



January 2012

Welcome Note

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- Kingston P. Rhodes, Chairman

Welcome Note	1	<i>Welcome to the first edition of “ICSC MATTERS”, a newsletter designed to keep our interlocutors more fully informed about our activities. We would like to kick off the New Year by issuing a newsletter telling you more about who we are and what we do. We plan to issue “ICSC MATTERS” on a periodic basis and hope that you will find it interesting and useful. Because ICSC is a body which works collaboratively with its interlocutors, we aim through this medium to explain and contextualize the major developments in HR policy, cost of living and benefits and allowances that affect the working lives of UN common system staff. An informed constituency is a strong constituency and our aim is to deepen knowledge about what we do and how we do it. Through the timely sharing of information we seek to strengthen our mutual ties and promote productive working methods with our stakeholders.</i>
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Composition of the ICSC

The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1975 as an independent expert body. Its mandate is to regulate and coordinate the conditions of service of staff in the United Nations common system, while promoting and maintaining high standards in the international civil service.



The Commission is composed of fifteen members who serve in their personal capacity. They are appointed by the General Assembly for four-year terms, with due regard for broad geographical representation.

Two of the members are designated Chairman and the Vice-Chairman who are full-time members and are based in New York. The full Commission meets twice a year. The current composition of the Commission includes three female and twelve male Commissioners hailing from five continents - Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, France, Germany, Ghana, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Morocco, Poland, the Russian Federation, Sierra Leone and the United States of America.

The constitutional background

The Charter of the United Nations which was signed in San Francisco on 26 June 1945 and entered into force on 24 October 1945, contains several articles which are relevant to the International Civil Service Commission.

Article 8 in Chapter III:

"The United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs."

Article 57 in Chapter IX:

1. *"The various specialized agencies, established by inter-governmental agreement and having wide international responsibilities, as defined in their basic instruments, in economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related fields, shall be brought into relationship with the United Nations in accordance with the provisions of Article 63."*

2. *"Such agencies thus brought into relationship with the United Nations are hereinafter referred to as specialized agencies."*

Article 63 in Chapter X:

1. *"The Economic and Social Council may enter into agreements with any of the agencies referred to in Article 57, defining the terms on which the agency concerned*

shall be brought into relationship with the United Nations. Such agreements shall be subject to approval by the General Assembly."

2. *"It may co-ordinate the activities of the specialized agencies through consultation with and recommendations to such agencies and through recommendations to the General Assembly and to the Members of the United Nations."*

Article 101 in Chapter XV:

1. *"The staff shall be appointed by the Secretary-General under regulations established by the General Assembly."*

2. *"Appropriate staffs shall be permanently assigned to the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, and, as required, to other organs of the United Nations. These staffs shall form a part of the Secretariat."*

3. *"The paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. Due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible."*

Mandate of the ICSC

The Commission's mandate covers all facets of staff employment conditions, but the type of action it is empowered to take in a specific area is regulated under its statute. On some matters (e.g. establishment of daily subsistence allowance; schedules of post adjustment, i.e. cost-of-living element; hardship entitlements), the Commission itself may take decisions.

In other areas, it makes recommendations to the General Assembly which then acts as the legislator for the rest of the common system. Such matters include Professional salary scales, the level of dependency allowances and education grant. On still other matters, the Commission makes recommendations to the executive heads of the organizations; these include, in particular, human resources policy issues.

The Statute and Rules of Procedure is available in English, French and Spanish on the ICSC website (<http://icsc.un.org/resources/pdfs/general/statute1.pdf>).

Subsidiary bodies

ICSC is assisted by an expert subsidiary body, the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions (ACPAQ), which provides technical advice on the methodology of the post adjustment system. Other working groups and panels are established on an ad hoc basis as the need arises.

ACPAQ is composed of six members and is chaired by the Vice Chairman of ICSC. The chief of the Cost-of-Living Division serves as secretary to ACPAQ. ACPAQ usually meets every year to review methodological and other technical issues related to the operation of the post adjustment system, and to make recommendations for ICSC's consideration and approval.

Commission's 73rd Session

The ICSC held its 73rd session at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 18 through 29 July 2011 where a number of important matters affecting all staff categories common system-wide were considered. The Commission, *inter alia*:

- *Focused on harmonization of the conditions of service of staff working in non-family duty stations of the common system, including:*
 - *The designation of non-family duty stations,*
 - *The rest and recuperation framework,*
 - *The unified rates of special operations living allowance;*

- *Reviewed the methodology and the level of allowances paid under the mobility and hardship scheme;*
- *Established the level of Danger Pay;*
- *Continued its review of performance management framework;*
- *Considered the results of a survey on diversity in the United Nations common system;*
- *Reviewed the implementation of ICSC decisions and recommendations by common system organizations;*



- *Revised the minimum eligibility requirements for the receipt of the education grant;*
- *Decided to recommend to the General Assembly revised level of base/floor salary and the rates of staff assessment used in conjunction with gross salaries of the Professional and higher categories of staff.*

The details of the Commission's consideration of the various items during 2011 are issued in the Commission's annual report (A/66/30) available on the ICSC website. In accordance with Article 17 of the ICSC statute, the Commission's annual report has been submitted to the United Nations General Assembly.

General Assembly resolution 66/235

The General Assembly, at its 92nd plenary meeting of the sixty-sixth session on 24 December 2011, adopted resolution 66/235 entitled "United Nations Common System", approving all of the Commission's recommendations regarding performance management framework, revised base/floor scale of gross and net salaries for staff in the Professional and higher categories, revised rates of staff assessment, and revised set of criteria for the granting of rest and recuperation travel and the corresponding frequencies of travel.

The Assembly also endorsed the Commission's decisions with respect to:

- *Mobility and hardship scheme* - with effect from 1 January 2012, a 2.5 per cent increase shall be granted for the hardship, the mobility, and the non-removal

allowances, while the additional non-family hardship elements for staff serving in non-family duty stations shall be adjusted by the same percentage;

- *Danger pay* - abolishing hazard pay and establishing the level of danger pay for internationally recruited staff at US\$1,600 per month (N.B. the Commission concurred to extend hazard pay until 29 February 2012 and establish danger pay as of 1 March 2012).
- *Amendment to the education grant methodology* - with effect from the school year in progress on 1 January 2012, exceptionally, a lower minimum eligibility age could be accepted for those educational institutions which, by virtue of law, require an earlier start of formal education. Governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations common system are invited to harmonize the education grant eligibility criteria with respect to the minimum age.
- *Review of the staff assessment rates* used in conjunction with gross salaries every three years;
- *Termination of the current Noblemaire study* to identify the highest paid national civil service, and to undertake the next study in 2016;
- *Conduct of studies on recruitment policies* and to revert to discussing the issue with recommended measures that would be more favourable to diversity;

Additionally, the General Assembly requested the Commission to explore the feasibility and suitability of possible measures to reflect in the administration of the post adjustment system the pay freeze of the comparator civil service; to determine whether the implementation of such measures falls under its authority; to exercise such authority as appropriate and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. It also requested the Commission to give due regard to the process of timely implementation of its decision on harmonization of conditions of service in non-family duty stations of the organizations of the UN common system.

Commission's upcoming session

The ICSC will hold its **74th Session** at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand from 27 February - 9 March 2012. Items on the agenda include, inter alia, performance rewards and recognition, review of the methodology for determining education grant, standards of conduct, UN/US net remuneration margin review of the methodology, review of security evacuation allowance and extended monthly security allowance, and danger pay for GS staff.

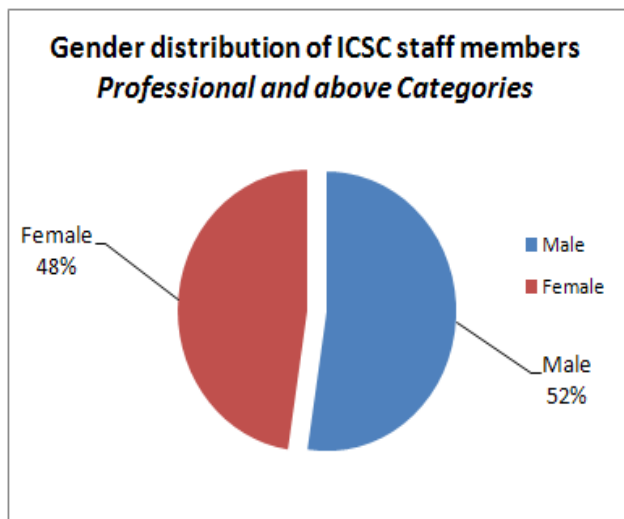
Composition of the ICSC secretariat

The ICSC secretariat provides advisory and technical support to the Commission with particular emphasis on the development of new approaches in human resource management, with emphasis on condition of service for United Nations staff members. The secretariat also advises and guides the organizations of the United Nations common system in the implementation of decisions taken by the Commission.

Presently, the ICSC secretariat employs 39 staff members in its three divisions - Cost of Living, Salaries and Allowances, and Human Resources Policies, as well as the Office of the Executive Secretary. The ICSC offers a challenging, professional environment in the pursuit of promoting and maintaining high standards in the international civil service. Respecting and celebrating a diverse multicultural makeup is what provides the ICSC its dynamic and exciting environment where work is a fulfilling and enriching experience.

Gender Balance in the ICSC

The goal of 50/50 gender balance in the United Nations system has been taken very seriously at the ICSC secretariat. Efforts have been made to recruit qualified female candidates especially at senior and policymaking levels, while paying full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution.



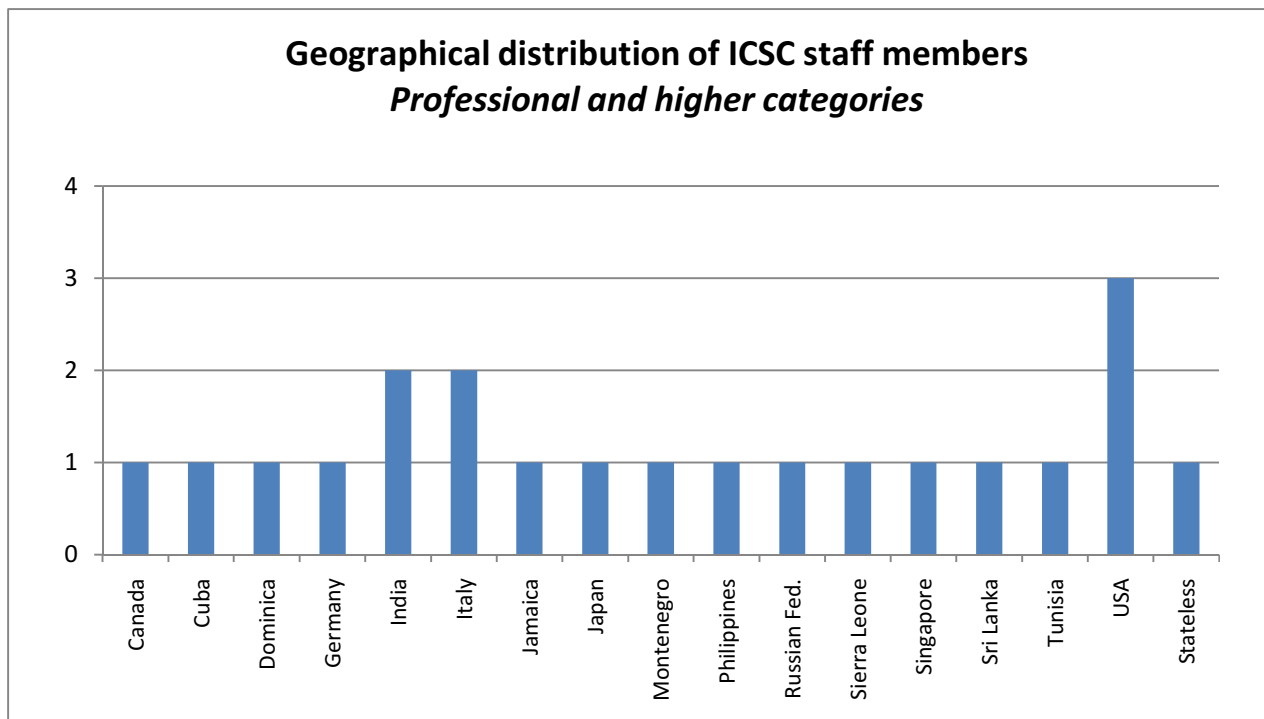
While the size of the ICSC secretariat is fairly small by comparison to other departments and offices, it is encouraging to remark that the efforts have been fruitful. At the present time, the representation of women in the Professional and higher categories is at 48%. Efforts will continue to retain the momentum towards reaching the 50/50 gender target and, maintaining it.

Information about a recent review of gender balance in the United Nations common system can be found in the annual report of the ICSC for 2010 (A/65/30, Chapter IV D.)

Geographical Distribution in the ICSC

A culturally diverse workforce has always been one of the pillars of the United Nations system. As a result of hiring practices that highlight diversity, the ICSC staff members in the Professional and higher categories currently represent 16 different nationalities from various regions, including Canada, Cuba, Dominica, Germany, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Montenegro, Philippines, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tunisia and the United States of America. Table 1 below depicts geographical distribution of ICSC staff member in the Professional and higher categories.

Looking at all staff members of the ICSC secretariat, 25 different nationalities are represented, including Benin, Brazil, Fiji, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Liberia, Peru and Romania.



Recruitment activities

There have been several staffing changes in 2011. We bid farewell to John Hamilton (USA), Denise Jaen (USA), and Duncan Barclay (Denmark) who retired in July 2011, and we welcomed Danijela Milić (Montenegro), Marta Leichner-Boyce (USA) and Regina Pawlik (Germany) and Sergio Moreno (Peru).

Vacant posts in the ICSC secretariat are advertised on the United Nations careers portal (<https://careers.un.org/lbw/Home.aspx>) and the ICSC website (<http://icsc.un.org/joblinks.asp>), as well as on websites of other common system international organizations. Several posts are presently under recruitment and several more vacancy announcements will be issued in the coming period. Recipients of the newsletter are encouraged to disseminate the ICSC vacancies to interested individuals.

ICSC Secretariat in figures

39 staff members at present

21 in the Professional and above categories

18 in the General Service category

22 women (10 P & above, 12 GS)

17 men (11 P & above, 6 GS)

25 nationalities represented

IT Initiatives

Significant work has been undertaken by the ICSC Information Technology Unit with regard to upgrading its system and tools necessary to meet the rapidly changing environment facing the ICSC secretariat. As the services provided by the secretariat are increasingly driven through its internet presence, the development of these latest tools help the secretariat fulfill the needs of its outside customers - common system organizations, staff, and individual member states' diplomatic services.

The ICSC website icsc.un.org has been redesigned and launched in December 2011. Information has been reorganized and updated, making it readily available and accessible for external and internal use. Designed as a comprehensive update to ICSC's online profile, the restructured interactive layout and clean design allow users to navigate the site easily. With addition of features like the map, data subscription page, calendar, "Contact us" page and the updated compendium, the ICSC web site continues to evolve to keep the UN common system informed and updated on time with data, news and information.

ICSC Workshops

ICSC Workshop on the methodology for best prevailing conditions of employment at headquarters and similar duty stations was held in Madrid, Spain from 31 October - 3 November 2011. Prior to that, ICSC workshop on the United Nations Compensation System took place in Hanoi, Vietnam from 5 - 9 September 2011. Participants were internationally and locally-recruited staff of United Nations common system organizations in Asia, who have operational responsibility for administering the compensation of staff, including the post adjustment system, mobility and hardship scheme, daily subsistence allowance (DSA) rates and other allowances and benefits.

Information about the next workshops will be announced on the ICSC website in due course. These workshops are very popular among the staff of the United Nations common system organizations and are often over-subscribed, so make sure you register early to avoid disappointment.

Staff Development Lecture Series

In 2011 ICSC began holding Staff Development Lecture Series and inviting prominent individuals to address topics of common interest. The objective of these series is to provide ICSC staff with the opportunity to learn about current issues relating to the United Nations and how they matter to our work in the secretariat.

In April 2011 Ambassador Ahmed Kamal was invited to speak about "*UN in a Changing World*". Ambassador Kamal is the author of several important publications on disarmament, management, multilateralism, global economic issues, and on technical aspects of informatics and information technology. He is an Honorary Visiting Professor at

several universities in the United States, and has served as a professional diplomat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan for forty years until his retirement in 1999.

Following the success of the first lecture, the second one was held on 11 October. Mrs. Gillian Sorensen, Senior Advisor/National Advocate at the United Nations Foundation, was invited to speak about the "*UN-US relationship in a changing world*". Ms. Sorensen has had a long career working with and for the UN. She served as Assistant Secretary-General for External Relations on appointment by Secretary-General Kofi Annan and prior to that she served as Special Adviser for Public Policy on appointment by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, where she led the global commemoration of the UN's Fiftieth Anniversary and the coordination of the UN50 Summit at Headquarters in New York with 180 Heads of Government participating.

Contributions from readers

If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions for ICSC secretariat please email them to Danijela Milić, HR Policies Officer and communications focal point, at milicd@un.org. Your feedback will provide valuable insight, helping us serve you better.

The ICSC website also includes a "Frequently Asked Questions" page (<http://icsc.un.org/resources/FAQ/default.htm>) through which you can get in contact with us. The content of the ICSC website is continuously being updated and enhanced to facilitate interactive usage, so be sure to visit often.

OTHER INFORMATION

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Did you know?

The ICSC held its first session in 1975. The first Chairman of the ICSC was Mr. Raul Quijano (Argentina) from 1975 to 1979, and the first Vice-Chairman was Mr. A. Adu (Ghana) from 1975-1976.

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