

Record of Decisions of the Fifteenth Session of
the Council of the Federation of Associations of
Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS)

(Geneva, Switzerland, 29-31 July 1987)

1. The Fifteenth Session of the Council of FAFICS was held on Wednesday through Friday, 29-31 July 1987, at the ILO headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland.

Participation

2. The following Member Associations of FAFICS were represented:

AAFI/AFICS, Geneva	Mr. A. Ali
AFICS, New York	Mr. S. Grabe
AFICS, Santiago de Chile	Mrs P. Tsien
BAFUNCS, London	Mrs M.E. Astorquiza
CAF/UNESCO, Paris	Mr. S. Finning
FFQA, Rome	Mr. A. Chakour
NAFICS, Copenhagen	Mr. C. Buonaccorsi
	Miss I. Poulsen

3. Mrs. M. Bruce (Chairman of the Council of FAFICS), Miss A. Butler (Secretary of FAFICS) and Miss E. Vanbraecken (Treasurer of FAFICS) were present in their official capacity.

Election of the Chairman of the Session

(Agenda item 1)

4. Mrs. M. Bruce (Chairman of the Council) was unanimously elected Chairman of the session. It was agreed that, unless there was some valid reason to the contrary, future sessions would normally be chaired by the Chairman of the Council.

Adoption of the Agenda

(Agenda item 2)

5. The proposed draft agenda (document D.1/Rev) was adopted, subject to the addition of a new item, "Membership of FAFICS", after item 11 (cf. Appendix I).

Report of the Chairman of the Council

(Agenda item 3)

6.1 The Chairman reported briefly on developments since the last session of the Council, noting the problems arising as a result of the deteriorating world economic situation and the decreasing value of the dollar. She had attended the General Assembly session, following particularly the Fifth Committee. These were not easy meetings to follow. More often than not, decisions were taken in closed meetings. If FAFICS was to exert effective influence, it meant a constant effort of liaison and lobbying.

6.2 Within the Federation, she welcomed a new Member Association, the Canadian Association of Former International Civil Servants (CAFICS). She understood the reasons why CAFICS was not able to be represented at the present session of the Council, and appreciated perhaps all the more that CAFICS had communicated its views on the items on the agenda of the forthcoming session of the UNJSPB (cf. doc. D.8). She warmly welcomed the representative of AFICS/Santiago, and noted that that Association was participating in a Council session for the first time. AFICS/Mexico had expressed its regrets at not being able to attend.

6.3 With a growing number of UN pensioners all over the world, other associations of pensioners were being set up (eg. in Argentina and Australia) which would undoubtedly develop links, formal or informal, with FAFICS. There had been contacts with members of the Bombay and New Delhi branches of AFUNFI/Bangalore (India).

6.4 Referring to the organisational structure of the Federation, she was glad to report that, with goodwill on both sides, the fact that the Chairman and the Secretariat of the Council were on opposite sides of the Atlantic was not hampering the work of the Federation.

Reports of the appointed representatives of FAFICS to various bodies and meetings
(Agenda item 4)

7.1 Meetings of the UNJSPB and other UN bodies. The Council took note of the reports on the 35th session of the UNJSPB, the 165th session of the Standing Committee of the UNJSPB, the 36th session of the UNJSPB, the twenty-fourth session of the ICSC and the 166th session of the Standing Committee, which had already been distributed to Member Associations.

7.2 The representative of AFICS/New York reported on the twenty-fifth session of the ICSC (New York, 6-24 July 1987) which she had attended on behalf of FAFICS. The session had been largely dominated by demands from various quarters to find an "immediate" and "long-term" solution to the dollar-depreciation problem. This was a problem that not only affected serving staff but also had an impact on pensioners and had led to many resignations and early retirements, thus making it difficult for the Organisations to carry out their programmes of work. The Commission did not accept the proposal of the ACC to adopt a 10 percent floor for the dollar exchange rate from the date of the last post-adjustment survey. After modifying the method of calculation of the remuneration correction factor (RCF), the Commission decided to retain the floor at 20 per cent. Following the recommendations of the General Assembly, the Commission reviewed the present six-week leave entitlement and the post-secondary education grant. It decided that both should be retained as part of the total entitlements of the international civil service.

7.3 Other meetings (document D.6). The Council decided to defer consideration of these meetings to item 10.

Pension questions

(Agenda item 5; documents D.1, Appendices I and II; D.8; D.9)

Items in the draft agenda of the UNJSPB

8.1 JSPB Item 8: Investments of the Fund. The FAFICS representatives at the UNJSPB should demonstrate their interest, noting in particular the positive aspects of the situation but should also try to raise a question, through a voting member of the Board, concerning (1) the advisability of having a second financial adviser, and (2) the nature and extent of the financial audit of the Fund's assets.

8.2 JSPB Item 10: Composition of the Board. A lengthy discussion, hinging on (1) the policy to be adopted regarding FAFICS' participation in both the Board and the Standing Committee, and the relative advantages of having the status of full membership (and a more restricted number of representatives), with or without a vote, or having a larger number of representatives as observers which would enable a larger number of FAFICS Member Associations to attend the sessions and follow the discussions first hand; and (2) the tactics to be adopted (e.g. long-term and short-term objectives). The Council reached agreement on guidelines for the FAFICS Observers at the Board (cf. Appendix II). It also decided to circulate a paper to the Board (cf. Appendix III).

8.3 JSPB Item 11: Actuarial valuation. It was agreed that if FAFICS were to speak on this subject at all it would be merely to emphasise the concern of the Federation over the continuing deficit.

8.4 JSPB Item 12(b): Inequalities of benefits. The Council noted with interest the proposal of the Secretary of the Fund for the establishment of a "floor" as an interim measure applicable to future pensioners. It regretted, however, that no proposal was made to take account of the problems encountered by existing pensioners. The Council decided to request that this aspect of the problem should be drawn to the Board's attention with a request that it be studied for early consideration by the Board.

8.5 JSPB Item 12(c): Two-track system. There was general agreement that the 20 percent cap should be strongly defended against any move to reduce it. The Council decided to speak with the Secretary of the Fund and get him to defend the cap position. FAFICS observers should also intervene, as appropriate.

8.6 JSPB Item 13: Pensionable remuneration of the G.S. category. The Council noted that the proposals concerned serving staff, not pensioners.

8.7 JSPB Item 16: Recovery of indebtedness to the Fund. The Council expressed general satisfaction with the proposals set out in the Secretary's paper. It agreed that the question of a mandatory appeals reference should be taken up with the Secretary, as well as the question of suspension of recovery action pending any decision on an appeal.

8.8 JSPB Item 17: The effect of marriage and its dissolution on benefits from the Fund. The present rules were too rigid. Other possibilities needed to be examined, e.g. correlating the situation of a divorced spouse entitled to and receiving alimony to that of a secondary dependent; possibility of allowing a pensioner who marries after he/she has taken retirement to contribute to the purchase of an annuity, subject to a reduction in pension. It was recognised that it might be necessary to impose restrictions of age or other criteria. FAFICS observers should try to see that the whole question, with its various options, would be examined with a view to reporting on it to the next session of the Board.

UNJSPF Emergency Fund
(Agenda item 5(2))

9. It was agreed that the matter should be taken up with the Secretary of the Fund. The Guidelines dated back to 1982; they were neither well-known nor easy to understand; the procedures needed simplifying. Member Associations might publish information on the Emergency Fund in their various bulletins, and attempts might be made to decentralise decisions (within certain limits) in order to speed up the award of grants.

Date of receipt of pensions and transfer charges
(Agenda item 5(3))

10. It was agreed to take up the matter of transfer channels and bank charges with the Secretary. The progress achieved in France and Italy in bringing about payments almost on time showed that determined action could achieve improvements and serve as an example for other countries.

Application of pension adjustment system
(Agenda item 5(4))

11. The Council noted with satisfaction the improvements in applying the adjustment system since the General Assembly had approved some flexibility regarding the date for granting adjustments. It noted, however, that some practical problems remained which should be drawn to the Secretary's attention.

Five years of service qualifying period
(Agenda item 5(5))

12. This was an item brought up by the Bombay branch of AFUNPI (cf. Doc. D.12). It was recognised that in several of the Organisations there were examples of granting leave without pay in order to make up the qualifying period, when that period was short of five years by only a few months. It was, however, a matter of concern chiefly to serving staff and their administrations. It was agreed to take the matter up informally with FICSA.

Exchange of information on appeals

(Agenda item 5(6))

13. It was noted that there were no new developments. The Tribunal decisions would be passed down in the autumn of 1987.

Taxation of Pensions

(Agenda item 6)

14. The Council exchanged information on this subject. The situation was clear in many countries (UN pensions were tax free in, inter alia, Austria, Chile and India). In several countries the matter was confused. FAFICS and FAFICS Member Associations should keep themselves informed in the matter to the best of their ability.

After-service health insurance

(Agenda item 7)

15.1 CAF/UNESCO distributed an extended and up-dated draft of the comparative study of after-service health insurance and facilities available to retirees through their various Organisations. In a general exchange of information on the subject, some additional data were provided by Member Associations present. Agreement was reached that the tables should be further worked on and supplemented by the Member Associations, and forwarded to CAF/UNESCO as soon as possible. After collating the information, CAF/UNESCO will distribute the final version to the Members before the next meeting of the Council. CAF/UNESCO was congratulated on its initiative in producing a document that would be a useful reference tool to all concerned.

15.2 The Council reiterated its policy decision that Member Associations should stress the importance of ensuring that pensioners were represented on any Agency bodies taking decisions on after-service health insurance.

Pre-retirement courses

(Agenda item 8; Doc. D.10)

16.1 In a general exchange of views the Member Associations gave additional information to supplement the data in the paper prepared by AAFI/AFICS, Geneva:

- BAFUNCS was preparing new information for the benefit of UN staff members coming to the U.K., and would give copies to persons requesting it and make it available to FAFICS;

- several Organisations (FAO, UN, ILO) had been experimenting with putting their pre-retirement courses on tapes and video-tapes so that they could be used at duty stations away from headquarters;

- FAO had been particularly conscious that field staff had less opportunity of participating in such courses, and had set up numerous contact points for providing, inter alia, appropriate pre-retirement advisory services. FFOA would be glad to prepare a summary of what was being done along these lines and communicate it to FAFICS for further distribution.

16.2 The Committee felt that for field duty stations where a number of Organisations were represented there was a case for organising joint pre-retirement courses for staff from all the organisations at a particular duty station. It was suggested that the UN could take the initiative for organising such courses.

16.3 It was agreed that Member Associations should do what they could to encourage and to assist in the organisation of such activities on the part of the Organisations concerned.

Representation of FAFICS at the 37th Session of the UNJSPB
(Agenda item 9)

17. The Council appointed the following persons to represent the Federation at the 35th Session of the UNJSPB:

Observers: Mr. S. Grabe (AAFI/AFICS, Geneva)
Mrs. P. Tsien (AFICS, New York)

Alternates: Mr. A. Ali (AAFI/AFICS, Geneva)
Mrs. M. Bruce (AFICS, New York)
Mr. C. Buonaccorsi (FFOA, Rome)
Mr. A. Chakour (CAF/UNESCO, Paris)
Miss I. Poulsen (NAFICS, Copenhagen)
Mr. W. Zyss (CAF/UNESCO, Paris)

FAFICS Activities as an NGO
(Agenda item 10; docs. D.5, D.6)

18.1 The Council took note of the information given on the various NGO meetings attended by FAFICS in 1986/87 (doc. D.6). AFICS/New York reported on a meeting that had been held in New York in January 1987 and had had as its main theme the "new humanitarian order". During the meeting a number of workshops had been organised on subjects of interest to FAFICS, including the problems of homelessness, ageing and youth. AFICS/New York had participated in the workshop on housing, which had been informative on the situation in the U.S.A.

18.2 In an exchange of views on the usefulness of FAFICS participation in NGO activities such as the meetings described in doc. D.6, it was agreed that the conclusions reached at the Fourteenth Session of the Council (1986) were still valid:

- there was a need to distinguish between what was FAFICS' role (which should chiefly be one of co-ordination and information, and of stimulating or generating action among Member Associations) and what could be done better through FAFICS Member Associations;

- it was useful for FAFICS to be represented at selected NGO Meetings;
- FAFIC's main areas of interest should remain health, ageing and related questions, and housing;
- FAFICS should retain its consultative status as an NGO and continue its membership in CONGO.

18.3 A number of suggestions were made with a view to streamlining the NGO activity, and to involving to a greater extent the participation of Member Associations. It was agreed that the Secretary should continue to deal with NGO activities to the extent possible with the limited resources available. Nominations for FAFICS representation as an NGO should normally be made by the Chairman of the Council or the Secretary, acting on the Chairman's behalf.

18.4 The council decided that FAFICS should remain in Consultative Status with ECOSOC, and that it should also remain a member of CONGO. The Treasurer was authorised to pay the CONGO membership fee.

18.5 The Council noted with satisfaction the replies that had been received to the Chairman's circular letter of July 1986, concerning action that Member Associations were taking or were prepared to take to support the work and enhance the status of the United Nations and the Specialised Agencies (cf. doc. D.5). It had been gratifying to note that the Member Associations were all prepared to engage in some sort of activities along the lines indicated; this was a step towards putting into practice the purposes and functions of the Federation as laid down in Article 2 of its Statutes, which specifies that the Federation "shall uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations system and support the work of the Organisations and bodies of that system, both directly and through its Member Associations in accordance with their competencies".

Information activities of the Federation (Agenda item 11)

19.1 AAFI/AFICS, Geneva distributed a mock-up of a short pamphlet for consideration by the Council. At previous sessions it had been suggested that such a pamphlet could be either fairly lengthy, for instance giving a page to each of the Member Associations for describing its own statutes, activities, membership, etc., or a minimal information sheet giving in capsule form the bare essentials and encouraging possible future members to ask for more information from the individual association. It was the latter solution that AAFI/AFICS now proposed.

19.2 The Council agreed that the short formula was the more appropriate. It would also be less expensive both to produce and to distribute. It was understood that some editorial changes would be needed and that a French and a Spanish text should be prepared. Member Associations should, on request by Secretariat, supply the information relevant to their association (some 4-6 lines).

Membership in FAFICS
(Agenda item 12)

20. In response to a question, it was noted that, according to the Statutes of the Federation, it was the Council that decided whether a new association grouping pensioners should become a member of FAFICS. The general guidelines for acceptance were specified in Article 3 of the Statutes.

FAFICS programme of activities for 1987/88
(Agenda item 13)

21. The Council took note of those decisions taken during the present session which required follow-up action by the Chairman, Member Associations, and/or the Secretariat of the Federation.

Co-ordination with representatives of active staff
(Agenda item 14)

22. The Council noted that the agenda of the present session had been communicated to the President of FICSA. Representatives of Member Associations would attend the FICSA meeting to be held prior to the 37th Session of the UNJSPB.

Financial matters

(Agenda item 15, Doc. D.2, D.3, D.4)

23.1 Accounts for 1986 and the Auditors' report (docs. D.2 and D.3). The Council approved the accounts for 1986 and took note of the auditors' report.

23.2 Budget for 1988 (doc. D.3). The Council approved the budget proposed for 1988. The Council noted, however, that both in the statement of accounts for 1986 and in the draft budget for 1987 there was an excess of expenditure over income which, if allowed to continue, would exhaust its reserves. This might lead the Council to consider the possibility of raising the rate of contribution to the Federation next year, partly to offset the depreciation of the dollar.

23.3 The Council thanked the Treasurer for the meticulous and tireless work carried on throughout the year, and the excellent presentation of the papers to the Council.

Election of Officers
(Agenda item 15)

24.1 The Council unanimously elected the following Officers:

Chairman: Mrs. M. Bruce (AFICS, New York)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. C. Buonaccorsi (FFOA, Rome)
Mr. A. Chakour (CAF/UNESCO, Paris)
Mr. S. Grabe (AAFI/AFICS, Geneva)

Secretary: Miss A. Butler (AAFI/AFICS, Geneva)

Treasurer: Miss E. Vanbraeckken (AAFI/AFICS, Geneva)

24.2 In making these appointments the Council unanimously expressed its warm thanks to Mr. Pasquale Montanaro, who had served as Vice-Chairman of the Council for many years. In recognition of his devotion to the work of the Federation, the Council decided to make Pasquale Montanaro an Honorary President of the Council.

24.3 Recognising that the growth of the Federation and the work represented by the NGO activities of FAFICS had considerably increased the workload of the Secretary of the Federation, the Council agreed that the latter should try to find an Assistant Secretary.

Date and place of the Sixteenth Session of the Council
(Agenda item 17)

25. It was noted that it was not possible at the present time to determine the date and place of the next session of the Council, but assumed that there would have to be a session shortly prior to the next session of the UNJSPB. If the Board should decide not to hold a session in 1988, it would probably still be desirable for the Council to hold a session next year, or to convene a meeting of the Officers of the Council. Any such decision would have to be taken at a later date and by correspondence.

Any other business
(Agenda item 18)

26. The Council agreed to take up again with the Secretary of the Fund the question of extending the supplementary benefit provided for in Rule F.11 of the Pension Adjustment System (JSPB/G.12). Under this rule, beneficiaries who were 75 years or over on 1 January 1982, and whose retirement or disability benefit on that date was below 50% of the then net base salary of a staff member at grade P.1 step 1, would be entitled to a 13th monthly payment every year. The Council considered that this supplementary benefit should be extended to all who have reached 75 by 1 January each year.

FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS

Fifteenth Session of the Council, Geneva, 29-31 July 1987

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Agenda</u>	<u>Relevant paper or comment</u>
1.	Election of the Chairman of the Session	
2.	Adoption of Agenda	D.1, Rev.
3.	Report of the Chairman of the Council	
4.	Reports of the appointed representatives of FAFICS to various bodies and meetings:	
	(1) Meetings of the UNJSPB and associated bodies:	
	- 35th Session of the UNJSPB (WHO, Copenhagen, 9-20 June 1986)	Distributed: 16.7.86
	- 165th Session of the Standing Committee of the UNJSPB (WHO, Copenhagen, 18 June 1986)	(16.7.86 (25.7.86
	- 36th Session of the UNJSPB (ILO, Geneva, 3-5 September 1986)	15.9.86
	- Twenty-fourth Session of the International Civil Service Commission (New York, 7-25 July 1986)	20.11.86
	- 166th Session of the Standing Committee of the UNJSPB (UN, New York, 9-11 February 1987)	D.11
	- Twenty-fifth Session of the ICSC (UN, New York, 9-27 March 1987)	4.6.87/D.7
	- Twenty-sixth Session of the ICSC (UN, New York, 6-24 July 1987)	
	(2) Other meetings:	
	- Consultation on NGO Consultative Status with ECOSOC (Geneva, 2-3 October 1986))
	- UN Regional Conference for the Non-Governmental Community (Vienna, 25-27 June 1986))
	- Board of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organisations (CONGO) in consultative status with ECOSOC (Geneva, 13-14 November 1986)) D.6
	- Conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organisations (Un, New York, 21-23 January 1987))

<u>Item No.</u>		<u>Relevant paper or comment</u>
5.	Pension Questions	
(1)	Discussion on items in the draft agenda of the 37th Session of the UNJSPB	D.8; D.9
(2)	UNJSPB Emergency Fund: action by Member Associations	D.1/Appendix I D.1/Appendix II
(3)	Date of receipt of pensions	"
(4)	Application of pension adjustment system	"
(5)	Persons who leave UN organisations without completing a full five years of service	"; D.12
(6)	Exchange of information on appeals	
6.	Taxation of pensions: exchange of information among Member Associations	"
7.	After-service health insurance	"
8.	Pre-retirement courses	"; D.10
9.	Representation of FAFICS at the 37th Session of UNJSPB	
10.	FAFICS activities as an NGO	D.5; D.6
11.	Information activities of the Federation and its Member Associations: FAFICS information pamphlet	
12.	Membership in FAFICS	
13.	Activities of the Federation: programme 1987/88	
14.	Co-ordination with representatives of active staff	
15.	Financial matters:	
(1)	Approval of the accounts for 1986, and auditors' report	D.2; D.3
(2)	Approval of the budget for 1988	D.4
(3)	Scale of contributions for Member Associations for 1987/88	
16.	Election of Officers	
17.	Date and place of the Sixteenth Session of the Council of FAFICS	
18.	Any other business	

GUIDELINES FOR FAFICS OBSERVERS AT THE BOARDComposition of the Board

The Council maintains the position previously taken that Pensioners - through FAFICS - should be fully represented on the Board and have the right to vote through two Board members, nominated by the Council. Pensioners, whom FAFICS represents, have an important and increasing equity in the Funds resources. They constitute a fourth element of the interests represented in the current composition of the Board and, as such, make a unique contribution to the work of the Board.

The essential aim, at this stage of the discussion, is, however, to ensure that FAFICS representatives, whatever their status (members of the Board, observers with special status) are given full opportunity to promote and defend the interests of pensioners in all matters, including individual cases, which affect them. A second, equally essential aim, is that representatives of member Associations are given free access to the proceedings so that they can competently fulfill their role of intermediaries between the Board and the Fund more generally and the pensioners. It is recalled in this connection that conditions vary greatly between countries and that the FAFICS representatives are drawn from several different countries and regions. They are therefore in a position to contribute valuable experience to the Board's debates.

FAFICS representatives should make clear - and insist on this being conveyed also to the General Assembly - that FAFICS representation on the Board is financed entirely by the Associations. It should also be emphasised that the Associations perform an important function of information and advice to members - a total of about one third of all beneficiaries of the UN pension system.

In summary our position should be:
full participation in the work of the Board including the right to speak and to make proposals for decision and, if possible, two seats with voting rights. If a limitation seems inevitable, FAFICS observers should insist in the event that the Board is expanded on three seats + no less than three alternates (or 2 + 4). What is said concerning the Board above relates also to the Standing Committee and to working parties set up by the Board to deal with questions which directly concern pensioners.

Composition of the Board

1. At its thirty-fourth session the Board agreed that:
 - (a) in the ongoing review of the size and composition of the Board, serious attention should be given to ways in which pensioners might be given member seats on the Board; and
 - (b) in the meantime FAFICS should be accorded the right to be represented by two observers on the Board similar to the right accorded to staff pension committees under Rule A.9 of the Rules of Procedure.
2. As noted in document JSPB737/R.14 para. 28 the Standing Committee in January 1987 amended Rule A.9 of the Rules of Procedure to include reference to FAFICS.
3. In the same paper the Secretary states (para. 29) that the question before the Board at its current session is whether further steps are necessary to ensure full and effective participation of pensioners, through FAFICS, in the work of the Board; in particular whether FAFICS should be given member seats on the Board.
4. FAFICS maintains the position that pensioners should participate fully in the work of the Board, and should be represented by members nominated by the FAFICS Council. They should have the right to speak, to make proposals and to vote.
5. Pensioners, whose numbers are rapidly growing, have an important and increasing equity in the Fund's resources. They constitute a fourth element in the interests represented in the current composition of the Board, and, as such, have a unique contribution to make to its work, and to that of the Standing Committee and any working groups established.
6. Through its ten Member Associations FAFICS represents more than 25,000 beneficiaries of the Fund. It is in continuous contact with pensioners in many countries and regions and has first hand experience of the practical implications for pensioners of the recommendations emanating from the Board and of the problems and hardships that arise. The Federation is therefore in a unique position to contribute valuable experience to the Board's discussions, and also to assist the Secretary of the Fund in carrying out his responsibilities.
7. FAFICS representation at the Board is, moreover, provided at no cost to Organizations or Governments since its representatives are financed entirely by its member associations.