



Coordinating Committee for International
Staff Unions and Associations

**Bureau Report
2019-2020**



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i. Message from the President

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you and your loved ones are doing well in these critical times. We are all pushed to our personal limits and have to adapt to the new situation. Balancing work and personal responsibilities has been very challenging and I want to express my full sympathy and respect to all who went and still are going above and beyond to keep themselves, their loved ones and their communities safe, healthy, protected and sane.

There are certainly no winners in this pandemic, and I am truly amazed and also alarmed by how 'going above and beyond personal' limits was possible and has sadly become the new norm. In my capacity as President of CCISUA and also personally, I feel very proud in being allowed to represent you. Rest assured that I will not go silent in making sure that your passion and commitment in defending your constituents through working at and sometimes even beyond the breaking point, gets recognized.

These past months have been very challenging, and we have witnessed different approaches in keeping a close dialogue with the Unions / Associations. They ranged from outright denial of consultation to open dialogue and coordinated response together with the unions / associations and also our federation. In ensuring that our constituents are heard, we intensified the cooperation among the three federations, CCISUA, UNISERV and FICSA and ensured that we are presenting a united front. I want to express my gratitude to the executives of our sibling federations and sincerely hope that we can continue in this spirit.

We have all been working very hard to alleviate current difficulties, craft sensible ways forward and most importantly push for measures protecting the health of yourselves and your loved ones. The work at the federation level was no different. While some meetings / consultations have unfortunately been pushed back, we did see a quick accommodation to the 'virtual' environment by some global bodies. It will require some more time and diligence by all stakeholders to get back to 'normal' level of consultation. We remain fully engaged with the HLCM, HRN and ICSC not only on topics of pressing urgency (safety, security, health, return to office) but also on the 'standing items' such as conditions of service and 'future of work'.

I want to thank our respective administrations (local and global) for their close dialogue with the unions / associations, the quick actions they have been taking in response to critical events and for doing their utmost to keep us safe during the current crisis. Is everything perfect? Probably not, but I believe that there is a genuine cooperation between management and staff to resolve as much as we can, going forward. I also believe that it is important that we, as members of CCISUA, come together even more, to ensure that our concerns are heard and addressed.

We are now in a situation where no one can realistically predict what the future will bring with regards to continued funding of the UN Common System and what the 'new reality' after the pandemic will be. Rest assured that we remain vigilant in protecting the rights of staff, ensuring that the utmost priority is given to keeping colleagues in employ and that hard fought-for benefits and



entitlements are not eroded. Personally, I do expect the pandemic to have a significant impact on the future of the UN system, and we need to be prepared.

Let me take the opportunity to thank Mr Ian Richards, who resigned from the office of President in March, for all his hard work, compassion and leadership in navigating our federation through the past years. Ian, I wish you all the best for your future and I sincerely hope that our paths, personally as well as in a staff representative capacity, will cross again.

Let me close in wishing you and your loved ones all the best and I look forward to an intensified dialogue with all of you.

Stefan Brezina, President



ii. Message from the General Secretary

Dear colleagues,

The challenges of the past few months have indeed affected all of us in all aspects of our personal and professional lives. The work on the Bureau and the Secretariat has been no different, posing challenges in many areas. The biggest impact on the Secretariat side has been in deciding on how to handle the organisation of the June 2020 General Assembly in light of the pandemic, and ultimately deciding to push on with organising our first virtual General Assembly instead of the one that we were planning on having in Rome, hosted by our colleagues from the World Food Programme. Therefore, the first virtual GA will take place over three days from 22 to 24 June 2020, with a limited range of topics to address the issues of the most pressing current concern to the federation, including the financial statement, the budget and the pledging, and the proposed Statutes amendments. The WFP will still host, albeit virtually. This will also provide an opportunity for those who might not have been able to join in the General Assembly otherwise to get a taste for what it is like. Separately, a meeting is being organised to discuss and address the current COVID-19 situation.

CCISUA has continued to work on internal improvements as well as to put out effective and impactful advocacy externally. The key areas of focus for the Secretariat has been the implementation of several Beirut GA resolutions, including, in particular, looking into the amendments to the CCISUA Statutes: the alignment of the fiscal and the budget year, the opening of a new bank account, the increased clarity in reporting and pledging requirements, as well as, the more clarified role and regularisation of contract of the CCISUA assistant. The Secretariat worked closely through the 2019/2020 mandate with the Finance Committee to come up with a clear, streamlined, and safe approach on these issues, and ultimately a set of textual amendments to be proposed to the membership at the General Assembly in 2020 was agreed upon between myself and the current CCISUA President, in our respective capacities as heads of our Staff Unions. I look forward to the discussions and hopefully, decisions on implementing these changes from the next GA.

The efforts to increase and improve the use of the Virtual Office have continued, with multiple areas being populated with, among other things, useful materials from internal meetings and at the various management levels within the UN Common System. Efforts also continued on improving the website platform and resolving the technical issues in order to make the platform consistently safe and accessible to all. As before, Mr Stefan Brezina worked on these issues with the CCISUA assistant, Ms Nataliya Vasylevska, continuing in his capacity as VP for Communications and Outreach – even after he took on the additional role as President. Kudos to you, Stefan, for this additional effort.

This year has been transitional for the Secretariat, as I took over from Mr Fraser McIlwraith, who went on to retire, first from CCISUA, and subsequently from the UN at the end of 2019. I have no doubt that he misses all of this not one bit and is enjoying his well-earned retirement. Before he left, however, Fraser gave me large amounts of immensely helpful advice and passed on much of his vast knowledge about the federation and its functioning, as well as the role of the General Secretary. I have benefitted immensely from this support, for which I am most grateful.



I have also received much good advice from other Bureau members, and the Finance Committee, who have all made it easier for me to fit in and hit the ground running.

Finally, I am very grateful to Nataliya Vasylevska, our current assistant, who has been an incredible source of support and indeed an asset to the federation. The Secretariat work would not be possible without the support provided by its Assistant, who handles correspondence, provides administrative and logistical support in organising meetings and events, takes care of the website and the supporting materials, conducts relevant research, frequently liaises between the members on their requests, and shares useful information on behalf of the General Secretary.

As Fraser did the previous year, I take the opportunity to call upon all our colleagues to support the Bureau in its work. The Bureau is a group of individuals with strong personalities, many of them heads of their unions, who come together in an attempt to work closely as a team in various capacities in the Bureau, in a mainly virtual setting, to steer an entire federation. The task is daunting in the best of times and becomes extremely difficult when additional challenges are presented, like this year. In such times, we are all tested on what we are really made of and how well we can respond to pressure. I am certain that the Bureau cannot achieve its best without the membership being responsive and supportive; and whatever the Bureau achieves, it achieves for the sake of the federation, its members, and all the staff they represent. We continue to work for you and for all of us.

In solidarity,

Ruth Frölich
General Secretary



iii. Composition of CCISUA

CCISUA Members

Organizations	Staff representation
ECA Economic Commission for Africa	ECA Staff Union
ECLAC Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean	ECLAC Staff Association
ESCAP Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	ESCAP Staff Association
ESCWA Economic and Social Commission for West Asia	ESCWA Staff Council
ICC International Criminal Court	ICC Staff Union Council
ICJ International Court of Justice	ICJ Staff Committee
ILO International Labour Organization	ILO Staff Union
IRMCT International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals	UN Criminal Tribunals Staff Union
ITU International Telecommunication Union	ITU Staff Union
SCBD Secretariat on the Convention on Biological Diversity	SCBD Staff Association*
STL Special Tribunal for Lebanon	STL Staff Union
UNITAR UN Institute for Training and Research	UNITAR Staff Association*
UNOG UN Office in Geneva	UNOG Staff Coordinating Council
UNHCR UN High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR Staff Council
UNICEF UN International Children's Emergency Fund	UNICEF Global Staff Association
UNON UN Office in Nairobi	UN Nairobi Staff Union
UN HQ UN Headquarters New York	UN Staff Union – New York
UNOV UN Office in Vienna	UN Staff Union – Vienna
UNU UN University	UN University Staff Council
WFP World Food Programme	WFP Professional Staff Association

* CCISUA observer member

CCISUA Bureau

Name	Function	Home Union
Stefan Brezina	President, Vice-President for Communication and Outreach	UN Staff Union – Vienna
Patricia Nemeth	Vice-President for Conditions of Service	UN Staff Union – New York
Guy Avognon	Vice-President for Field and Security Issues	UNHCR Staff Council
Ruth Frölich	General Secretary	ICC Staff Union Council
Philip Migire	Treasurer	UN Nairobi Staff Union
<i>Ian Richards</i>	<i>President, resigned as of March 20, 2020</i>	UNOG Staff Coordinating Council

iv. COVID-19 Response

The topic itself as well as the issues stemming from the current COVID-19 need no further introduction. These are very challenging times that test the limits of each and every one of us. CCISUA has been putting a lot of attention and energy to ensuring that our colleagues, who are the most vulnerable, receive proper protection and guidance in this period.

For that matter, CCISUA has been cooperating closely with FICSA and UNISERV to ensure that

- a) Issues experienced by colleagues are heard, documented and taken forward;
- b) Colleagues are kept in employ; *Duty of Care* is respected for all colleagues (regardless of contract type);
- c) Proper policies and guidelines are put into place at all UN-system entities;
- d) Critical situations for staff members are resolved immediately;
- e) Protection measures for salaries are put into place and those exposed to high-risk environments receive proper protection and danger pay;
- f) Ramp-up and long-term plans are in place to ensure a coordinated response to possible future waves of COVID-19 as well as preparing for a gradual resumption of standard operations.

The three Federations have been joining forces to represent our collective interests vis-à-vis all relevant counterparts to ensure that our concerns are heard and addressed and that we are included in any critical deliberations, going forward. The protection of our colleagues and their loved ones remains our top priority!

CCISUA will remain vigilant to ensure that after the current crisis, colleagues will be kept in employ to the maximum degree possible and will do its utmost to combat the following trends:

- Move towards precarious contracts;
- Downsizing;
- Erosion of benefits and entitlements;
- Side-lining of staff representatives in core deliberation bodies.

At the current point, it is unclear what immediate damages the COVID-19 pandemic will cause to the UN Common System system as a whole, but it can be expected that the overall funding situation will worsen, triggering mitigating measures by the organisations that may be detrimental to the interests of staff. We are also concerned that the ability of colleagues to be able to respond to the crisis, despite their personal circumstances and hardship, ensuring that the UN-system entities continue to be able to deliver, may be seen as ‘evidence’ that physical presence at the office is an obsolete concept and therefore opening the door to global sourcing and *mutual recognition agreements*, effectively providing the work from either cheaper locations or outsourcing the work altogether.

Our goal is clear. We are committed to upholding an international civil service, that is in stable and predictable employ of the organisations, is compensated appropriately and is truly recognized as the organisations’ **most important asset**.

A. CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

I. Review of compensation for locally recruited staff

The Working Group on the review of the GS Salary Survey Methodology met in London (3-7 February) in its third meeting, and CCISUA was represented by Ms. Patricia Nemeth and Mr. Stefan Brezina. Prior to that, the Working Group also met in Hamburg, Germany, in May 2019, with representation from Ms Patricia Nemeth and Ms Ruth Frolich.

Outcomes of the ICSC WG third meeting:

- The possibility of using external data: The ICSC Secretariat will conduct a pilot testing based on existing salary survey results with given parameters (i.e. filtering by job families, size of employers, location) that we agreed on. However, CCISUA considers this pilot testing only a simulation due to the fact that we believe that an actual testing of the external data should be carried out in parallel to conventional surveys - at selected locations - during the next round of surveys. It would allow us to gather the necessary information for an evidence-based analysis of the results. The results of the simulation/pilot testing will be presented the next meeting of the WG. We are optimistic that we will be able to prove the ICSC that inadequacy of external data in our salary surveys i.e. due to diverse methodologies used by various vendor to collect the data.
- Dual scales and transitional arrangements: The working group took up the topic of the possibility of using transitional measures at the second meeting of the working group to address the concerns related to dual scales as a result of negative salary surveys that resulted in significant changes in salaries. In reference to this matter there was differing views among the participants. CCISUA, FICSA and UNISERV supported the idea to eliminate of dual salary scales however, some others did not agree with their outright elimination. The federations also noted that if these or some future version of these transitional arrangements were adopted, consideration should be given to the treatment of current dual and/or multiple salary scales already in place.

UN Secretariat proposed the following model that we began to discuss in Hamburg: The idea included transitional arrangements for both positive and negative survey results. These arrangements were aimed at a more gradual implementation of the survey results where they were exceptionally high or low (thresholds would need to be defined).

The thresholds would be based on an indicator of market salary movement that could be used as a benchmark against the survey results. In cases of negative survey results, salaries in effect would be *frozen for a period to be determined by the working group*, and, upon completion of this period, *an incremental increase based on the benchmark* could be given until such a point where the survey results converged with the frozen salaries. These two parameters would be set as policy choices.

Taking the current scheme into consideration, this proposal would result in the eventual elimination of dual salary scales. In cases of positive survey results, the benchmark would be used to set a threshold for which salary results would be implemented fully. Results above this threshold would

not be implemented fully and rather the increase given would be a combination of the threshold amount and a portion of the remaining difference between the threshold and the survey result. These two parameters would be set as policy choices.

The discussion to be continued.

- Categorization of duty stations: ICSC stated in its proposal that they intend to streamline and simplify the system. The working group could not reach consensus on this issue but agreed that the work on it should continue. A proposal was made to create a task force for this purpose which would develop further proposals on this subject and report to working group at its next meeting.
- Review of the questionnaire: this matter will be discussed at a later point once other items, including the possibility of using external data, have been studied and propose recommendations how we move forward.
- Roles and responsibilities of survey stakeholders: The federations continue to keep alive and maintain the role of the LSSC. This matter was not discussed in London because other stakeholders noted that we should only define the role of the LSSC once the revised methodologies were finalized.

Agenda items for the fourth meeting that was rescheduled for the fall 2020:

- Pilot application of external data
- Categorization of duty stations
- Dual scales and transitional arrangements
- Relevance of job descriptions
- Special measures: review of thresholds.

II. Review of compensation of the post adjustment system

Mr Ian Richards and Ms Patricia Nemeth attended the March 2020 working group on operational rules for post adjustment, with participation from other federations, several ICSC commissioners, and organisation representatives as well as the ILO statistician. Post adjustment is the multiplier applied to P staff salaries in order to ensure similar purchasing power around the world.

This working group looks at how the pay index, which fluctuates monthly, is applied to salaries in order to provide stability and predictability for staff. The bulk of the work in reforming post adjustment is made at the level of the statistical task force, to which we sent high level statisticians. That task force looked at how the pay index is calculated, examining issues such as how rent is calculated (the biggest cost item), other large elements such as medical insurance, how data is collected and how outliers are treated.

The main issues discussed were grouped according to the type of duty station. There were some important protection measures introduced, particularly for staff in the field. The importance of this report and its financial impact on staff cannot be underestimated.

- **All duty stations**

Controlled convergence mechanism

The working group agreed for the time being to not accept the proposal of the ICSC secretariat for the Controlled Convergence Mechanism. The CCM would have seen net take home pay change every month, up or down, in order to more strictly follow the purchasing power of staff in New York. While there was a strong push from the ICSC Secretariat and some commissioners, we argued that changing net take home pay every month would be confusing for staff and create a level of uncertainty.

Gap closure measure

The GCM is a protection measure under which, if a cost of living survey shows that staff in a duty station are being paid more than the equivalent purchasing power of staff in New York, net take home pay should be reduced by the difference but then increased by the amount of the gap closure measure. Until 2015 that amount was 5 percent. Then the ICSC, against our position, reduced it to 0 percent. Then, under pressure three years ago it increased it to 3 percent, but with a longer period during which there would be no pay cut.

Over the last decade we had an exceptional situation following the financial crisis, whereby an artificially-imposed pay freeze in New York combined with high inflation in New York but low inflation elsewhere and a falling dollar because of quantitative easing by the Federal Reserve, led to a growing gap between New York and certain Group 1 duty stations such as Geneva, Rome and Madrid. For Geneva that gap was 7.7 percent, when calculated according to the ICSC's statistical methods, which our task force changed. If it had been run again according to the new methodology, that gap would be much smaller.

The General Assembly had asked that this gap be reduced. We requested that the gap closure measure, in line with requests from members, be re-established at 5 percent, with pushback from all the commissioners who argued this could only happen if pay increases would also be delayed until they accumulated to a certain amount, a position also held by the General Assembly. If applied, this would penalize staff in 99 percent of situations. Against this current context, CCISUA representatives were not able to increase the GCM from 3 percent to 5 percent given the collateral damage this would cause. At the same time, large gaps have only occurred on four occasions in recent history, and the set of economic circumstances was exceptional. The expectation is that by acting through the statistical task force, we have solved the issue through prevention rather than cure.

- **Group 1 duty stations**

These are duty stations with “hard” local currencies, such as Geneva, Vienna, Paris, Rome, The Hague. Salaries are set in a way that net take home pay is paid at the same level in local currency each month with the aim of maintaining purchasing power parity with New York. The amount paid is reviewed once a year.



Twelve-month review

Net take home pay is currently reviewed every February in order to see whether it should increase or stay the same. This review is done using inflation data. A number of commissioners were pushing for the twelve-month review should allow the ICSC to cut net take home pay in order to reduce the gap, in line with the General Assembly request mentioned above. We argued that cuts should not be done based on inflation data. If necessary, and if a large gap persists for at least two years, then a survey could be done to properly establish the facts. But inflation data that does not capture the reality of life for international civil servants should be avoided. This was accepted. Again though, it is important to stress that these situations are exceptional.

- **Group 2 duty stations**

These are duty stations with “soft” local currencies. Salaries are set in a way that net take home pay is paid at the same level in US dollars each month, with the aim maintaining purchasing power parity with New York. The amount paid is reviewed every four months in order to account for changes in foreign exchange rates.

Four-month review

Net take home pay is reviewed every four months. Currently, if the review decides that the post adjustment multiplier should reduce by up to 10 points, that reduction is applied immediately, creating uncertainty for staff in the field. The working group agreed a new formula. If there is a decline of up to 3 points, that reduction is applied. If the decline is between 3 and 10 points, a reduction of 3 points is applied, pending the next four-month review. This is due to a local currency depreciation, which might cut post adjustment, often being followed by inflation from more expensive imports that then increase post adjustment. At the next four-month review, if the decline is still more than 3 points but less than 10, then the balance is applied. Historical research shows that in most cases the post adjustment recovers in the intervening period and thus many field staff will be protected from a short-term pay cut.

Ten-point rule

Current rules state that if the decline in post adjustment at a four-month review is more than 10 points within a four month-period, then there is no immediate decrease and a cost of living survey is conducted in order to establish a new post adjustment multiplier. The problem has been when the reduction in each review period has been just less than 10 points but has over several periods cumulated to significantly more than 10 points. A number of duty stations have slipped through the gap and have suffered significant decreases with no cost of living survey to properly fix things. We proposed that should there be a decline of more than 10 points over a year, things are frozen at a point where the magnitude of the decline is established, and a cost of living survey is conducted. The working group agreed to this important protection measure that will help many staff. However, there is still some discussion on how that decline should be defined.

- **Next steps**

These are the main outcomes of the working group, and one of the final steps in a process that started almost three years ago following our collective action.

In summary, some important protection measures for staff, a push back against the most egregious proposals from the ICSC and the General Assembly, and some points to be revisited in the future. Importantly, combined with the work of the statistical task force (a point that needs to be emphasized as prevention is better than cure), this should ensure better outcomes and pay protection for staff in field and HQ duty stations.

This outcome was to be presented at the ICSC spring session for adoption. Following that, ACPAQ will work on the survey design. The survey design should focus on spending less attention on the price of small items like toothbrushes and shampoo and more attention on rent, medical insurance and other costly items.

Once this is all done, which takes a bit of time, a new round of cost of living surveys will be conducted early 2021. In total it will have been a busy four years to finally be able to make a major fix to how post adjustment works.

III. Independence of the ILO-AT

In 2019, the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization (ILO-AT), issued several five judgments in the so-called “Geneva salary cut cases”, deciding that Geneva-based organizations that implemented the decision of the International Civil Service Commission approving the results of the latter’s 2016 cost-of-living survey for Geneva, shall pay the complainants retroactively as if the pay cut had never occurred.

These judgments however applied only to the Common System organisations in Geneva that follow the ILOAT, but not those that follow the UNDT/UNAT internal justice system. This caused concerns about a two-track salary system in Geneva for Professional staff. In August 2019, the three Staff Federations (CCISUA, FICSA and UNISERV) sent a joint letter to ICSC Chairman, Mr Larbi Djakta, regarding these judgments. The Staff Federations called on the Commission to revise its earlier decisions relative to the 2016 cost-of-living surveys as well as its elimination of the 5 per cent gap closure measure in order to align its decisions with the principles and decisions contained in the ILO-AT judgments for all common system staff in the Professional and higher categories in Geneva. Further, the Federations expressed hope that the ICSC would prepare and publish a single, corrected post adjustment figure for Geneva.

On 27 December 2019, the UN General Assembly issued Resolution 74/255 (A and B), affirming the Reaffirms the authority of the International Civil Service Commission to continue to establish post adjustment multipliers for duty stations in the United Nations common system, under article 11 (c) of the statute of the Commission and the importance of ensuring that the governing organs of the specialized agencies do not take, on matters of concern to the common system, positions conflicting with those taken by the General Assembly; and expressing “concern at the application of two concurrent post adjustment multipliers in the United Nations common system at the Geneva duty

station”, urging the ICSC and its member organizations to uphold the unified post adjustment multiplier for the Geneva duty station under article 11 (c) of the statute of the Commission as a matter of priority, and requesting the Commission to report on the matter to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session.

The GA also noted “*with concern that the organizations of the United Nations common system face the challenge of having two independent administrative tribunals with concurrent jurisdiction among the organizations of the common system, as highlighted in the report of the Commission, and requests the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to conduct a review of the jurisdictional setup of the common system and submit the findings to the Assembly.*” (emphasis added).

The Resolution represents a point of concern and a potential attack on the independence of the ILO-AT through exerting pressure on the Common System organisations to “conform” with the GA decisions, and by extension defy some of the ILO-AT rulings. This can be also seen in conjunction with the ongoing process of amendments to the ILO-AT Statute in recent years, during which a number of its member organisations have expressed the strong reference to being able to unilaterally leave the ILO-AT jurisdiction, which seems to have intensified with the issuance of several staff-friendly ILO-AT judgments. This trend and the concurrent pressure from the Common System create a risk that the ILO-AT will be weakened in the longer term, and rather than elevating the conditions of service for everyone in line with the best jurisprudence, their conditions would be significantly worsened. CCISUA will continue the ongoing monitoring of this situation.

IV. Future of work

The vision of the reimagined workplace will focus not just on the workplace, but who would be required to work on-site, what policies would be applicable, and how the conditions of service would be redesigned for staff.

There are various initiatives address the Future of Work by different groups i.e. Young UN, #NewWork and others. CCISUA had requested the Secretary-General for the greater inclusion of the staff federations on this matter so that staff voices can be heard. Unfortunately, the federations have not been represented in any of the working groups, which is very problematic particularly with regards to the current pushes towards *Future of Work*. The *FoW* WG, amongst other issues, has tasked to look into possible increase in flexibility of the UN workforce through ‘all-in’ contracts (effectively *hire-and-fire contracts* that limit the liabilities to the organisation), to which CCISUA is fundamentally opposed. We note with concern that *Young UN* has been invited to participate in these WGs but our voice, as legitimate body comprised of formal staff representation bodies, is being ignored.

V. Dealing with organizational offshoring

No decision by Member States has been made with respect to the Global Service Delivery Model (GSDM). It is expected to be deferred to the 75th session of the General Assembly.

VI. Improving parental leave

At their session in August 2019, the ICSC established a working group to look into the topic of improving and harmonizing parental leave across the UN-system.

The WG has been tasked to examine the current parental leave entitlements of the UN system in a holistic and comprehensive manner and develop a proposal for consideration by the ICSC at their 91st session.

The ICSC Secretariat has been tasked to conduct an in-depth analysis of parental leave policies in international organisations with reference to national systems and private sector organisations, covering all geographic regions, to support the work of the WG.

While we believe that the topic of *parental leave* should be extended to also cover *caretaking leave*, the proposal by the Human Resources Network is an excellent starting point.

This proposal includes:

- Increasing parental leave (birth, surrogacy or adoption) for both parents to 16 weeks each;
- Granting additional 8 weeks for birth mother;
- Harmonizing the approach;
- Evaluating option for telecommuting before the delivery of the baby as well as special considerations warranting additional leave.

We want to also focus on improving the situation of pregnant women in the field, who have to leave their duty stations early in order to avoid airline restrictions on flying in the final month. We find the current practice where this is charged against the maternity leave entitlement unfair as it leads to reducing time with the child post-birth, or to eating into annual leave without any fault on the part of the expecting mother.

In order to provide empirical data as input for the WG, a questionnaire has been circulated amongst the CCISUA members, which will be consolidated and analysed prior to the WG taking up its work.

At the current point it is unclear when the first meeting of the WG will take place (originally scheduled for May 2020).

VII. HR Network

HR Network (HRN) held its 39th Session in The Hague at the ICC and the OPCW from 1 to 3 July 2019. The public part of the meeting was held on 3 July at OPCW, and CCISUA took part. The discussions focused on difficulties in attaining inter-organisational mobility, a number of ICSC-related topics, including base floor salary scale, education grant, Report of the WG on review LSS methodology, a presentation on post adjustment, parental leave policies, and a presentation on the importance of mental health strategy and the progress on the global staff survey.

On conditions of service applicable to both categories of staff, HRN concurred with the findings of the ICSC Secretariat on the current practices on performance management, and in reference to parental leave confirmed their commitment to present a Conference Room Paper at the upcoming ICSC session on Parental Leave provisions. The group agreed that it was important to ensure active staff participation in the Global staff survey on conditions of service.

The HRN agreed to recommend to the GA an adjustment to the unified base/floor salary scale for the Professional and higher categories of 1.21 per cent. Furthermore, it concurred with the proposal to recommend to the General Assembly that the current rates of staff assessment used in conjunction with gross salaries be maintained until the next regular review of those rates in 2022, unless a change in the situation of the Tax Equalization Fund necessitated an earlier review.

The group heard and welcomed the report the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions (ACPAQ), while asking for further research to be done on some topics. The HRN also concurred with the analysis of the ICSC and suggested continuing with the approach and to adjust the levels of the hardship allowance proportional to the movement of the net base salary scales, representing an increase of two per cent. The HRN highlighted the importance of finalizing the review of local salary methodologies in 2020 and highlighted areas of concern including employer's participation in surveys, the use of external data, cost of implementation, the role of Local Salary Survey Committees, and a need for clearer guidance in the methodology on the use of the special measures to mitigate the effects of high levels of inflation and abrupt currency devaluation.

The Bureau did not attend the 40th HRN Session held in Geneva in February 2020.

VIII. High Level Committee on Management

CCISUA was invited to participate on the open day of the 38th Meeting of the HLCM, which took place in Turin, from 15 to 16 October 2019. As mentioned above, the CCISUA was not represented in any of the working groups on the Future of Work. The focus of this HLCM was geared more towards security, safety and health than conditions of service.

The following topics were discussed at the open day:

a) Risk Management Framework

The HLCM endorsed the introduction of a *Reference Maturity Model for Risk Management*, which shall provide a system-wide standard for organisations on

- Putting risk management tools and frameworks in place;

- Establish a multiple stage maturity model that incorporates risk culture, process and integration, policy and governance;
- Self-classification against a 5-stage maturity model.

Participation in the RMM shall be voluntary.

Our concerns regarding the RMM, as expressed by CCISUA during the session are

- lack of inclusion of staff representatives;
- lack of formal processes to keep staff in the loop;
- no streamlined risk reporting tools and missing system-wide risk register;
- lack of commitment to continuous evaluation and improvement of the RMM.

We further encouraged the evaluation of ‘risk reserves’ (markups) to mitigate some of the effects caused by risks actually materializing.

b) Occupational Safety and Health

The newly proposed vision statement of the Task Force: *“The United Nations, in fulfilling its organizational mandates, aims to provide a healthy, safe and respectful working environment that promotes greater accountability, efficiency and commitment of its workforce”*.¹

The previous term *Duty of Care (DoC)* has now been replaced by *Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)*. The concepts are the same, effectively requiring an organisation to introduce measures for protecting those under their purview.

While CCISUA is pleased with the efforts that have been undertaken and the framework as such, it remains unclear in how this will be operationalized now and how a clear and consistent implementation as well as proper governance can be introduced. We are furthermore concerned about the lack of coverage for affiliate staff as coverage for them remains voluntary for organisations, effectively limiting the liabilities and responsibilities towards this vulnerable group. The HLCM adopted the draft framework, vision statement and core principles and will issue guidelines on how to integrate OSH into the Enterprise Risk Management.

c) Supporting the Transformation of the UN to a repositioned development system

While this agenda item has mainly be an update on the activities of the Business Innovation Group, there was one very important point that surfaced, that will have wide-ranging impacts on the conditions of work for staff, namely **Mutual Recognition**.²³

¹ Final Report of the Cross-functional Task Force on Duty of Care, October 2019, CEB/2019/HLCM/27/Rev.1, p. 12.

² https://www.unsceb.org/CEBPublicFiles/Mutual%20recognition%20statement_2%20April%202020_latest.pdf

³ <https://www.unsceb.org/content/mutual-recognition>



We need to be aware and alert about downsizing and outsourcing potentially being implemented through the back door via the mechanism of mutual recognition. It allows organisations to procure services from each other. What this could entail is that, for example, one organisation starts with outsourcing transactional functions and other organisations to make use of this via a mutual recognition agreement. The Mutual Recognition clearly states that the establishment of Shared Service Centers (UN-System wide) is a target.

B. FIELD AND SECURITY

I. Classification of Hardship Duty Stations

As is the usual practice, CCISUA participated in the mid-year and annual review meetings of the ICSC working group on the classification of Hardship Duty Stations. 2019 was the mandatory review of duty stations in the Asia/Pacific region. The annual process is held to allow for a full review, based on a questionnaire from the field locations, input on security from UNDSS and health from the medical service, WHO and other sources. A total of 243 duty stations were reviewed. The annual process is usually followed by a midyear review which has just taken place virtually on 9-11 June 2020. The session was marked by discussions on the potential impact of the ongoing COVID crisis on local conditions and health factors in most locations. As a result, several duty stations were given a transitional classification pending a comprehensive assessment of the strains of COVID on local socio-economic fabrics.

II. Security

CCISUA actively participated in the activities of IASMN, the Inter Agency Security Management Network which is the largest gathering of security specialists and security policy makers UN wide where staff representatives have an observer status. The reporting period saw a change of guard at the top of the UN Department on Safety and Security (UNDSS) with the appointment of a new USG, M. Gilles Michaud. One of the first decisions of the first IASMN under the new leadership of UNDSS has been to reopen discussions on strengthening compliance and oversight mechanisms since the last changes introduced in 2015. Broadly, participants advocated for a mechanism with centralized elements that would assist with compliance. This was a welcome development as when the changes were introduced in 2015, CCISUA raised concerns about the potential down sides of a decentralised compliance monitoring system.

III. Duty of care

The reporting period saw the end of the activities of the task force on Duty of Care in which CCISUA took a keen interest. The working group presented to the HLCM for approval, the following conclusions and recommendations:

- A Vision Statement and a set of Core Principles for a healthier, safer and more respectful UN workplace.
- A draft Framework for Affiliate/Standby/Non-UN Personnel, outlining voluntary measures, based on the Core Principles, for reference by UN organizations when contracting these categories of personnel.
- A Practical guidance for integrating Occupational Safety & Health (OSH) into Enterprise Risk Management Processes.

- Establishment of an Occupational Safety & Health (OSH) Forum, led by WHO, to serve as a multidisciplinary interagency technical body to mainstream OSH and the tools developed by the Task Force in the UN system; to coordinate, revise and update relevant norms and standards; to further develop OSH risk management methodologies; and, to promote the integration of OSH risk management into the work of Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams.

IV. Implementation Board for the UN System Mental Health Strategy

Notes on the most important updates on Action Plan (Content Development, Psychosocial Support and Stakeholder Engagement)

- Audit of resources that have been developed for COVID-19 completed and plan approved.
- Noted that ‘grief and loss’ and ‘reintegration into the workplace’ were noted as important topics. If any materials have been developed in these areas.
- Other key areas recommended were suicide prevention and substance use.
- Agreed to look at psychosocial support for health professionals.
- Communication and engagement: a number of platforms being considered. Key areas emerging: focus on leaders and developing action plans for those UN Organizations who we have not previously engaged with.
- SCO has grief workshops and handouts and will start offering workshops online to UNS staff starting in June (platform approval pending).

Suicide Prevention

- Commencing work on a Suicide Prevention Project was approved.
- CISMU counsellors in the field are working on Suicide Prevention.
- Suicide Reduction/Awareness - Both SCO & CISMU also have materials on this, SCO doing suicide prevention workshops for SSS (security) as requested (generally for promoted supervisors) and to staff at large.

Domestic Abuse Action Plan

- Domestic Abuse Reference Group is well established with membership across many agencies and disciplines. There is a balance between the need of getting things out now and long-time work.
- Momentum is growing. Conversation with EOSG – SG’s interested has increased, he mentioned it during the town hall and sent out a broadcast in April.
- Resources currently available being estimated. Working now on awareness, moving towards legal and HR policy areas, realizing that is a very complex area. Conversation has started.
- Website ready to go, is with DGC and will go out shortly.
- Spoken with UNSSCG on training needs, particularly for counsellors, would be good to have a conversation with medical on where the needs are.

C. LEARNING, COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

Particularly during times of crises, robust communication and outreach strategies are important. For that purpose, CCISUA, in addition to our website (<http://www.ccisua.org>) is using less formal means of communication and collaboration to ensure a quick turnaround time and prompt dissemination of critical information.

Our *members*' mailing list has proven to be the most important tool, but we are also relying on our Virtual Office *Wiki* system for ensuring retention of institutional knowledge as well as our *JIRA* system for keeping track of general inquiries and adherence to financial processes.

Unfortunately, our website has experienced some security issues over the last year and we are now in the process of reviewing the technical architecture and fixing any identified issues, with the help of an external service provider. This should also resolve the issue of our website not being accessible from within selected UN-system networks ("blocking").

In order to strengthen the communication amongst the bureau, we have been heavily relying on video conferences, and will continue to do so.

Resources

- <http://www.ccisua.org>
- <http://wiki.ccisua.org>
- <http://jira.ccisua.org>

I. Institutional knowledge and internal communication

One of the priorities for the present reporting period, as established in the communication strategy presented at the past CCISUA GA, was to continue developing and improving CCISUA internal communication and retention of institutional knowledge. CCISUA communication team has been strongly investing in the Virtual Office (VO) platform to tailor it to the members' needs and preferences – expressed by the members during GA meetings; as well as to the work of the federation – both external (as preparation for representation in meetings) and internal (as working groups and discussion hubs).

- **Virtual Office**

CCISUA Virtual Office was established in the second half of 2018 and has been tailored as a knowledge sharing hub and a platform to collaborate and coordinate on internal and external matters. The aim of this platform is also to address the shortcoming in communication highlighted by the members – as the lack of information on CCISUA activities, which is a barrier for new members and teams to stay tuned and contribute.

Amongst its different "spaces", the platform includes:

- Archive – where members can find historic documents of CCISUA (since 1978!), by searching by year, category, popular labels or text search.

- Ongoing work - where members can find the latest information about developments in ongoing external working groups and meetings, internal planning (as General Assembly meetings) and other activities.
- Discussion groups/working groups – thematic spaces where members lead the discussions and propose ways forward (e.g. working group on contributions, coordination space on Statutes' amendments and coordination space on social security).
- Q&A space – currently with five questions on different topics, answered by CCISUA members. The space is meant to move the communication from emails, where the information is lost over time, to one dedicated space where members can access/request information at any time as well as to contribute with knowledge and expertise.

A VO “cheat sheet” has been created to help the members get started.

- **InfoBooklet** – the InfoBooklet serves as a guide about CCISUA, its activities and membership benefits. It is updated every six months and when there is a change in membership.
- **CCISUA Newsletter** – Due to the hard work on the VO platform, as well as the VO content developed, the newsletter was not produced during this reporting period. Though the information currently available on the VO, including summaries of developments and of CCISUA activities, is very similar to the content of the newsletter, the latter was regarded as a useful tool by the members. Thus, it is planned to continue developing newsletters in the future, when resources allow.

II. CCISUA website report

- **Background**

A new CCISUA website (www.ccisua.org) was built in the course of 2015-2016 by a firm called Born Interactive. The website became functional in May 2016. As there were a number of issues with the website, as delivered by Born Interactive, a new firm was selected to provide the necessary support. Westend Creations, based in The Hague, was selected based on price-service-availability criteria and provided assistance in the course of 2017-2018.

- **Priorities and objectives**

The approach for conducting work on the website is based on three priorities, these being functionality, long-term capacity and quality of content.

The website was hacked in August 2019 and, even though the malware was eliminated, the site was blacklisted, which made it inaccessible thorough several networks. As such, the objectives delineated for the present reporting period were to (a) ensure that the website is accessible and secure from future threats, (b) continue developing content and monitoring progress.

- **Progress**

- i. Website security

To resolve the outlined issue and to ensure that the site is accessible and properly secured, a website expert was engaged to run a review, clean up the site from unnecessary content and backdoors which could be used by hackers and review the technical architecture to keep the site secure and prevent future threats. CCISUA website was transferred to a new host, SiteGround, in order to resolve the blacklisting issue and ensure that the site is accessible.

To select the service provider, two firms were contacted and submitted quotes. AR Interactive was selected based on price-service-availability criteria and started the review on 12 March 2020. Web development retainer is advised to ensure prompt maintenance, technical support, updates and bug fixes throughout the year.

- ii. Content and visibility

Fourteen articles with dedicated visuals have been posted within the timeframe of the present report (May 2019 – May 2020), with an average of 500 views per article. As reported in the previous Bureau report (2018-2019), the communication team continued to post the articles on UN Staff Unions' Facebook page and monitoring the visibility results – which show an average of 820 people reached per article on the Facebook page. Further, the results also aligned with what was reported in the previous Bureau report – an article posted on the website and shared on the Facebook page gets significantly more views than an article posted on the website without sharing.

Though, according to the CCISUA communication strategy (2019), it is intended to further expand CCISUA content to social media pages as Facebook and Twitter (by creating CCISUA accounts), the priority set for the present reporting period was to develop and improve CCISUA internal communication and retention of institutional knowledge. Thus, the plans to invest in external communication by expanding to social media have been postponed.

III. Training (the amended Bureau decision)

In December 2019, the Bureau amended its decision on covering training to ensure that the conditions of use are clear to everyone and that it is easy to ensure the accounting. CCISUA covers the fees of any union-related workshop / training for dues-paying members in the maximum amount of USD 1,000, per member, per annum, including course participation and trainer fees. The trainings are paid by reimbursement via bank transfer. These have to be claimed within the financial year when the workshop / training was attended and after its completion. The members are encouraged to submit the requests for reimbursements as soon as possible to enable smooth financial tracking and, preferably, within two months from the completion of the workshop/ training. The members are advised that the timeline for claiming reimbursements will be shorter for workshops / training taking place close to the end of the financial year. The members carry full responsibility for ensuring timely submission of their claims.



The reimbursement is claimed by the Executive Head of Union of the CCISUA member participating in the workshop / training, by addressing an email to CCISUA Treasurer and General Secretary, copying CCISUA Secretariat (secretariat@ccisua.org), with the invoice stating the fee amount of the workshop / training or trainer and the proof of payment.