



OPENING STATEMENT BY CCISUA AT THE ICSC'S 86th SESSION

New York, 19 March 2018

Mr. Chair, Members of the Commission, Colleagues,

Allow me start by congratulating Mr. Mantovani on his election as Vice-Chair and Mr. Kumamaru and Mr. Mounts on their recent appointment to the Commission.

Allow me also to congratulate Mr. Fitzgerald on his election as FICSA President.

Let me start by thanking all who have spoken before for their statements, in particular Ms. Beagle on behalf of the Secretary-General, although it is interesting that the Secretary-General has not chosen to attend himself. The statements so far show the concerns staff have and the expectations that this meeting has raised, both in the field and in headquarters duty stations.

Staff join the UN common system to serve the collective goals of member states and to do so efficiently and effectively, particularly in the context of UN reform.

However, that does doesn't mean that they aren't conscious of their conditions of service and are not aware of how these conditions have declined markedly these recent years, particularly in comparison to a comparator that has just awarded its DC-based staff a 2.3 percent pay rise.

Over the next two weeks we look forward to discussing a reform to hardship classification so that hardship payments are in line with the actual hardship of the location, and we thank members of the hardship working group on their proposals.

Further we welcome the opportunity to consider payment of non-family service allowance for duty stations, which while safe for families, are clearly not suitable. And for this we thank the HR Network for their excellent paper.

With regards to gender and diversity, and notwithstanding the observation of the HR Network, let us also focus on the steps organizations can take to create a more enabling environment. In view of recently reported events in the media concerning the UN but also the wider aid sector, we hope the ICSC can recommend a framework to eliminate harassment and abuse of authority in all its forms from the common system workplace.

With regards to the ACPAQ report, we note that the consultant found considerable scope for improvement on how post adjustment is applied, vindicating many of the serious methodological, legal and managerial concerns made last summer by the HR Network and staff federations, and questionable use of ECP data. It is regrettable that while ACPAQ acknowledged these concerns

as inputs for a future review of post adjustment, these same concerns did not lead to a correction in the 2016 survey round.

It therefore remains unresolved to date what specific, cumulative impact those issues had on the results of the 2016 survey round. Therefore, if implemented without further review and, as appropriate, revision, it appears probable that the ICSC decisions would be open to legal challenge by officials at concerned duty stations.

To this end we also note that the pay cut of five percent in Geneva is significantly more than many of us here were led to understand following the Commission's meeting last July.

Further, colleagues in Bangkok and Tokyo have expressed strong concerns with the application of new scales respectively 13 and 25 percent below current ones. The application of such large and successive cuts does not appear to be based in the reality of salary movements at those duty stations. This does need to be addressed in the forthcoming review of conditions of service for locally recruited staff.

But staff dissatisfaction goes further than what has just been mentioned. In recent years staff in the field have lost the ability to see their families more often through the removal of accelerated home leave and the installation of their families in a nearby family duty station. Elements of the education grant have been reduced, particularly for children with disabilities. And recently, despite being ruled unlawful by the UN Dispute Tribunal, staff with children and working spouses have seen pay cuts of up to 5 percent.

In conclusion, you will be aware of the growing dissatisfaction of staff around the world. Three weeks ago a first day of action brought together staff around the world. Photos were posted on the UN intranet of protests, from the most remote to the largest duty stations, from Bangkok to Baghdad, from Juba to Geneva.

It is no secret that UN staff in Geneva last week went on strike, and we understand that important meetings such as the Human Rights Council were considerably disrupted. We also understand that other agencies and duty stations, representing staff in all three federations, are voting on organizing a second, more global strike later this week. We further understand that staff in New York have planned a demonstration this lunchtime.

As staff federations we must represent the needs and concerns of our member unions while doing our best to support open dialogue at the Commission. We therefore hope that you will be able to address our concerns, and to this end we would like to echo the request of FICSA to put reconsideration of the current round of post adjustment surveys on the agenda.

Thank you.