



15 January 2018

Dear Secretary-General,

You will be aware that the International Civil Service Commission instituted a new pay system for P and D staff starting January 2017.

This system had a number of negative consequences for staff. This included reductions in benefits related to mobility, reduction in step frequency, and a pay cut of one percent a year for staff with children and a working spouse.

You did not hold back in criticizing these changes:

- In 2015, speaking at the UNHCR Executive Committee, you said the changes to mobility-related benefits are “counter-productive and threaten to affect our ability to fulfil our mandate where it matters most – including in many dangerous locations.”
- In the same year, speaking collectively as the Chief Executives Board, you stated to the ICSC that “slowing down the rate at which salary step increments were achieved was likely to have negative effects on the morale of the majority of staff members who were performing well.” (A/70/30)
- Then at the ICSC 2017 March session, in a statement delivered by your Chef de Cabinet, you “reiterated the appeal to the Commission that it reconsider the elements of the new compensation package that would adversely affect current staff members who were working parents and whose spouse was not recognized as a dependent.” (Sessional report ICSC/84/R.8)

While the ICSC disregarded your appeals, the UN Dispute Tribunal did not.

Having convened a special three-judge gender-balanced panel to consider a number of cases brought by staff, it sided with you and ruled the year-on-year pay cut for working parents illegal. (UNDT judgment 2017/098)

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Mr. António Guterres  
Secretary-General of the United Nations

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Like you, we welcome the opportunity provided by this judgment to force a rethink at the ICSC. The judgment:

- is consistent with your concerns about the pay cut in question and consistent with your ongoing criticism about how the ICSC reaches its decisions;
- is consistent with your desire to provide a more attractive work environment for women - many female staff have indeed noted that the cuts affect them disproportionately as they are more likely to have a spouse that works than the other way round; and
- is consistent with your belief that reform of an organization should not be through cuts in pay but through increases in productivity.

In addition we believe that no strategic purpose is achieved by cutting pay; it demoralizes staff and damages the organization.

For these reasons we urge you not to appeal this judgment but to instead notify the ICSC of your intention to respect the collective wisdom of the three judges on the panel and to urge the ICSC to rethink its approach in a more modern and productivity-focused way.

We thank you for your kind consideration in this matter,



Ian Richards  
President

Coordination Committee  
of International Staff Unions  
and Associations (CCISUA)



Diab El-Tabari  
President

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