countries where they would only serve temporarily and not being able to recover those contributions.

The contractual precariousness was noted to be linked to other issues, namely: the fact that the ICSC was becoming less and less representative as organizations parted from engaging actual staff members; the future income of UN pensioners was put at risk as with less contributors to the Pension Fund; the lack of duty of care by organizations towards non-staff personnel; discrimination among personnel on the basis of their contractual status; and use of interns and UNV personnel.

The membership took positive note that UNICEF was promoting the conversion to continuing contracts after a certain number of years as well as the granting of 5-year contracts when warranted by length of service. It was also found encouraging that in certain regions the legality of UNOPS contracts was being questioned and at instances not considered legal.

On the argument of organizations not being able to give stable contracts because of budgetary constraints, the members noted it was not an excuse to resort to contractual precarity given that staff could still be let go if budgetary issues arose, whilst keeping a sense and the inherent benefits of presumed stability. Organizations could still provide secure contracts even if they had to engage in downsize exercises, minding the importance of transparency and communication with the staff concerned. The trend of funding, rather than the source of funding, was a point to make to organizations against budget-based contractual precarity. Obtaining funding data was important to that effect, particularly to disaggregate on grades of posts and determine the trajectory of resources (increase/decrease in posts) to be able to draw conclusions.

The discussion continued on the way forward. Issuing a resolution would prove useful in paving the federation’s road ahead. Issues to consider in said resolution would include the point on staff morale, how UNOPS contracts were being tested in different countries, contract security which supports the Pension Fund and its objectives, and the completely discretionary use by organizations of the contractual framework rendering meaningless the provision on “continuing appointments” and its purposes – where the ICSC could be more prescriptive in its use. A letter to the ICSC would also follow.

### **3. National officers**

CCISUA members were briefed on the discussions of the federation’s working group on the staff category “national officers”, who presented to the General Assembly the following recommendations:



(1) request to understand the issue holistically, provide support in raising the issues in appropriate forums with the in-house expertise in CCISUA; (2) continue the dialogue and gather information/data from all organizations and prepare strong case for discussion in appropriate forums; (3) establish a working group, undertake studies/research and keep this discussions on national staff as a standing agenda in CCISUA.

A discussion ensued on the various issues that surround national officers and best ways to approach them; these included security evacuations, danger pay, career development, mobility, the G-to-P barrier and compensation. The misuse of the category often evidenced in various duty stations was a key source of the issues, noting how national officers were increasingly doing more international/professional category-related work.

A suggestion was raised for CCISUA to lobby for a complete abolition of the “national professional officers” (NPO) category in favour of international P positions or increase the burden of justification on the organizations to create NPO posts. Caution was advised on this as NPO jobs were often important for local communities, and a total abolition could be in detriment of said staff who could be let go instead of converted to international posts.

Members noted that organizations would often create more national officer posts than other categories just as a savings mechanism, where staff in the national officer category would still be required to be equally qualified as international professional staff. This led to an issue of fairness of treatment, notably concerning work output, compensation packages, and recognition. The traditional understanding of the national officer category was deemed outdated and should be reconsidered.

The national context of national officer functions was noted to be key to the justification of the category because international staff would normally not be fully aware of local intricacies, but problems would arise where organizations would employ staff on the national officer category for regional or international tasks, creating tensions and difficulties whereby national officer colleagues were sitting side by side with international staff doing similar work but getting paid differently. In many cases, the only difference in functions between national officer and international staff in the same duty station were merely managerial responsibilities with equally substantive functions.

Another source of frustration for national office staff was noted to be factual changes to their original terms of reference, namely national office colleagues who would be hired under certain terms of reference with the impression that they would take on serious international staff-level work but would end up with mostly administrative responsibilities.

The question on the way forward was raised, should CCISUA support the creation of more national officer posts under correct circumstances and terms of reference, or rather their internationalization. Both ways were said to be mutually reinforcing, where allowing a pathway for transition where possible from a national to an international staff category was as important as redefining and improving the national officer category itself. The CCISUA members agreed to adopt a resolution in that sense.

Engaging with the ICSC was key to make progress on the matter, especially on the review of compensation packages. Based on the upcoming discussions at the ICSC the federation could put more weight on specific actions. The matter would be raised with the Chair of the ICSC who would be addressing the General Assembly the following day, focusing on the need for a proper review of the category, its job descriptions, and the different tiers within the category, with the view of avoiding abuse and ensuring career paths to national officer staff on equal playing fields. For the purposes of engaging with the ICSC and other stakeholders, the federation agreed to study the drafting of a paper on the subject for which data on national officer posts would prove useful, which could be obtained from the CEB.



#### 4. Presentation by UN parents

The CCISUA General Assembly welcomed Mr. Bardia Jebeli, representative of the group “UN Parents”, who presented to the federation the group’s scope and objectives. The presentation was followed by a discussion among the members on how the concerns and proposals of UN Parents could be of help in staff-management consultations.

The following is an account of the presentation by UN Parents.

##### About UN Parents

Born in 2021 out of informal discussions between colleagues eager to promote an equal distribution of childcare, UN Parents is an inclusive network of United Nations colleagues hoping to champion gender equality through better parenting policies. With members from many UN entities and duty stations, U.N Parents aims to challenge and redefine gender norms, with the ultimate goal of creating better and more equal societies.

The network combines the views of parents, whether opposite sex, same gender or single parents, including adoptive and surrogate parents, but also of aspiring parents and people actively deciding not to have children, as well as staff and non-staff personnel.

What connects UN Parents members is the shared belief that better parental policies, in which each individual can play an active role in childcare, will contribute to the well-being of parents and children alike, and to a more peaceful and equal society.

##### Why do we need a gender-neutral parental leave?

Since Secretary-General António Guterres took office, a special emphasis has been placed on gender within the United Nations, particularly with the launch of the Secretary-General's System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity in 2017. One of the recommendations of this strategy is to replace maternity, paternity and adoption leave with one parental leave of an equal length for all parents, with additional coverage for the specific pre- and post-delivery needs of the birth parent, a recommendation supported by the Supplementary Guidance on the Enabling Environment Guidelines published in 2019 by UN Women as well as by the appeal of several heads of UN Agencies.

UN Parents recognizes that such a policy would have far reaching benefits, greatly contributing to a redefinition of gender roles, mainly to rebalance rights and responsibilities regarding childcare and child-rearing activities.

UN Parents is convinced of the need to move away from the concepts of primary and secondary caregiver, to only differentiate between birth and non-birth parents, where applicable. A gender-neutral parental leave would contribute to a more meaningful participation of all parents in childcare and the elimination of existing gender bias, which in turn would have a direct positive impact, among other benefits, on women’s participation in the labour market, on men’s physical and mental health and, most importantly, would give children a better start in life.

##### Why at least 24 weeks for all parents?

Most current parental leave policies fail to provide sufficient leave to the non-birthing parent, thus locking-in traditional caregiving roles, failing to challenge gender norms and hurting the birthing parent’s career chances. Biases in the workplace are known to happen towards pregnant persons and mothers, but women of childbearing age also suffer biases in recruitment due to reasons such as potential maternity leave. An equal, gender-neutral parental leave would contribute to ending workplace discrimination for all personnel.



Too often, the question of parental leave is approached using a binary concept of family, and many current policies are discriminatory towards LGBTIQ+ and other family structures, including but not limited to same gender or gender fluid parents, single parents, adoptive parents and cases of surrogacy. An equal, gender-neutral parental leave would contribute to ending discrimination for LGBTIQ+ and other family structures.

#### Why for staff and non-staff personnel alike?

In 2014, a review of the Joint Inspection Unit found that a significant number of personnel of United Nations system organizations (around 45 per cent of the total workforce) were working under non-staff contracts, with many of them working for extended periods under a de facto employment relationship, like staff. The findings also indicated a lack of congruence between the values of justice and fairness held by the United Nations system organizations and their practice of differential treatment without a clear basis for those differences.

The UN has a duty of care to balance its corporate needs with the fundamental rights of both children and parents to good health and well-being. Recognizing this and the need to uphold the values and principles the UN stands for,

UN Parents believes that all members of personnel, staff and non-staff, should be granted access to a gender-neutral parental leave of at least 24 weeks.

#### Why now?

Despite commendable efforts, the UN is still significantly behind in terms of gender parity. Marked improvements have emerged at professional staff level and above (P, D, ASG and USG), but the gap at the field level is alarming, and there is currently no significant data to support parity being achieved among non-staff personnel.

An equal, gender-neutral parental leave policy can help close the parity gap within the UN workforce by significantly increasing the UN's competitiveness as a global employer, fostering gender neutrality among all levels and creating a work environment based on respect, care and trust.

Almost five years have already passed since the launch of the Secretary-General's System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity. It is now time for the UN to put words into action and lead by example.

Considering all of the above, UN Parents urges Secretary General António Guterres, the General Assembly and the ICSC to work together and adopt a unified parental leave regardless of sex, gender, family structure and contract situation, keeping in mind various pre- and post-birth considerations, which are detailed in a

UN Parents recommendation paper to the ICSC. These include:

- Pre-delivery, adoption or surrogacy:
  - Time dispensation for antenatal appointments
  - Pre-adoption and pre-surrogacy leave of 4 weeks
  - Pre-natal leave
  - Leave for miscarriage and stillbirth for all parents
- Post-delivery, adoption or surrogacy:
  - Access to 24 weeks of parental leave for staff and non-staff
  - Mandatory leave period of eight weeks for both parents
  - Flexible parental leave arrangements
  - Extended parental leave in the case of multiple birth
  - Post-adoption or post-surrogacy leave of 24 weeks



- Introduction of anti-discrimination policies
- Post-parental leave:
  - Time off to body feed, bottle feed or extract milk
  - Reimbursement of childcare costs during official travel
  - Paid family leave in case of sickness of a dependent child
  - Allowance for children not yet attending mandatory education
  - Flexible working arrangements in favour of childcare

### III. CCISUA GA: Thursday 19 May

#### 1. Report of the Treasurer

The Treasurer recalled that the federation operated on the basis of its incomes from member contributions. A historic record of pledges was made available. The 2021-2022 financial year saw pledged contributions of USD 88,000. Expenditures were lower than originally budgeted mostly due to less travel expenses given the Covid-19 context, at the level of USD 46,217. A surplus was therefore evidenced at the level of USD 41,783.

The balance sheet as of 15 May 2022 showed liquid assets of USD 503,507.16 which constituted the federation's reserves.

A question was raised concerning two member unions who had not paid their contributions, to which an answer was provided whereby one did not have any revenue due to its size, and the other was struggling to exist given the circumstances of its organization.

#### 2. Financial pledges

The following pledged contributions for the financial year 2022-2023 were recorded:

UNHCR	USD 8500	IRMCT	USD 2000
ICC	EUR 4500	UNOG	CHF 23000
ILO	USD 12500	UNON	USD 6000
ECA	USD 5000	UNV	USD 1000
ECLAC	USD 2000	WFP	USD 15000
ESCAP	USD 3000	ICJ	-
ESCWA	-	ITU	CHF 3000
UNICEF	USD 6000		

#### 3. Adoption of the budget

The draft budget for the financial year 2022-2023 was presented to the CCISUA General Assembly. The President remarked that no engagement of an administrative assistant was foreseen given the expected level of income and expenditures, to ensure maintaining a balanced budget. No assistant had been engaged during the previous year either, but the federation was still able to maintain operations with the help of the Bureau and specific cases of assistance lent by unions. Operations for the new 2022-2023 period were expected to continue the same way, bearing in mind the need to care for CCISUA's finances.

The presented budget was adopted by consensus as recorded by the Treasurer.



#### 4. Draft Resolutions

The members reviewed the text of draft resolutions being prepared, which would be finally discussed and adopted during the last day of the General Assembly. These included draft resolutions on the review of the jurisdictional set-up, evacuation of national staff, contractual arrangements, and racism.

#### 5. Social Dialogue at the UN

The ILO Staff Union presented a paper to the General Assembly on social dialogue at the UN, focusing on the five guarantees that encompass the rights of civil servants and applying them to the international civil service, namely: (1) Protection of the right to organize (2) Facilities to be afforded to public employees' organizations, (3) Procedures for determining terms and conditions of employment, (4) Settlement of disputes arising in connection with the determination of terms and conditions of employment, and (5) Civil and political rights of civil servants. For this, collective bargaining was considered to be of the utmost importance. Two recommendations and steps for improved social dialogue were given:

- Equal and tripartite representation of governments, administrations and staff representatives in ICSC sessions. Recommendations made to the United Nations General Assembly by this Tripartite Committee according to pre-established and negotiated criteria.
- Signing of a recognition agreement stipulating the procedures for consultation and negotiations within the Commission and stipulating the facilities granted on an equal basis to all the federations representing the personnel (same time of secondment granted, premises and support).

A discussion ensued on how to bring about more social dialogue and collective bargaining in the UN common system. The difficulty of unequal dialogue was noted, where one partner often saw itself as the senior partner in the conversation, for which strong organizing and campaigning was needed to get proper recognition; to show management that only that recognition would make them be seen as a model employer.

Caution was raised on how the argument for collective bargaining was presented, noting that requesting it would be based on the principle of freedom of association. Claiming collective bargaining was normally under the purview of trade unions which operated under the principle of freedom of association. However, UN common system staff unions and associations were in fact workers' councils who statutorily represented all staff at their jurisdiction, not just those who freely associated. This meant that a potential collective agreement negotiated by a staff union or a group of staff unions would apply to all staff concerned, regardless if they agreed or not, which meant they would all be associated by force to the negotiated conditions – a situation that opposed staff representation. Further caution was raised on issues related to collective bargaining that unions should bear in mind, e.g. financial reserves, liabilities, strike funds – essentially how to finance the tools of labour disputes.

The question was asked to the members how to put together a campaign to push for change, where educating staff at large played a key role, namely on the meaning of collective bargaining, why it mattered, and would change for staff if they had it. The general idea was to empower individual staff unions with collective bargaining rights for better standing in seeking improved staff rights. Staff were mentioned as the main audience of a possible campaign, though careful prior study was required to correctly identify stakeholders and the issues to address. This included whether a campaign would be more effective if carried out by the federation or by the individual unions. The leading thought among CCISUA members was for the federation to support the unions if they wished to campaign in that regard.

The discussion continued on how to entice management to accept collective bargaining and the incentive that unions could provide – in a context where an important number of personnel would accept precarious contracts to have a job. An important part of that incentive was the fact that collective bargaining helped prevent disputes and provided a smoother work environment for management and



staff. This was mainly achieved by allowing meaningful participation of staff during decision making processes rather than after decisions were made. This was not the case in the current process to establish and review working conditions, where the ICSC would mostly determine the latter on their own without negotiating with the social partners, but merely consulting them. This process was set up this way by the General Assembly.

A possible approach to the issue could be two-fold: (1) for the federation to engage the Member States at the General Assembly to request formal recognition of the federated unions as a negotiating partner before the ICSC, and (2) empowering and supporting local unions to push for more engagement by management and the recognition of unions as equal partners. The common efforts of the CCISUA members through the federation could entice management to at least commit to more consultations and move towards a more even playing field. Actions could begin by presenting a paper to the UN Secretary-General.

The CCISUA members agreed: (1) to prepare a paper based on the contribution of the ILO Staff Union for submission to the UN Secretary-General and heads of common system entities, outlining the issue and requesting dialogue on the matter; (2) to begin preparing an awareness and educational campaign on collective bargaining.

## **6. Pension Fund issues**

The CCISUA members recalled that, following the federation's campaign, the Pension Fund had put on hold from July to September its plans to outsource the management of its fixed-income assets. Former participant representative and CCISUA advisor on the Pension Fund, Michelle Rockcliffe, briefed the members on the status quo, mainly noting that there was a lack of justification for the outsourcing, lack of clarity from the Fund's senior investment management team on the figures they had shown, and ultimately a complete lack of justification for the planned outsourcing – especially considering that the portfolio in question had actually been outperforming in recent years. In-house management proved to be more financially beneficial.

A discussion on the issue ensued. A point was made that in any case of outsourcing, the question of cost was key, in the present case being a comparison between the cost of doing business in house or outsourced. It was noted that the Fund's Office of Investment Management (OIM) did not provide a comparative analysis on the cost, which was part of the lack of clarity and transparency. The Fund's Board reported to the ACABQ that they were proud of the efficiency of in-house investment management.

The CCISUA members noted that if ever the outsourced portfolio would have serious performance issues, the Pension Fund would have no recourse like many other funds who have been exposed to Wall Street management. Even in the event of fraud or negligence, recourse would be difficult.

The question was raised of engagement with other federations on this subject. It was said that CCISUA was always willing to engage and discuss with them and interactions would continue. However, in this particular case, if the other federations wanted to trust OIM blindly or if they did not want to engage with CCISUA in discussions, that was their decision and CCISUA could not force them otherwise. Efforts to engage with the sister federations would continue.

Caution was called for on communication, noting the importance of avoiding suggesting that the Fund was in any way in danger or that this one particular outsourcing decision would have an immediate effect on staff or retirees. It was clarified that the federation had not construed its messages as such and that much care would be taken not to create any confusion in that sense.

Members recalled the importance of the role that participant representatives play in discussions at the Pension Board and the need for them to represent the interest of their constituents. To that end, engagement and alignment with the unions was a key element. The need to hold a global meeting to brief the members' constituents was highlighted.



Members further recalled the main reasons for the federation to oppose the outsourcing: mainly the fact that the same OIM had stated before the General Assembly that in-house investment management is preferable, that accountability is better ensured when said management is kept in-house and under direct UN control, and that Wall Street greed – which had brought ruin to public funds such as the UN's – was better avoided. No actions were discarded to that effect, including a ultimate vote of non-confidence on the Representative of the Secretary-General for the Fund's investments.

Going forward, the CCISUA General Assembly agreed to: (1) hold a global townhall mid-June for all constituents to brief them on the situation, (2) to adopt a resolution restating its position on the outsourcing, (3) to continue exerting pressure on decision-makers through communications to the OIM and the UN Secretary-General, and (4) to prepare a paper further explaining the situation to increase colleagues' awareness and understanding.

## 7. Meeting with the ICSC Chair

ICSC Chairman, Mr. Larbi Djacta, attended the CCISUA General Assembly and briefed the members on various developments, namely:

- The UN General Assembly approved all recommendations from the Commission's 93rd session.
- The ICSC recently completed the review of the GS salary methodology and concluded recommendations on all outstanding items. The Chairman thanked the federation for the collaborative efforts of its participants.
- The ICSC would meet the following week in Rome to discuss parental leave and its harmonization in the common system.
- The ICSC would review at its upcoming summer session: standards of accommodation of air travel, recruitment incentives, multilingualism, the definition of H duty station, among other items.
- The cost-of-living survey (for the determination of post-adjustment) was so far considered a success mostly thanks to excellent cooperation among stakeholders. The Chairman welcomed the federation's involvement in next phases – from data analysis to implementation. The ACPAQ would be reviewing the results by mid-June and making recommendations to the Commission, who would decide on them at its 94th session in July. If approved, the results of the survey would be implemented this year on the basis of the revised operational rules.

Mr. Djacta noted that because of the Covid-19 situation the Commission was not able to advance in its agenda as fast as it wanted, but with the sense of normalcy returning it hoped to continue its advances. Mr. Djacta called upon staff unions to continue and enhance their collaboration with the ICSC.

The members raised a series of questions related to conditions of work and the challenges that staff faced, to which Mr. Djacta provided the following clarifications:

- On travel standards, the Commission would normally remain conservative and tend not to open the issue or make any review.
- On standards of conduct, the last review took place 10 years before. The issue touched upon various aspects, e.g. recruitment, promotion, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment. A review of responsibilities would take place.
- On the composition of the Commission, for the first time there were five women among the Commissioners and two among ACPAQ members.
- On the contractual framework and precariousness, the ICSC reaffirmed the validity of the current framework. Member States were apprehensive when it came to financial implications and regular funding, where an increased use of extra-budgetary funds could bring about more precariousness.



- In the Commission's latest report to the UN General Assembly, it conveyed a clear recommendation to the Member States to encourage organizations to fully implement the existing contractual framework through the regular budget. However, the context in which some organizations had to work made it difficult to expect them to make full use of the contractual framework. It was important for staff representatives to engage with Member States in New York on these issues.
- On travel standards, discussions would soon be held by the UN General Assembly's 5th Committee and the ACABQ. The position of the ICSC is conservative with the view to maintaining the current standards.
- On national officers' (NO) conditions and career prospects, Commissioners were aware that the situation had evolved into one where NO held higher degrees in many were cases doing very similar jobs as international professionals, and it was about time the ICSC tackled this issue. This should be fixed through a holistic review of the situation. This was on the Commission's agenda and it would not hesitate to address it objectively and fairly to do justice to this category of staff.
- On multiple salary scales, Mr. Djacta was pleased to inform the federation that one of the decisions taken by the ICSC working group reviewing the matter was to do away with the existence of multiple salary scales in any given duty station, and to phase out current secondary scale. Once adopted it would be a matter of transitioning, for which steps were being taken.
- On the review of the compensation package requested by Member States, seemingly to be reduced to a 5-year interval instead of a 10-year one, the details of what they were asking were still not clear. The understanding of the Commission was still that it would continue to carry out routine reviews. Commissioners shared this reading, where the normal routine would continue but looking at different elements of the entitlements. In that sense, no new way of doing business was being created.
- On racism and the encouragement to increase diversity among organizations, the ICSC could look at geographical distribution, however all elements of diversity should be reviewed.

#### **IV. CCISUA GA: Friday 20 May**

##### **1. Federation support to local staff union issues**

CCISUA members raised a number of local issues on which support by the federation was deemed important:

- Classification of duty stations (family status and hardship);
- Salary methodologies;
- Restructurings and downsizing;
- Use of flexible working arrangements;
- Covid-19 vaccination and eligibility to return to office;
- Treatment of P2 staff and their career prospects after recruitment through the YPP process.

A discussion followed in which the members noted the particularities of the above mentioned issues and how their constituencies were locally affected, including: the restructuring process of the ICC; classification of field duty stations such as Khartoum or Addis Ababa and the proper use of classification basis (security, health, etc.) and of the criteria to determine family status; ensuring access to flexible working arrangements (most worrying cases at IRMCT and ECLAC); removal of unnecessary vaccination requirements for onboarding, accessing premises and missions at various organizations; career advancement of P2 staff in various offices of the UN Secretariat.



The members were encouraged by the active involvement of the federation in support of the resolution of many of the above issues and looked forward to receiving CCISUA's continued support.

## 2. Adoption of resolutions

The CCISUA members discussed, reviewed and adopted the following resolutions:

Res. 1 : [Resolution on the review of the jurisdictional set-up of the United Nations common system](#)

Res. 2 : [Resolution on the evacuation of national staff](#)

Res. 3 : [Resolution on the contractual arrangements](#)

Res. 4 : [Resolution on racism](#)

Res. 5 : [Resolution on National Officers](#)

Res. 6 : [Resolution on the Pension Fund](#)

## 3. Elections

The CCISUA General Assembly proceeded to hold elections for the statutory positions of President, General Secretary, Vice-President for Communication and Outreach, Vice-President for Conditions of Service, Vice-President for Security and Field Operations, Treasurer, the Finance Committee, and the Procurement Committee.

A request was made as per the statutes to hold a secret ballot where there was no consensus. Seeing 10 votes in favour and 2 against, the members agreed on the request. Each union was given a ballot, for a total of 12 ballots, and Messkir Lemma and Brad Smith were appointed as polling officers.

### Election of the President

**Prisca Chaoui** was elected President by consensus.

### Election of the General Secretary

**Yvan Poulin** was elected General Secretary by consensus.

### Election of the Vice-President for Communication and Outreach

Geraldine Danhoui and Pamela Odhiambo were nominated for Vice-President for Communication and Outreach. In a first round of voting they received 8 and 4 votes respectively, where **Geraldine Danhoui** was elected as Vice-President for Communication and Outreach.

### Election of the Vice-President for Conditions of Service

Mahamadou Nassirou Ba and Nathalie Meynet were nominated for Vice-President for Conditions of Service. In a first round of voting they received 6 votes each which resulted in a tie.

The candidates were given the floor to express their views and positions vis-à-vis their candidatures and a second round of voting took place, but again resulting in the same tie.

Following further interventions by the candidates, a third round of voting took place where the candidates received 7 and 5 votes respectively, resulting in the election of **Mahamadou Nassirou Ba** as Vice-President for Conditions of Service.



#### Election of the Vice-President for Security and Field Operations

June Onguru and Wagdi Othman were nominated for Vice-President for Security and Field Operations. In a first round of voting they received 6 votes each which resulted in a tie.

The candidates were given the floor to express their views and positions vis-à-vis their candidatures and a second round of voting took place, but again resulting in the same tie.

The candidates made further interventions before a third round of voting took place where again both received 6 votes each, concluding in a tie. A discussion followed on whether an alternate Vice-President position could be created, which was deemed to have informally existed in the past. Said position however was noted not to be a statutory position on which members could vote. The meeting was adjourned for 10 minutes to allow informal discussion among the members.

Following further interventions by the candidates, a fourth round of voting took place where the candidates received 7 and 5 votes respectively, resulting in the election of **June Onguru** as Vice-President for Security and Field Operations.

#### Election of the Treasurer

**Guy Avognon** was elected Treasurer by consensus.

#### Election of the Finance Committee

**Ferdinand Grimm, Messkir Lemma and Jaishankar Vridhagiri** were elected to the Finance Committee by consensus.

#### Election of the Procurement Committee

**Pamela Odhiambo, Ryan Carvalho and Gloria Otieno** were elected to the Procurement Committee by consensus.

### **4. Wrap-up & place and date of the next General Assembly**

The UNON Staff Union offered to host the 2023 General Assembly which the CCISUA members kindly thanked and welcomed. The exact date during Spring of the following year was yet to be confirmed.

The President congratulated all newly elected Bureau members for their election and looked forward to working with them. The President expressed special thanks to the outgoing members of the Bureau and their great support, and to all members for their attendance and active participation at the General Assembly. The President further appealed to all members to consider the federation as a family, highlighting the need for a spirit of collaboration and openness in embracing all the members' diverse views which were encouraging to have.



## Annex: Adopted amendments to the CCISUA statutes

- Art. 19** The Bureau shall consist of a President; Vice-President for Conditions of Service; Vice President for Outreach and Advocacy; Vice President for Safety, Security and Field Operations; a General Secretary and an ex officio Treasurer. All members of the Bureau **should be approved by consensus**. In case no consensus is reached, then the Bureau shall be elected by a majority vote after an open nomination process and first and second motions by CCISUA members. The nomination period for the positions on the new Bureau shall be open until the day before the scheduled elections at the General Assembly. While holding office, the Bureau is fully accountable to the membership of CCISUA. **Any member of the Bureau of CCISUA who ceases to be an elected member of their respective staff union or association shall not be eligible to stand for election at the next annual General Assembly.**
- Art. 20** Bureau elections shall take place at the time of the annual General Assembly. Members of the Bureau shall be elected/acclaimed/~~appointed~~. The Bureau remains in office until a new Bureau has been elected. No two Bureau Members shall be elected from the same staff union or association. Once a Bureau Member has been nominated and elected, no more nominations from the same staff union or association will be entertained for any other Bureau positions. Nominations and elections shall proceed from the office of the President through the list of other officers in the order outlined in paragraph 19 above. **Elections shall be by open ballot. Elections may be held by secret ballot at the request of any staff union or association member, seconded by at least two other members, and by a majority vote of eligible staff unions and associations.**
- New 24bis** **Should any other member of the Bureau resign or become unable to serve, the President shall temporarily designate another member of the Bureau to assume the relevant functions until elections can be held by the CCISUA membership. The General Secretary, or the President by default if the position of General Secretary is vacant, shall undertake an electronic vote within 45 days calling for nominations for replacements from the eligible CCISUA member staff unions or associations to fill the vacant position for the remainder of the term.**
- Art. 36** The CCISUA budget shall be financed by pledged contribution in either United States Dollars or Euros. Members shall inform the Bureau by 15 April of their planned contribution for the period starting 1 July of the same year and ending 30 June of the following year. **Staff unions and associations of CCISUA shall commit to a minimum annual contribution commensurate with their financial abilities.** Every CCISUA member may increase their initial announced pledge, to be committed during the CCISUA annual General Assembly.