

FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS  
OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS  
(FAAFI/FAFICS)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

(Geneva, 20-21 July 1978)

1. The fourth meeting of the Council of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants was held on Thursday 20 and Friday 21 July 1978, at the Office of the United Nations at Geneva.

2. The member Associations of the Federation were represented as follows:

Association of Former International Civil Servants, Geneva (AAFI/AFICS)

Mr. René Petit, Chairman ) of the  
Mr. Jean-René Rivet, First Vice-Chairman ) Committee  
Mr. Charles Lederrey, Second Vice-Chairman) of AAFI/AFICS.

Association of Former International Civil Servants, New York (AFICS-New York)

Mr. Henri Reymond, member of the Committee of AFICS/New York.

Association of Former Officials of the FAO and of the  
World Food Programme (FFOA), Rome

Mr. Emmanuel Abensour, Honorary Chairman of the FFOA.

The Committee of Former UNESCO Officials of the UNESCO Staff Association,  
Paris

Mr. Jean Guiton, Chairman of the Committee of Former UNESCO Officials.

3. Mr. Paul Blanc, Chairman of the Federation, presided over the Council's meeting.

4. Mr. Charles Lederrey, Secretary of the Federation, took the notes for drafting the minutes of the meeting.

5. The Council adopted the following agenda:

- I. The Chairman's report
- II. Relations with such Associations of former international officials as are not members of FAFICS
- III. Review of the Statutes of FAFICS
- IV. Meeting of the UN Joint Staff Pension Board (Rome, 24 July to 4 August 1978)
- V. Reversionary pension of the widow of a pensioner who has married after his retirement
- VI. Any other business
- VII. Elections

### I. The Chairman's report

6. The Chairman's report forms annex I of the present minutes.
7. The Council associated itself with the Chairman's words expressing the Federation's gratitude to Mr. Rivet for the dedication with which he has placed his extraordinary expertise in pension matters at the disposal of FAFICS and also expressed its thanks to Mr. Blanc for all he has done as Chairman of the Federation.
8. The Council noted with satisfaction the cooperative way in which the Federation's representatives had worked together at the last meeting of the Standing Committee of the United Nations' Joint Staff Pension Fund, in London, and that there is every reason to think that it will be the same in future, notably at the forthcoming meeting of the Joint Staff Pension Board, in Rome.

### II. Relations with such Associations of former International officials as are not members of FAFICS

9. The Council noted that new Associations had been founded (at London and Copenhagen) with membership based on national (London) or regional (Copenhagen) criteria.
10. The Council considered that if these Associations which have not yet applied for membership of the Federation, or other new Associations, were to apply for membership, it would be desirable, before taking a decision, to study their statutes and to request them, where appropriate, to bring these into line with those of the Federation and especially to draw attention to paragraph c of the present article 2 of the statutes, which reads "to protect and represent common interests" (viz. those of the member Associations) "in the United Nations and other organs, notably in those dealing with pension matters", pending a revision of this article, which seems to be necessary, at least in its form.
11. The Council recognized that in view of the possible admission of new members to the Federation, not only paragraph c of article 2 of the statutes would have to be revised, but possibly other parts of the said statutes.
12. The Council confirmed its previously expressed view on the formation of new Associations, i.e. that it is for people locally interested in starting such Associations to take the initiative in setting them up.
13. The Council recognized that it was impossible to prevent the creation of such Associations, and that they are justified when they aim at defending the interests of their members in the local area (e.g. the taxation of pensions) and the promotion of recreational activities .
14. The Council considered that, in order to avoid dispersing energy and to conserve the Federation's representative quality, and credibility, notably vis-à-vis the organs of the United Nations' Joint Staff Pension Fund, in matters of general concern (e.g. the question of the adjustment of pensions) it was of capital importance that new Associations join the Federation, accepting its statutes which make it the sole protector of the common interests of its members vis-à-vis the outside world.

15. The Council was nevertheless of the opinion that it was not the business of the Federation officially to take steps to seek out new Associations as members, but, on the other hand, if these Associations sought information, it should reply and that, moreover, present members of the Federation are free to be in touch with these Associations, especially to encourage them to apply for membership of the Federation. It was hoped that the Federation would be kept informed of such contacts.

16. Moreover, the Council considered that the nature of these new Associations should be studied and that, in addition, it would be important that the activities of the Federation should be made known as widely as possible.

17. Finally, in course of discussing this item of the agenda, the Council recognized that the question of knowing the membership qualifications of Member Associations as well as of new Associations was not without importance in relation to voting rights within the Federation. It noted once more in this connexion that its Member Associations admit as members in their own right, e.g. the widowed spouses of participants or retirees who are in receipt of a pension from the Fund, and that certain of these Member Associations also admit officials who are still working, after a given number of years of service. It also recognized that if its Member Associations can gain advantage from the presence among their own members of officials still serving or co-operating with unions or associations of serving staff, they should take care that they are not run by the serving staff.

### III. Review of the statutes of FAFICS

18. The Council, considering itself entitled to put forward to Member Associations of the Federation proposals for amendments to the statutes and believing that there should not be any special difficulties in working out such proposals immediately, entrusted Mr. Abensour (joined by Mr. Reymond at Mr. Abensour's request) with producing a draft, to be attached, after adoption by the Council, as an annex to these minutes, for submission in this context to the Member Associations.

19. As for the basic language to be used in the draft, the Council decided, in view of the discrepancies which there seemed to be between the English and the French text of the present statutes, that the new French text should be regarded as basic and that the English version should derive from the said new text.

20. In the course of the review of the statutes of the Federation, the Council gratefully noted Mr. Reymond's statement according to which his Association was ready to pay the Federation a proportion of the contributions of its members, for example, half a dollar per member, making a total of about seven hundred dollars.

21. At another point, the Council considered that possible clauses on the subject of the appointment of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman and a Secretary, and the duration of their term of office, should form part of the Council's internal rules and not of the statutes.

22. As for the law under which the Federation should operate, it was decided that if FICSA (Federation of International Civil Servants Associations) is governed by articles 60 et seq. of the Swiss Civil Code, the Federation should also refer to it in its statutes, subject to the result of a legal consultation on this subject.

23. On the same topic, the suggestion was made of trying to reach an agreement with the Administrative Tribunal of the United Nations, so that the latter would agree that it is competent to rule on differences which might arise between members of the Federation.

24. Finally, after a thorough study of the amendments proposed by the Drafting Committee composed of Messrs Abensour and Reymond, the Council unanimously adopted the proposals for revising the Federation's statutes, recorded in Annex 2 of the present minutes, and instructed the Secretary to circulate them to member Associations as soon as possible for discussion by the Council at its 1979 session.

25. As for possible proposals for amendments to the Council's proposals (Annex 2) which Member Associations may wish to submit, they should be addressed to the Secretariat of the Federation in time for the latter to send them to all the member Associations three months at latest before the opening date of the next session of the Council.

#### IV. Meeting of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board (Rome, 24 July to 4 August 1978)

26. The Council unanimously decided to support the proposals worked out by the Fund's Standing Committee at its last meeting in London and to be submitted to the Joint Board at this forthcoming meeting in Rome.

27. In so doing, the Council was fully aware that aspects of these proposals were open to criticism, notably because they will have the effect of creating two categories of pensioners (the new ones benefiting from 1 January 1979 of an average exchange rate over 36 months; the present pensioners being left with an average over only 12 months), and because these proposals do not make for the ideal, unified system for which we should strive. However, it felt that, all things considered (among others the inflexible attitude of the United Nations General Assembly towards the level of expenditure of the Fund, and the fact that the proposals of the Standing Committee have been unanimously adopted by this body and that they have the notable virtue of aiming at ending the illogical WAPA system and thus reaching towards a system which is unified etc.) the Standing Committee's proposals should be supported, though without losing sight of the continuing need to go on seeking better solutions and trying to get them adopted (such as that of UNESCO, aiming at linking the increase in pensions to that of salaries and, in another field, that of the IAEA, proposing an increase in the percentage deducted from salaries for pension purposes).

28. As for the representation of pensioners in the Organs of the Fund, the Council, while still thinking that a direct representation by representatives elected in their own right would be justified, considered that it would not be opportune formally to bring up this question in present circumstances and that, for the moment, it had reason to be satisfied that the Joint Staff Pension Board, at its Nairobi meeting, as a consequence indeed of Mr. Rivet's initiative, had agreed to the Federation being represented by two observers and two alternates.

29. On the other hand, the Council recommended that the representation of pensioners by observers, at least on local pension committees, such as now exist in certain organizations, should be acquired by local pressure from the staff organizations where it is still lacking.

30. In the course of the discussion on the position to be adopted by the Federation vis-à-vis the proposals of the Standing Committee, the Council's attention was drawn to the investigations to be conducted in the fairly near future by the ICSC (International Civil Service Commission) into the field of pensions, at least into the amount of salary withheld for pension purposes, and to the encroachments, not yet defined, that these investigations could have on the statutory rights of the Organs of the Fund and to the possibility of there being set up a joint working group Joint Staff Pension Board/ICSC to study certain questions.

31. In conclusion, the Council, after having appointed Messrs. Reymond and Rivet as representatives and Mr. Abensour as alternate representative of the Federation to the meeting of the Joint Staff Pension Board, gave carte blanche to their colleagues to do as best they could in defence of the interests of the pensioners, at the same time giving them the following guide lines:

- Support the proposals of the Standing Committee, while nevertheless mentioning their inadequacy,
- Speak in favour of abandoning, on suitable terms, the ceiling imposed on pensioners aged 70 and more,
- Also speak in favour of the extension to the age of 25 years of coverage for children in full-time education,
- Reaffirm the position taken by the Council last year, as set out in paragraph 24, page 5, of the minutes of the meeting of 13-14 October, 1977, in Paris.

32. In doing this, the Council did not lose sight of the fact that the representatives of the Federation cannot make proposals to the Joint Staff Pension Board, but can only inform the latter of the views of the pensioners.

33. On the practical level, the Council entrusted Mr. Reymond with the task of supporting the proposals of the Standing Committee, and Mr. Rivet, in view of his special expertise on the technical level, with that of setting out the Federation's objections to certain aspects of these proposals.

V. Reversionary pension of the widow of a pensioner who has married after his retirement.

34. The Council was seized of the problem by Mr. Abensour who, basing himself especially on the developments in national pension systems, which are more and more providing for the payment of an equitable pension to the surviving spouse, even when marriage took place after the retirement of the deceased spouse, proposed that it request that article 35 of the statutes of the Fund be amended so as to be brought into line with this practice.

35. The Council, which had asked at its previous session that information on the situation in national pension systems be sought from the ILO, in view of its special competency in the matter, was informed by the Chairman of the tenour of a letter he had addressed to the ILO on 13 April 1978, in accordance with the Council's decision, a letter so far remaining unanswered.

36. On learning of this, the Council regretted that the despatch of the letter had been put off pending the publication in two languages of the minutes of the last meeting and suggested that in future the decisions of the Council should be acted on without delay and that, if possible, while awaiting the production of the minutes, these decisions should also be at once communicated to the member Associations of the Federation, for information.

37. While accepting these suggestions, the Chairman drew the attention of the Council to the fact that in the ordinary way the present meeting would not have had to be held before the Autumn, as in 1977, and by then it would doubtless have been possible to have had a reply from the ILO.

38. The Council was further informed that the situation was also developing in international organizations outside the United Nations system, such as the European Communities, and the scope of the study should be extended to what rights should be granted to the divorced wife of an official who is still alive, a question which is the subject of a letter addressed to the Joint Staff Pension Board by the UNESCO Pension Committee.

39. In the course of the discussion on this agenda item, the Council, à propos of the question of knowing if the Federation, with its status as observer at the Joint Staff Pension Board, is entitled to present written notes to the latter, was informed that the rights of observers are nowhere codified, but that, on the other hand, at the last meeting of the Standing Committee, Mr. Rivet had submitted a working paper to the Committee and this paper had been attached to the Committee's final report.

40. In conclusion, the Council requested that a reminder should be sent to the ILO, noted with gratitude that Mr. Rivet had agreed to collect information about the situation in the European Communities, decided to continue studying the question, but considered that while awaiting the collection and analysis of the various items of information on the subject, it would not be opportune even to mention to the Joint Staff Pension Board the existence of the problem and the interest the Federation takes in it, it being nevertheless understood that when the Federation has acquired the necessary information, it will make proposals to the Board with a view to amending article 35 of the statutes of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund.

## VI. Other Business

### 1) Recruitment policy

41. The question of the recruitment policies of the member Associations of FAFICS, which had already been discussed at previous meetings of the Council, even tentative approaches having been made to establish a common recruitment policy by the Geneva and New York Associations, a policy which is at present in abeyance because of the disparity between the respective subscriptions brought about by the fall in value of the dollar in relation to the Swiss franc, was brought up by Mr. Abensour who would hope that the Geneva Association would not try to recruit members from among the retirees of the FAO.

42. In this new discussion the following facts were once more made very clear: certain Associations (notably those of Geneva and New York) accept as members not only retired people but also serving staff, which is not the case with the FAO and UNESCO Associations; the Geneva and New York Associations have agreed on a modus vivendi which they find workable, that is, the New York Association recruits its members from the lists published by the Fund, within the geographical confines of the American continent, Australia, New Zealand and Papua/New Guinea, while the Geneva Association, working from the same lists, which the New York Association sends them after crossing out the names of the retirees they have written to, proceeds with recruitment among retirees living in the rest of the world.

43. Moreover, it was made clear that these lists make no mention of which organizations the retirees belonged to and the addresses given are often of a temporary nature.
44. As for UNESCO, it was made clear that the officials of this organization who reach retiring age are invited by the Staff Association's Committee of Former Officials not only to become members of this Association, but also to join the Geneva Association, which supplies a very useful pamphlet.
45. For their part, the representatives of the Geneva and New York Associations, while hoping that, on a not too distant day, there would be no more practical difficulties in setting up a common recruitment policy for themselves or even, perhaps, for the Federation, had expressed their satisfaction with the present arrangements and emphasized the fact that, so far as they were concerned, it seemed that the important thing was that retirees should be free to choose to belong to the Association or Associations of their choice, with no restriction.

ii) Specific questions on the agenda of the next session of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board

46. Mr. Guiton drew the attention of the Council to the fact that the following three questions which are on the agenda of the Joint Board are the subject of comments from the local Pensions Committee of UNESCO:

- The loss, in the case of divorce, of the spouse's right to a pension,
- The payment up to the age of 25 of the children's allowance, as envisaged in section (e) of article 37 of the Fund's regulations (orphan's pension),
- In cases of deferred retirement, rationalisation at 2% per annum of the actuarial deduction applied, instead of the actuarial deductions of 6% and 2% now applied according to whether the retiree is more, or less, than 55 years old.

47. In reply to Mr. Guiton, who hoped that the Federation's observers at the meeting of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board would support these proposals, the Council, having in mind the importance of what was at stake in the other questions before the Joint Board (proposals of the Standing Committee) and the impossibility of foreseeing how the debate on the points raised by the UNESCO Committee would develop, left the Federation's observers free to speak, as seemed necessary, according to how the discussions developed.

VII. Elections

48. Mr. Blanc having repeated his request, already made last year, to be replaced as Chairman of the Federation, Mr. Guiton, who had been put forward in 1977 for the post of Chairman but had not felt able to accept it and had then been elected to the post of Vice-Chairman, was unanimously elected Chairman.
49. Previously Mr. Guiton had drawn the attention of the Council to the reasons which had made him hesitate to accept the office, notably those of a financial order, since on the one hand his Committee of former UNESCO officials, of the UNESCO Staff Association, had not the necessary financial means and that the Staff Association of UNESCO itself had financial problems and, on the other hand, the Federation itself had no financial resources.

50. Further, although appreciative of the assurances given by the representatives of Geneva and New York Associations that, subject to the consent of their respective committees, these Associations would furnish financial help to the Federation and that the first-named would in any case be ready to continue doing the Federation's office-work, within the present limits, Mr. Guiton linked his acceptance with the condition that the UNESCO Staff Association should also support his appointment and, if that could not be so, the status quo would be continued.
51. The Council then proceeded to the election of a Vice-Chairman, in the person of Mr. Abensour, and continued Mr. Lederrey in the post of Secretary.
52. The session was then brought to a close after the Council had, on the one hand, heard Mr. Blanc express his satisfaction at having been able to work for the Federation as Chairman for three years and at the excellent relations that this had led him to maintain with the Geneva Association in connexion with the office-work freely undertaken by this Association, and, on the other hand, had assured Mr. Blanc of the Federation's gratitude for the way in which he had discharged his duties as Chairman.
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