



FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS
FÉDÉRATION DES ASSOCIATIONS DES ANCIENS FONCTIONNAIRES INTERNATIONAUX
FEDERACION DE ASOCIACIONES DE EX-FUNCIONARIOS INTERNACIONALES

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DRAFT
Fifty-fourth Session of the FAFICS Council
21-25 July 2024
Bangkok

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ANNEX

(see link to google drive for all documents)

The list of participants is included in the Annex to this report,

ABBREVIATIONS

ACABQ	Administrative Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
ASHIL	After-service health insurance and long-term care
CE/DCE	Certificate of entitlement and digital Certificate of entitlement
CEB	Chief Executives Board of the UN System
CEPA	Chief Executive for Pension Administration
CET	Central European Time
CRM	Client Relationship Management
FSALMC	Fund Solvency and Assets and Liabilities Monitoring Committee
HLCM	High-level Committee on Management
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
OIM	Office of Investment Management
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PRG	Plan Review Group
RSG	Representative of the Secretary General for the investment of the assets of the UNJSPF
SPC	Staff Pension Committee
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCU	United Nations Federal Credit Union
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNJSPF	United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Fifty-fourth session of the FAFICS Council

Bangkok, 21-25 July 2024

List of Major Decisions taken by the Council at its 54th Session

- **Decision 54/1: Acceptance of ARPUPU/UPU as the 64th member of FAFICS**
- **Decision 54/2: Acceptance of the Ivorian Association (AIAFI-SNU) as the 65th member of FAFICS.**
- **Decision 54/3: The Council approved the recommendations made by the President and approved by the Bureau on succession planning for the FAFICS representatives to the Pension Board and its Committees as detailed in document D.6.a by the President.**
- **Decision 54/4: The Council approved by acclamation the nomination of Jerry Barton (ARICSA) for a second term as President of two years from July 2024 to July 2026.**
- **Decision 54/5: The Council approved the four reports relating to the administrative and financial matters of the Federation by acclamation as listed below**
 1. **Revised travel policy with edits**
 2. **Interim report on the management of the budget for 2024**
 3. **Proposed budget for 2025**
 4. **Appointment of two Auditors- Mr. Ambi Sundaram and Mr. Mohammed Bachiri.**
- **Decision 54/6: The Council approved by acclamation the establishment of a new FAFICS website.**
- **Decision 54/7: The Council approved by acclamation the establishment of a Standing Committee on Communications.**
- **Decision 54/8: The Council approved by acclamation the appointment of Chair (Juan Casas AFICS-Panama) and Co-Chair Aye Win (AFICS-Myanmar) for the newly established Standing Committee on Communications.**
- **Decision 54/9: The Council approved the awarding of a certificate of appreciation to Douglas Helland by acclamation.**

- **Decision 54/10:** The Council approved by acclamation the establishment of a new Standing Committee on Membership on the understanding that the Terms of Reference be broadened to include an emphasis on also increasing the membership of FAFICS overall and giving adequate attention to dormant Associations.
- **Decisions 54/11:** The Council approved by acclamation the appointment of a Chair (Marashetty Seenappa (AFUNPI) and Co-Chair Abdou Khadre Diakhate (AFICS-Senegal) for the newly established Standing Committee on Membership.
- **Decision 54/12:** The Council approved the eight recommendations as presented by the Standing Committee on ASHIL in its report (Council 54/2024/D/10.c/1) with a change to recommendation 2 to change the word “harmonization” to “harmonization towards best practices”.
- **Decision 54/13:** The Council approved the recommendation found in the document (Council 54/2024/D.10/d/2D) from the Plan Review Group, including the charge to the FAFICS delegation to support the proposal for the Pension Board and the Actuaries to remain seized of the improvements proposed by the Plan Review Group pending improved actuarial results .
- **Decision 54/14:** The Council agreed to the recommendation as cited in para. 139 of this report concerning small pensions, and charged the FAFICS Delegation to offer further assistance in modifying the minimum pension and small pension regulations.
- **Decision 54/15:** The Council approved the recommendations in para. 145 of this report on the management of investments, noting that transparency has improved, and investment values are increasing, but further noting that the long-term benchmarks are too frequently modified.
- **Decision 54/16:** The Council approved the recommendations as found in para 148 of this report on the Actuarial Valuation as of 31 December 2023, noting that the funding surplus has decreased.
- **Decision 54/17:** The Council approved the recommendations as found in para. 154 of this report on the FSALMC and charged the FAFICS delegation to support the request for a more thorough procurement process for an FSALMC independent expert.
- **Decision 54/18:** The Council approved the recommendations that FAFICS should remain seized of the suspensions from the Two-Track option and prepare a Board paper for the April 2025 session of the Pension Board.
- **Decision 54/19:** The Council approved the two-year terms for three Vice-Presidents, namely Juan Antonio Casas-Zamora (AFICS-Panama), Nancy Hurtz-Soyka (AFICS-NY) and Marashetty Seenappa (AFUNPI).

REPORT OF THE 54TH COUNCIL SESSION

Introduction

1. The Fifty-fourth session of the Council of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) took place from 21- 25 July 2024 in-person and virtually.
2. The first day of the Council was reserved for a preparatory meeting of the FAFICS Bureau on 21 July 2024.

Agenda item 1: Opening session of the Plenary

3. On 22 July 2024, President Jerry Barton welcomed both those in person and those online to the 54th FAFICS Council's plenary sessions. He noted that this was the Council's first ever session held in Bangkok, Thailand and noted that the time difference between Bangkok and Europe, US and South America was extreme and thanked those for staying up late and was glad to see more Associations from Asia attending this year. He thanked everyone in ESCAP who had assisted in the organization of the meetings and especially Secretary Delia Barcelona, who was instrumental in ensuring the overall organization and preparation along with AFICS-Thailand. He introduced the President of AFICS-Thailand, Mr. Suraphon Songweera, who made an opening statement welcoming all to Thailand and ESCAP.
4. After Secretary Delia Barcelona confirmed that a quorum had been reached and the requirements set out in Rule 3.11 of the Federation's Rules of Procedure had been met, the President declared open the 54th FAFICS Council session. The Secretary reported that 38 Associations were attending with 119 people in total with seventy-three delegates online and forty-six in person. The list of participants can be found in Annex 1.
5. Many Associations thanked both President Jerry Barton and Secretary, Delia Barcelona, for their work in preparing the 54th Council session. They thanked Delia Barcelona for her quick and kind response to their questions during the weeks ahead of this Council session.

Agenda item 2: Election of Presiding Officer and Rapporteur

6. The President turned to the next item which was the nomination of the Presiding Officer and Rapporteur. He proposed Adriana Gomez of AFICS-Chile as Presiding Officer and Nancy Hurtz-Soyka of AFICS-NY as Rapporteur. Both were elected by acclamation.

Agenda item 3: Adoption of the agenda and work programme

7. The Council considered the provisional agenda (Council 54/2004/D.1Z) which was submitted together with the provisional work programme (54/2024/D.2Z). As there were no additions or changes to the provisional agenda or work programme, both were adopted as proposed. The President made the point that as some of the presenters were in the western hemisphere, they had requested to present their agenda items before midnight and thus the work programme was different than in the past.

Agenda item 4: Minute of silence for colleagues who have passed away since the last meeting

8. A moment of silence was held to remember colleagues who have passed away since last year and silent prayers of peace offered for those difficult situations around the world.

Agenda item 5: Status of membership and admission of new members

- a. **Nomination for FAFICS membership of the Association of Retirees and Pensioners of the Universal Postal Union (ARPUPU)**
 - b. **Nomination for FAFICS membership of the Ivorian Association of Former International Civil Servants of the United Nations system (AIAFI-SNU)**
9. The Secretary reported that the retirees Association of Paraguay (AFICS-Paraguay) had disbanded in 2023 bringing the total number of FAFICS Member Associations to sixty-three. At the request of the President, the new ARPUPU representative, Mr. Achim Vander Weg, President of ARPUPU gave some remarks. He stated that even though they were isolated in Berne, Switzerland, they consider it beneficial to be connected to FAFICS both for information sharing and networking. After a wait of some years, they were glad to be able to join the Federation. He noted that UPU is not a member of the UNJSPF but hopes to be as soon as some conditions are met.
10. The President provided some background in the ARPUPU's efforts to become a member of the Federation which had started in 2012 under the presidency of Andres Castellanos. With their wait now behind them, he and the Bureau were happy that ARPUPU had finally become a member of FAFICS and felt assured that they would become an important part of the Federation. Emeritus President Castellanos joined in congratulating ARPUPU and hoped that the Council would endorse their nomination.
11. The representative of AFICS-Malaysia asked if there were criteria for joining FAFICS. The President explained that there were procedures and criteria such as being universally open to retirees of all system-wide organizations or nationalities, support of UN principles, being in a good financial situation, and having at least twenty-five members. The Secretary confirmed that both nominees had observed the necessary steps required

for admission into FAFICS. A large number of Associations welcomed ARPUPU as a member of the Federation. At the end of the discussion, the Council approved the admittance of ARPUPU by acclamation.

- **Decision 54/1: Acceptance of ARPUPU as the 64th member of FAFICS**

12. The Secretary introduced Mr. Souleymane Diabate, President of the Ivorian Association of Former International Civil Servants of the UN System (AIAFI-SNU) who stated that Cote d'Ivoire was pleased to join FAFICS. He thanked FAFICS Vice-President Abdou Khadre Diakhate, Co-Chair of the Membership and Revitalization Committee, who had worked with him and his colleagues to help with the nomination documents for submission to the Federation. He then provided some personal background having worked for UNICEF for over thirty years, retiring in 2019. The Association has thirty-five members to date. Mr. Diabate stated how pleased his Association was about becoming a member of FAFICS and that his Association looked forward to working with the Federation, acknowledging strength in its union with others. AIAFI-SNU looked forward to working with everyone and thanked FAFICS for its warm and sincere welcome, especially Delia Barcelona who helped him through his difficult travel to arrive at the session in time for his Association's acceptance..
13. The Ivorian Association (AIAFI-SNU) was approved by acclamation to become the 65th member Association of FAFICS.

- **Decision 54/2: Acceptance of the Ivorian Association (AIAFI-SNU) as the 65th member of FAFICS.**

**Remarks by Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana,
Executive Secretary of ESCAP**

14. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP greeted FAFICS members and noted that they would also be hosting the 78th UNJSPF session to be held the following week. ESCAP is also pleased to support the UNJSPF local office which bridges time zones and provides support to 14,000 staff members and 9,000 retirees representing all interests with a strong partnership. She wished everyone a welcome stay at ESCAP and added that they were pleased to provide ESCAP's full cooperation during the Federation's Council session.
15. The President thanked the Executive Secretary for her words and strong cooperation. He added that a pre-retirement seminar would be held for ESCAP and other UN staff at the end of the week which would help explain to those about to retire the intricacies of retiring from the UN.

Agenda item 6. Report of the President

16. President Barton introduced his report (Council 54/2024/D.6) stating that this had been a busy year for the Bureau as they worked to implement decisions made last year by the Council. The Bureau met monthly, with a much faster work pace for the Bureau and its Committees. He noted that the Bureau had held one hybrid meeting in Geneva earlier in the year and that he hoped to continue to hold one hybrid meeting annually recognizing the value of meeting in person for team building and in discussing

challenges. He added that voices of dissent from outside FAFICS were quieter this year. The Bureau had worked cooperatively and moved FAFICS forward following its agreed upon work plan. Over the year, he had tried to be present and transparent with all efforts being made to support Associations such as by providing opening statements to annual meetings and pre-retirement seminars. After the first year of his two-year tenure - with the first being a transitional year and implementing the tenets of the approved new Rules of Procedure - his second year was focused on implementing the work programme and addressing challenges. The two Working Groups on Communications and Membership had worked diligently over the year. He fully supported the efforts to make both groups Standing Committees of the Council which would provide more opportunities for Association members to participate - whether for those who had served as international civil servants or locally recruited staff. Currently, there are over thirty members from 18 Associations serving on various FAFICS' Committees. As for the budget and the proposed new travel policy, both will be discussed in more detail later in the agenda, as both required a Council decision. He noted that travel expenses represented an important part of next year's budget as it was essential, even with the use of online meetings, to meet in person. However, he added that he was mindful of the need for belt tightening across the UN system and the need to deal with the climate change situation but stressed that some selective travel on FAFICS business was important to be maintained.

17. Regarding travel costs, he reported that since 2013 the Pension Fund had covered the costs for four FAFICS delegates to the Pension Board, but last year the Pension Board had decided that only two would be funded. The other two delegates are now being funded by FAFICS, but the Federation would continue to request the Pension Fund to include travel for four FAFICS' participants in its budget proposal.
18. He reminded Associations of the need to receive talent submissions for the Expertise Pool and requested all Associations to identify and nominate the incredible talent within their Associations. He was pleased to report that the Bureau had followed its work plans which made it easier for him to follow progress and was pleased with the close collaboration among Bureau members. He thanked all Associations for their support, and he hoped that they had noted that the Council was now following its new Rules of Procedure and timelines for the distribution of documentation.
19. The President then briefly reported on the Committee's work beginning with the Standing Committee on After-Service Health Insurance and Long-Term Care (ASHIL) which had been very active this year. The Standing Committee on Pension Issues had agreed that the core group would be the Pension delegation plus individuals from the Expertise Pool for succession planning purposes. However, he noted the need for more people to be recruited. One such source identified was those that had served in UN organizations' Staff Pension Committees (SPCs) and noted that if an Association's Organization did not have any retirees on the SPC, there should be efforts to include them.
20. As for the Pension Fund's financial situation, the news was generally good. The Pension Administration continued to improve, and investments have surpassed the 2021 peak, and no payments of benefits had been missed. He added that the UNJSPF's Geneva Office was working well and there had been many dedicated UNJSPF sessions around the Associations to help retirees with the digital Certificate of Entitlement. He was pleased to note the creation of its new liaison office in Bangkok.

21. He confirmed that FAFICS would be participating in next week's Pension Board meeting. He added that he had been pleased with the Pension Fund's work and the increase in the investment portfolio after the dip. FAFICS had also supported the extension of the term of the Chief Executive of the Pension Administration (CEPA) and was pleased that she accepted the extension offered.
22. As for the situation with the two-track option, he remarked that over half of the countries of the world would soon be excluded from the two-track system. Even though its algorithm was statistically accurate, it did not mean that it was necessarily fair and approaches to the Pension Administration had not produced any change. As a result, FAFICS would, if approved by the Council, prepare a paper for the Board's April 2025 session and it was hoped to work closely with the Pension Administration and allow for the reinstatement of this track in some countries.
23. The President then especially thanked Vice-President Deborah Landey who was stepping down after completing her consecutive 2-year terms, and who has been an inspiration to many FAFICS members. He also thanked Marco Breschi, Carlos Tejada and Kumiko Matsuura-Mueller who had to resign from their Committees. As for membership issues, he thanked Vice-Presidents Marashetty Seenappa and Abdou Khadre Diakhate for their work over the year. He reported that the work of the Bureau had now been characterized as four pillars namely, Communications, Membership/Revitalization, ASHIL and Pension Issues and hoped that the work under these pillars would involve many Associations.
24. Many delegations applauded the President for his excellent report and noted the good work of the Bureau in its various fields of work over the course of the year. They also congratulated him on his comprehensive approach to transparency and hoped that the following year would continue in the same way. Many felt that it had been a productive year, appreciating the always professional manner with which the Bureau has paid attention to both technical and administrative matters. Some noted in particular the President's warm presence in meetings of Associations and hoped that this new way of working would continue in the long term. Others mentioned that there was strength in numbers recognizing the role that FAFICS plays in representing all retirees. Associations were supportive of the President's call for volunteerism. The President was also thanked for bringing up the situation of small pensions. One Association was appreciative of the translation of documents especially in Spanish and hoped that this would continue to be the way forward.
25. The Council accepted the Report of the President and thanked him for the comprehensive details provided therein.

Agenda item 6a. Succession Planning

26. The President then turned to administrative actions that needed to be approved by the Council as noted in document Council 54/2024. D.6.a. This document showed that there were many actions that he had taken during the year that needed immediate attention. The document on succession planning provides an overview of some actions

that were taken and to which Associations were informed but now require Council's approval. The following actions require the Council's approval:

- a. The **Chair of the Standing Committee on Pension Issues** - Suzanne Bishopric to be extended for an additional two-year term.
 - b. The **FAFICS delegation to the Pension Board** to be extended for one more year.
 - c. The extension of the tenure of the **FAFICS representatives to the Standing Committee** of the Pension Board to be extended for one more year.
 - d. For the **Pension Board's FSALM Committee** - Suzanne Bishopric to be extended for another two years.
 - e. For the **Pension Funds Budget Committee** - Werner Blenk and Clemens Adams who had already been nominated but to be approved for two years, which is for 2026 and 2027
 - f. For the **Pension Board's Succession Planning and Evaluation Committee** - Theresa Panuccio and Jerry Barton to be extended for one year.
27. A number of Associations congratulated the President on his outreach to Associations and on his enthusiasm and support for all Associations. One Association reported that the UNJSPF could gather information on all retirees in a particular country which would help Associations reach out to retirees. The President confirmed that this list exists and will be shared with Associations. Others commented on the transparency shown in the succession planning document and the need to trust the President's and the Bureau's nominations that promote credibility.
28. In light of the positive discussion and remarks, the Presiding Officer declared the President's recommendations approved.
- **Decision 54/3: The Council approved the recommendations made by the President and approved by the Bureau for the FAFICS representatives outlined above.**

Agenda item 7: Election Procedures

29. The Secretary reported that there were 35 Associations able to vote which included one proxy vote for Mexico given from Cuba. She added that the ballot process would open on Tuesday and remain open through Wednesday afternoon. She added that there was only one candidate for President and four candidates for three vice-president positions.
30. The Presiding Officer declared that since there was only one nomination for President and that was for the current President, Jerry Barton (ARICSA), that he be approved by acclamation. The Council approved the nomination of Jerry Barton (ARICSA) President for an additional two-year term by acclamation and with applause.
31. The Secretary then referred to the election for the vice-president positions of FAFICS where there were four nominations for three positions. She asked the four candidates to introduce themselves to the Council and to briefly provide their credentials for fulfilling the role of vice-president. The four nominees, Juan Antonio Casas Zamora (AFICS-Panama), Nancy Hurtz-Soyka (AFICS-NY), Shahida Fazil (PAFICS-Pakistan) and Marashetty Seenappa (AFUNPI) briefly described their work experience and background as well as their current roles in FAFICS.

- **Decision 54/4: The Council approved by acclamation and applause the nomination of Jerry Barton (ARICSA) for a second term of two years from July 2024 to July 2026.**

Agenda item 8: Association matters

32. The representative from the following Associations highlighted their concerns and activities:
- **AAFI-AFICS-Geneva** noted that the President’s Newsletters were not included on the FAFICS website, and it was hoped that these Newsletters would appear on the new FAFICS website. She added that this year they had invited the Pension Administration to assist in the enrollment in the digital COE and in September they would have a seminar dedicated to wills and successions. They also participated in a number of pre-retirement seminars.
 - **AFICS-ADDIS ABABA** reported on its new communication team and the celebration of its 25th anniversary as the first AFICS created in Africa. Their publication was issued for the 25th anniversary and contains information on its transformation under its new leadership. In addition, they will have a new website which will include their support for members as well as their achievements over the last 25 years.
 - **AFICS-Philippines** reported that last year they had a successful dinner-dance event on the occasion of UN day. Currently, they are proposing with the Resident Coordinator to host an activity to highlight the importance of the UN and its work. This past April they had their first strategic planning meeting elaborating on the vision and mission of the Association which also looked into its alignment with FAFICS purposes.
 - **AFICS-Brazil** reported on its communication policy which covers its website and three yearly bulletins along with the use of google groups for health, communications and pensions.
 - **AFICS-Bangladesh** said that they were publishing a number of documents and a Newsletter and the Members’ Directory which is revised every year. It also includes their Constitution, all of which they hope to post in their planned new website.
 - **AFICS-Mauritius** mentioned a book that is almost ready called ‘Glimpses of Life in the Service of the United Nations’. He offered for anyone interested to contribute to the book by writing several paragraphs for inclusion.
 - **AFICS-Panama** shared that they had a workshop last week with UN staff who are preparing to retire. Documents and a power point presentation were prepared with basic information on pensions and health insurance. They plan to continue with this activity throughout the year.
 - **UNAPATA-Tanzania** expressed their appreciation for rejoining FAFICS and noted that the Association president has been highly active in organizing members. They recently had a well-attended meeting with discussion on many issues affecting retirees.

Agenda item 9. Administrative and financial matters

a. 2023 Accounts and Report of the Auditors

33. The President introduced the Report on the 2023 Accounts and the Report of the Auditors (Council 54/2024/D.9A) that was issued *for information*. He stated that the Auditors were totally satisfied that the accounts were correctly kept and the financial situation and the results of the year, shown both in the Balance Sheet and the Statement of Income and Expenditures, as at 31 December 2023, gave a true and fair view of the affairs of the Federation as of 31 December 2023. The President thanked Treasurer Romesh Muttukumar (AFICS-NY) for doing a wonderful job with the FAFICS accounts.

b. Use of assigned reserves

34. The Treasurer introduced *for information* the Report on the Use of Assigned Reserves (Council 54/2024/D.9/B) reminding all that the Council had agreed to the set up in 2022 four Reserve Accounts. He then **reported** on the reserves that had been used in 2023 which totaled \$9,000 including an amount of \$7,729 from the ***Reserve for Bad Debts*** based on the agreement to write-off unpaid dues of Member Associations going back to 2021 and prior. The other amount was from the ***Solidarity Reserve*** for which \$1,358 was used for the travel of a FAFICS Bureau member who assisted the Member Association in Tanzania to be reactivated. He added that going forward during 2024-2025, it was planned to use some of the resources in the ***Capital Reserve*** for the revamping of the FAFICS' website as well as on new communications-related initiatives. In addition, the Solidarity Reserve would be utilized towards reactivating dormant Member Associations, the establishment of new Member Associations, as well in assisting planned membership drives, (specifically aimed at enlisting increasing numbers of international and locally recruited UN retirees) related to in-country Member Associations. He concluded by saying that he would keep the Council apprised of how things progressed over the next year.

c. Revised travel policy

35. The Treasurer then introduced *for approval* the Report on the Revised Travel Policy (Council 54/2024/D.9/C) which provided reasons for the revision and rationale for the change of the current travel policy. Following the implications of the Covid pandemic, the FAFICS Bureau began in 2022 to gradually step up its activities. This entailed revisiting and reactivating activities that had been curtailed or deferred due to the pandemic. While Bureau meetings over the years have been held virtually and will continue in this manner, the intention has been to have one in-person mid-year Bureau meeting. Annual FAFICS budgets provided the funds for such a mid-year Bureau meeting, but since 2020 no such meeting had been held except for last year. Furthermore, budget provisions only covered the three Secretariat members of the Bureau and the five Vice-Presidents, but not the Chairs of the Pension and ASHIL Standing Committees, and the Rapporteur, who are also members of the Bureau so going forward, they will also be included in the budget provisions. In the future an in-person meeting will be held annually in conjunction with the annual Council session. However,

despite the use of hybrid meetings, travel subsidies would still be needed and increased due to the large overall global increase in travel and per diem costs. It is therefore proposed that the amount for regional travel be increased from \$500 to \$1000 and international travel from \$1500 to \$2000.

d. Interim report on the management of the budget for 2024

36. The Treasurer introduced *for approval* the interim report on the management of the budget for 2024 (Council 54/2024/D.9/D). In this paper, he reported that projections for 2024 would provide \$49,850 as income with estimated expenditures at \$48,785 leaving a balance of \$1065 at the end of 2024.

e. Proposed budget for 2025

37. The Treasurer also introduced *for approval* the proposed budget for 2025 (Council 54/2024/D.9/E). This report had a change in format, with a view to better presenting and integrating the purposes and related utilization of the budgetary resources available to FAFICS in pursuing its mission and related functions/activities. In this connection, the Treasurer presented, and the Bureau approved, the estimated expenditures for 2025 at \$52,050 for income and expenditures amounting to \$49,785 leaving a balance of \$1,265.

f. Appointment of Auditors

38. The President spoke on the final agenda item, which was the appointment of Auditors for one year, which is for 2024 to 2025. The Bureau agreed to the appointment of the same two Auditors - Mr. Ambi Sundaram from Geneva and Mr. Mohammed Bachiri from France. Mr. Sundaram had reported that he was willing to serve again but no reply had yet been received from Mr. Bachiri. However, in reply to the President's request, AAFU-AFUS-France said that he had agreed, and the Association would provide documentation to this effect.
39. Many Member Associations thanked the Treasurer for his complete and concise review of the Federation's financial and administrative situation since 2023. The Report of the Auditors was welcomed. Some Associations noted the sharp increase in travel costs but understood the President's call for an increase for the Bureau to meet once a year in person before the Council session and understood full well the recent increase in costs overall. Others felt that going forward travel should be carefully monitored, and Associations should be encouraged to pay their dues as early as possible in the year. The impact of travel on the climate must be recognized and the Federation should not be seen as ignoring the call by the Secretary-General for responsible action to deal with global warming. It was also noted that the UNJSPF had no incentive to pay for the travel of two FAFICS members to the Pension Board, as they had done in the past, and wanted more action on this situation. Another Association felt that the reports were ready for approval as he felt that the travel policy looked fair but felt that the Bureau should be aware that lump sums would not be sufficient, and the reserves may need to be subsidized and thanked those who did their work voluntarily. Other Associations then brought up the subject of sustainability noting the falling membership numbers.

40. The Treasurer commented on the Council's decision to agree to write off bad debts. The Bureau would need to review those Associations who have not paid after that time and with three years of consecutive non-payment the Council may decide to exclude those Associations. He, however, noted that on the flip side, FAFICS needed these memberships and unfortunately, travel costs would continue to increase. He reported that the question of sustainability was dependent on two things - membership participation and contributions from UNFCU.
41. The President added that on sustainability and income levels, FAFICS needed to increase its income in three ways: i) increase the number of Associations ii) increase the number of members in each Association and iii) increase fees. The last point was not something that was contemplated but could be a practical necessity if the other two points were not achieved.
42. An additional question was asked about the situation of Cuba and whether they had paid their dues as their proxy for voting was given to Mexico. The Treasurer confirmed that they had paid but there was a problem with their banking situation which made the recording of their contribution difficult. AFICS-Bolivia was thankful for the travel subsidy that her Association received, making it possible for her to attend the Council, but felt there was a need to generate demand and increase members. Another question was raised on whether or not a review had been undertaken on the impact of the higher retirement age on FAFICS membership numbers. Other delegations made similar comments about sustainability and how to increase numbers, noting that they had similar situations with their own national Associations.
43. The Treasurer felt strongly that FAFICS had sustainability through the 84,000 beneficiaries that FAFICS support, noting that FAFICS had only 18,500 members but felt it was not wise to give up on Associations, but often there was just no response from dormant ones. ARICSA mentioned that travel costs always posed a red flag, but it was a technical issue versus a political aspect. ARICSA further said that FAFICS must maneuver in between strength in cohesion and strength in numbers, so it was very worthwhile in gaining new members and avoiding a situation where FAFICS loses members on the other side. Some brainstorming was needed in this regard to work on getting new members and not losing them. AAFI-AFICS-Geneva felt that FAFICS had to work with the staff associations, namely FICSA, CCISUA and UNISERV representing active staff member who were future retirees to see how they could assist the Federation which is actually an investment for their members. AFICS-Addis Ababa felt that it was important for African Associations to bond together and get stronger to which AFICS-Senegal noted that a new website called 'Africa 4 FAFICS' had recently been created and hoped that would be an additional support for Associations in African countries.
44. The President was glad to hear all the innovative ideas to increase membership and he noted that FAFICS had been in touch with CCISUA, FICSA and UNISERV but no solid planned activities have emerged. However, he assured the Federation that this initiative would be on the Bureau's work plan for next year. He also referred to the issue of the Pension Board's covering the costs for only two out of the four FAFICS delegates to the Pension Board and felt it was important to have four delegates in attendance. This would mean that FAFICS would have to fund four participants, so

FAFICS must continue to raise this issue of full participation and funding whenever possible.

45. The Presiding Officer outlined the six reports introduced by the Treasurer. She noted that there were two reports for information and four that needed approval by the Council. which were as follows:
1. The Revised Travel Policy
 2. The Interim Report on the management of the budget for 2024
 3. The proposed budget for 2025
 4. Appointment of Auditors
46. As for the revised travel policy, one Association felt that some text editing was needed regarding the preamble for the group formations and with this provision the revised travel policy was approved. The Interim budget for 2024 and the proposed budget for 2025 were also approved. In addition, the appointment of two Auditors, Mr. Ambi Sundaram and Mr. Mohammed Bachiri were also approved by the Council.
- **Decision 54/5: The Council approved the four reports relating to the administrative and financial matters by acclamation as follows:**
 1. Revised travel policy with edits
 2. Interim report on the management of the budget for 2024
 3. Proposed budget for 2025
 4. Appointment of two Auditors- Mr. Ambi Sundarem and Mr. Mohammed Bachiri.

**Remarks from the UNFCU's Representative Mr. Donald Mwangi,
UN Affairs and Partnerships Office in Nairobi**

47. The representative of UNFCU, Mr. Donald Mwangi, addressed the Council. He stated that UNFCU has more than 230,000 members globally with close to \$10 billion in assets. He assured the Council delegates that all resources are safe and secure and recently a new Board of Directors was elected. He added that the UNFCU mantra is that once an individual becomes a member, that person will always be a member. He reported that UNFCU remained financially strong and stable and well capitalized. and that it was federally insured with the National Credit Union in the State of New York. He noted that at the beginning of the establishment of UNFCU, thirteen staff members began by setting up a Credit Union after the Second World War whose mission was to serve the people who serve the world. Now more recently, with a much larger client base, UNFCU has revamped its website and created a user-friendly digital banking program with a new contact center recently established in Nairobi.

Agenda item 10: FAFICS pillars

a. FAFICS Communications Committee

Agenda item 10.a/1 Report of the Communications Committee: Follow-up to recommendations of the 53rd FAFICS Council

48. The Chair of the Communications Committee, Juan Antonio Casas-Zamora, introduced the Committee's first report which was the Report of the Working Group on

Communications: Follow-up to recommendations of the 53rd FAFICS Council (Council 54/2024/D.10.a/1). He reported that the Committee had worked hard over the year with its members from around the globe((Argentina, Chile, Mali, Myanmar (Co-Chair) Panama, Philippines and Switzerland)) on its mission to provide policy, guidance, technical support and inputs for refining, implementing and monitoring the FAFICS Communications Strategy. He added that the Committee had initially decided to focus on the production of a trilingual brochure, a call for a proposal for the design and development of a new FAFICS website as well as developing terms of reference for the formal establishment of a Standing Committee on Communications.

49. There are further steps in the Communications Strategy that the Committee is envisioning, including tapping additional social media platforms, strengthening interactivity in the channels of communications and encouraging Member Associations to contribute and upgrade their profile and activities on the FAFICS website. It was also proposed that a web management team be established which would be composed of representatives of each Standing Committee, the FAFICS Secretary and the website content manager. Finally, it was proposed that the Council favorably consider the establishment of a FAFICS Standing Committee on Communications to continue to strengthen and broaden participation in the work of the Committee on Communications.

Agenda item 10.a.2: FAFICS Brochure

50. The Chair then demonstrated the trilingual brochure (E/F/S) (Council 54/2024/D.10.a/2) which was digitally created which meant that it could easily be updated and easily printed locally by each Association. The Secretary added that it had taken a while to agree on content in the Committee, but they were guided by the content sourced from the old website. The draft content and format of the brochure in three languages were also shared with and approved by the Bureau, ensuring that simple language was used to make it readable and relatable to those seeking information on FAFICS. Limited copies of the trilingual brochures were produced for this Council.
51. Member Associations congratulated the Communications Committee for the idea of preparing a digitally prepared brochure. One Association suggested that the brochure be sent to the Pension Fund for them to distribute and link the Associations to the brochure. Another Association praised the Committee saying that the brochure could help future retirees to understand the value of FAFICS. Another Association questioned whether the brochure could be translated into Portuguese or other languages. One Member Association noted that there was no list of achievements made over the last fifty years. Another questioned if resources had been included in future budgets for maintenance and updating of the new website. Another Member Association referred to the need for a Communications Strategy and said that the Federation needed to know who FAFICS was communicating with and through these communication tools - brochure and website - it would be important to advocate for our work.
52. The President thanked all for their comments and offered congratulations for the work of the Communications Committee and reminded all the constant need for transparency which leads to better team building. He added that it would be important to see more contributions from Associations and, in fact, even in his own President's Newsletter he hoped to include more material and information from Associations. As for changes to be made to the brochure, he suggested that changes should only be made from a sole

source (in FAFICS) in order to ensure consistency and appropriateness of content and language.

53. The Communication Committee Chair then also thanked everyone for their kind comments and noted that the idea of the brochure being available in other languages was a good suggestion. He also noted that there was still a need for changes to the brochure as it was not meant to be static but a living document. It was also his intention to have the website up to date with a good source of materials which Member Associations could also use for their own websites or publications. In fact, he noted that the brochure and website could be a resource for potential membership. He also referred to the point on specific work plans and replied that it was the intention of the Committee to have a more elaborate midterm and long-term plan, as well as a discussion on funding. It was his understanding that resources for communications would be allocated as a permanent item in the Federation's budget. He also took time to recognize the work that Odette Foudral of AAFI-AFICS-Geneva and a former Vice-President had done in her previous capacity as the Chair of the first Working Group on Communications. Her group which included some members of the current Committee, started the work on the Communications Strategy and the basic tools that were the underpinnings of the Strategy.

Agenda item 10.a/3. FAFICS website

54. The Chair then turned to the new FAFICS website report (Council 54/2024/D.10.a/3) stating that the organization of the new website contents would be based on the four pillars of FAFICS organization, namely: pension, health insurance, communications and membership. He then introduced Hubert Thompson, the Director-General of the Panama based contractor, Quattro Medios Digitales who provided an overview on the establishment of the revamped FAFICS website. In the months leading to this Council, his company and the Communication Committee worked closely together to develop a modern, user-friendly website tailored to the specific needs of FAFICS. The contract with Quattro Medios Digitales would be for two years for technical support and maintenance. The Chair noted that after receiving confirmation that the site was satisfactory, Quattro Medios Digitales would proceed to migrate content to the new website ensuring a seamless transition for all users. He added that the actual launch of the website would be announced as soon as possible.
55. Associations provided their comments around the following themes:
- Appreciation for the attractive, modern website
 - Concern about appropriate security
 - Need to remember the appropriate order of the UN hierarchy including in the placement of the logos
 - Complicated interface for older people.
 - Concern about software which should be off the shelf and not dependent on a developer
 - Piggybacking by other Associations on this website architecture
 - Concern over future management
 - Transition and content management in the future
 - Concern about the updating of the website - need for content manager

56. The Presiding Officer requested the Council to approve the creation of this new website. The Council did so by acclamation.

- **Decision 54/6 The Council approved by acclamation the establishment of a new FAFICS website.**

Agenda item 10.4: Justification for the establishment of the Standing Committee on Communications

57. The Chair of the Communications Committee then brought forward the next report which was entitled ‘Justifications for the establishment of the Standing Committee on Communications’ (Council 54/2024/D.10.a/4). In response to concerns raised by Member Associations and following the recommendations from the 52nd and 53rd Council Sessions, it was now proposed to establish a Standing Committee on Communications. Based on the terms of reference and plan of action outlined in the Report, the Council was requested to approve the establishment of this new Committee which would ensure that communication issues were thoroughly reviewed and addressed. The Committee would ensure the overall effectiveness of FAFICS communications strategy, ensuring transparency, broader engagement and support within the Federation.
58. The Presiding Officer noted that as there were no comments from Council members on the establishment of a Standing Committee on Communications and therefore the Council was requested to endorse the recommendation as outlined in the above report. The Council endorsed this recommendation.

- **Decision 54/7: The Council endorsed the establishment of a Standing Committee on Communications**

59. The President added that this new Committee needed members and requested Associations to submit members to the Expertise Pool through their Associations. He also added that the new Standing Committee needed a Chair and Co-Chair, and he proposed to maintain the current two Co-Chairs, Juan Antonio Casas Zamora (AFICS-Panama) and Aye Win (AFICS-Myanmar) recognizing the work they had already done to set the Committee work in motion. The Council agreed to his proposal.

- **Decision 54/8: The Council approved by acclamation the appointment of a Chair (Juan Antonio Casas Zamora, AFICS-Panama) and Co-Chair Aye Win (AFICS-Myanmar) for the newly established Standing Committee on Communications.**

Agenda item 12.a/5: Awarding of certificate of appreciation to Douglas Helland for his long and dedicated service (Council 54/2024/D.10.a/5)

60. The President then turned to one additional agenda item which was the awarding of a certificate of appreciation to Douglas Helland (ARICSA). He noted that one person who worked behind the scenes and who had provided technical support for the FAFICS website over many years was Doug Helland. He developed the first ever website and since 2000 had helped in keeping the website as up to date as possible and he could

always be counted on to help ensure the workability of the website. He requested the Council's approval to make such an award of appreciation.

- **Decision 54/9: The Council approved by acclamation the awarding of a certificate of appreciation to Douglas Helland.**

Agenda item 10.b: Membership

61. Marashetty Seenappa (AFUNPI) Co-Chair of the current ad hoc Membership and Revitalization Committee of the Bureau provided an overview of the accomplishments of the Committee last year and introduced the two reports before the Council which are as follows:
 1. Report of the ad hoc Working Group on membership and updates on outreach to Associations which was for information (Council 54/2024/D.10.b/1)
 2. Justification for the establishment of the Standing Committee on Membership. TOR and Composition of the Committee (Council 54/2024/D.10. b.2) for approval
62. He noted that at the 52nd Council, Associations had already signaled and given the message that FAFICS was not interacting enough with Associations and that some of the issues within the Member Associations were not being addressed by FAFICS. It was then at the 53rd Council session, and after the review of decisions taken by the Council and a review of the work plan, it became clear that the work plan must include FAFICS support to member Associations. At this time, it was basically a one-person job. However, at that point Abdou Khadre Diakhate (AFICS-Senegal) was elected as Vice-President and joined in with Vice-Presidents Marashetty Seenappa to work on this issue.
63. Abdou Khadre Diakhate, Co-Chair of the ad hoc Membership and Revitalization Committee, reported that while many Associations were functioning well others had problems with membership due to a number of issues including aging and disability of senior members and with very few new members joining. Associations needed support and assistance from FAFICS. He provided information on the status of Nigeria which was trying to renew itself as well as Ghana who was also considering becoming a member and preparing the necessary documents.
64. UNAPATA-Tanzania was a good example of the importance of helping and making contact. In 2020, Tanzania had to deal with a terrible flooding situation and then there was Covid. However, Marashetty Seenappa had made contact with a few UN retirees there and with travel support from FAFICS, he was able to travel to Tanzania and offered support on behalf of FAFICS. Other plans for next year would be to assist Zimbabwe, Liberia, Mauritania and Laos who have all expressed interest in joining FAFICS.
65. Co-Chair Seenappa then provided the justification for the establishment of a Standing Committee on Membership noting that some Associations lacked initiative to recruit new members or have weak leadership. In addition, economic constraints lead to declining membership and then add to that the difficulty in locating new retirees, spouses reluctant to join, financial contributions decreasing or Associations and

FAFICS losing touch with each other. Consequently, FAFICS is receiving an increasing number of requests for support. As a result, the ad hoc Committee of the Bureau was established. Two success stories were UNAPATA-Tanzania and Côte d'Ivoire (AIAFI-SNU) but there was more work to be done. To service Associations better, there needs to be a systematically organized Committee in line with the new Rules of Procedure. It is on this basis that a Standing Committee on Membership and Revitalization is proposed to be established in conformity with other Standing Committees of FAFICS already functional.

66. Many Associations thanked the Co-Chairs for the work accomplished and to be carried out by Vice-Presidents Marashetty Seenappa and Abdou Khadre Diakhate as well as the proposed terms of reference for the Standing Committee. Other comments concerned the following points:
- The Terms of Reference refer to new associations, but priority should be dormant or inactive ones
 - Could be cost-effective to have neighboring countries assist
 - Personal contact is especially important
 - Need to champion from inside the country, Pension Fund could be of help
 - Prepare a tool kit which potential new Associations could use to assist them in setting up new Associations
 - What are the needs of other retirees
 - Supportive of the terms of reference but could be broadened
 - Priority should be given to dormant Associations, but note that there are no Associations in Romania, Bulgaria and Poland
 - May not need an Association in each country but regionally
 - A budget line is needed to support this Committee
 - Particularly important to increase FAFICS membership to show the Pension Board the strength of FAFICS
 - Must pay attention to members whose dues are in arrears
 - There may be retirees who are familiar with a particular country because of their work experiences
 - Would be useful to have more information on those African countries that have already been contacted to see how more help could be given
 - Multi-country associations as a possibility
 - Do a systematic analysis of countries to know their parameters
 - Need a 'champion' in a country who can initiate the establishment of an Association
 - Need to circulate the added value that FAFICS brings
 - Larger Associations must keep up their membership as well
 - Terms of reference focus on dormant and new, what about broader membership
 - Relevance and how can FAFICS help retirees, a joint approach from all Committees and Associations
 - Eastern European countries are not represented, need to focus on combining those living in neighboring countries
 - More inputs needed for Terms of Reference
 - With a view to maintaining and increasing FAFICS impact, strong Associations needed on the ground
 - Committee should have a good geographical mix in its membership

67. Gerhard Schramek noted that this was not a new discussion and supported the establishment of the Committee but also to elaborate on the Terms of Reference to broaden FAFICS overall membership. It was important to try to increase FAFICS membership to ensure that FAFICS continues its representative role on all Pension bodies. He noted that the overall membership in FAFICS was decreasing and there have been some queries in the past as to whether FAFICS really was representative of all retirees, and he did not want that to happen again.
68. The Presiding Officer hoped that both Vice-Presidents had taken note of the comments and the revisions to the Terms of Reference so the mandate of the Committee would incorporate those additional considerations.
69. The Council approved the establishment of the Standing Committee on Membership and Revitalization with the proviso that the Terms of Reference would be broadened to include an emphasis also on increasing the membership of FAFICS overall and giving adequate attention to dormant associations.
70. The Council approved the establishment of a new Standing Committee under the pillar of ‘Membership’.
- **Decision 54/10: The Council approved by acclamation the establishment of a new Standing Committee on Membership on the understanding that the Terms of Reference be broadened to include an emphasis on also increasing the membership of FAFICS overall and giving adequate attention to dormant Associations.**
71. The President pointed out that there was a need to appoint a Chair and Co-Chair and requested the Council to agree to the appointment of Vice-Presidents Marashetty and Abdou Khadre Diakhate be named Co-Chairs of the new Standing Committee on Membership and Revitalization.
- **Decision 54/11: The Council approved by acclamation the appointment of a Chair (Marashetty Seenappa (AFUNPI) and Co-Chair Abdou Khadre Diakhate (ASAFI-Senegal) for the newly established Standing Committee on Membership.**
72. On a point of order, AFICS-NY stated that as part of the discussion presented that it had been proposed that all the other Committees must come together. Therefore, the Terms of Reference needed to be revisited to add a value proposition to that effect noting that it was important to start small and build big.
73. The President said that this point would be considered in the Terms of Reference and the idea of starting small would be incorporated into the work plan which is more specific. He added that he would put the concern of the membership into the hands of the new Bureau.

Agenda item 10.c ASHIL - After-service health insurance and long-term care

74. The President opened this item by thanking Chair Jay Karia for his substantial and important work as well as that undertaken by the FAFICS Core Team of the Standing Committee on After-Service Health Insurance and Long-Term Care (ASHIL) over the past year. Jay Karia then introduced the Committee's report (Council 54/2024/D/10.c) adding that he was proud of the Committee and its diligent work and accomplishments. The Chair then proceeded to provide the highlights of the Committee's report.
75. His first comment was on the JIU's observations and recommendations made in their Report (JIU/REP/2023/9) in which they noted that locally recruited staff outside Headquarters locations and retirees were not sufficiently engaged in health insurance policymaking which was crucial for good governance and appropriate administration and therefore recommended that Organizations ensure that all groups of plan members, including locally recruited staff in the field and retirees were represented in health insurance plan management, oversight and advisory bodies. He noted that this was their first recommendation, and it should go a long way in ensuring that retirees are represented as full members in all the UN's health insurance management/advisory committees.
76. He also commented that the JIU also noted that the After-Service-Health-Insurance (ASHI) liabilities remain underfunded. Although ASHI liabilities have been on the agenda of governing bodies, the Chief Executives Board (CEB), and External Auditors as a system-wide issue since the 1990s, funding those liabilities is an unachieved goal, with only 31 percent funded. Adoption of the pay-as-you accrue method is not only a matter of sound financial management for long-term financial sustainability but also of transparency and efficiency in legislative budgetary discussions.
77. The JIU study also observed that long-term care was generally not covered by health insurance and remained an unmet need. This was mainly due to funding constraints. Out of twenty-five health insurance schemes reviewed, only eight included some long-term care coverage. The study clarified that the main purpose of long-term-care insurance was not to prevent or cure illnesses but referred to the need for non-medical assistance with routine daily activities both at home and health-care establishments. Long-term care is associated not only with geriatric care, but it may also be required by young people suffering from extended or indefinite physical or mental conditions.
78. He then summarized the results of the general survey that was distributed to all Associations which contained five questions. Thirty-one Associations had responded which was about half of the membership. Almost all Associations considered it important that the Federation continues its strong engagement on health insurance matters related to ASHI. Some responses drew attention to the fact that retirees increasingly required health services as they became older, and most retirees of UN organizations have no alternative affordable health insurance and almost exclusively rely on ASHI.
79. The survey sent to eighteen African Associations received ten responses and he noted

that African Member Associations experienced challenges accessing health care in their countries of residence. The reasons given were the lack of adequate technical platforms in some cases varying competence of human resources and restrictive financing systems for the insured participants. In fact, in certain countries, most healthcare providers did not recognize the ASHI insurance card issued by CIGNA, which meant that the insured person was obliged to pre-finance the totality of the expenses of the consultation and of the treatment before being subsequently reimbursed by the health insurance. In addition, due to lack of medical facilities in their own country, some retirees are forced to seek health care in other countries, adding the cost of transportation for themselves or accompanying family members to their costs.

80. He also reported on the Medical Insurance Plan (MIP), which is health insurance scheme for locally recruited active staff and retirees in duty stations away from UN Headquarters operating in the field. There are about 70,000 ASHI beneficiaries with 13,500 enrolled in MIP representing 20% of the total ASHI members. MIP is designed and priced for local use. However, Associations in field locations mentioned the gap that existed between coverage under ASHI for locally recruited staff under MIP and that of field-based former staff of Specialized Agencies. To review and monitor this situation the UN Secretariat has now set up a Working Group to review MIP provisions focusing on governance and monitoring. He then detailed the eight recommendations before the Council.
81. AAFI-AFICS-Geneva presented a supplementary paper for information (Council 54/2024/D.10.c/1a) on the representation of retirees in the insurance management committee of the UN system. The paper summarized the situation vis a vis the history and current situation of retirees in the structure of the various insurance management committees. Although it was noted with satisfaction that some organizations have authorized full participation of retirees, others remain reluctant and limit their representation to observer status. He noted that this was particularly the case in the UN Secretariat and added that this limited status was detrimental to retirees as a distinct category of beneficiaries and to the medical scheme itself due to the imbalance in the representation of interests between active members and retirees. Considering the JIU's recommendation in this regard, AAFI-AFICS felt compelled to highlight the situation and request that follow-up action on this matter be taken to end depriving retirees of the status of full representation in the management committees.
82. Many Associations made the following comments:
 - Thanked Jay Karia and the Standing Committee for the concise and well-written report.
 - Felt that the response of CIGNA to their claims and inquiries was inadequate with long procedures for reimbursement and unnecessary banking procedures.
 - Recommended that a CIGNA representative be invited to one of the Council's sessions.
 - Requested that attention also be paid to countries in conflict where there were many medical challenges and an acute shortage of medicines.
 - Recognized that harmonization and transparency were good goals but as far as harmonization was concerned, a better word should be used as it is important to be sure that harmonization would not mean a lowering of any coverage. Many

felt that this word could be problematic and therefore a more appropriate word should be found.

- Raised interest on the need for long-term care.
- Found that the complexity of the health insurance system and the uncertain financial crisis currently faced by the UN and with unfunded liabilities meant huge financial risks for all.

83. Jay Karia thanked AAFI-AFICS-Geneva for their supplementary paper and the synopsis of the full history of the situation of the status of retirees on management committees which was extremely important. He added that each time a meeting was held with relevant senior officials at the UN Secretariat, the retirees' status was always brought up and discussed. There had been an additional constraint with the legal decision issued in this regard. However, AFICS-NY had argued that the legal decision was not an appropriate legal opinion and recently met with the USG for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance on this subject. That was why the JIU's recommendation was so important, and Associations should take all opportunities to bring this recommendation up with their organizations. A meeting is being set up with the UN's Legal experts and the current interim Head of the UN's Health and Life Insurance Section (HLIS) to review this legal opinion with AFICS/NY including their legal experts who are very familiar with the issue. The Chair noted that while AFICS-NY has an Observer status in the UN's Health and Insurance Life Committee, as regards the working procedures for the committee, it had been agreed to do everything on a consensus basis.

84. As for issues with CIGNA, these should be brought up with CIGNA directly as they are Third Party Administrators. He reminded all that the insurance schemes are based on what is decided on in health insurance committees and the Third-Party Administrators carry these schemes out as directed. As for contracts, these are signed by each Organization, and FAFICS representatives can only try to influence what the schemes include as well as their client services. As for the harmonization issue, the aim was not to reduce benefits but to raise the level to reach certain higher standards. As for the question of how to harmonize, this was always a complex situation, but what was needed to do was to harmonize carefully and take best practices, leading to less diversity in benefits with a view to improve them. As for ASHI funding, the Secretariat had produced its eighth report in 2022 on this subject noting in the report that unfunded liabilities in the UN system amounted to almost \$20 billion. Even though the situation of unfunded liabilities has been made known to Member States, demonstrating how important it was for them to pay these liabilities on a pay as you accrue method as a matter of sound financial management or long-term financial sustainability, Member States have not taken any action in this regard. This information is always included in the financial statements, so Member States are aware of the situation, but it was still incumbent on FAFICS to organize and lobby appropriately showing that there was insufficient funding for health insurance liabilities.

85. The President noted how important health insurance was to Member Associations and therefore, was already thinking about how to incorporate this item into his own work programme for the coming years. He added that he would be glad to participate and contribute to meetings held with senior officials at UN Headquarters, and taking guidance from the Standing Committee on ASHIL, he proposed that perhaps an offline session could be held at the next Council session with the appropriate people from

CIGNA to discuss directly with them issues mentioned by many Associations. He was also willing to bring up again with the HLCM, if appropriate, as well as spearheading informational sessions with staff unions, namely, FICSA, UNISERV and CCISUA.

86. Further comments were made by Associations as follows:
- Welcomed the statement by the President noting that he would tackle the major issues mentioned here with the senior officials of the UN.
 - Requested a review as to the need for re-enrollment for retirees and to determine if after-service- health insurance could continue without the additional administrative steps.
 - Requested that more information on the UN's health insurance be made available on the websites of specialized agencies
 - Noted that it was important to build up the capacity in the Associations to be able to answer questions on health care for retirees.
 - Noting that information sharing on pensions and other activities was being done by FAFICS and other Associations through the pre-retirement seminars, it would also be good to do so for the after-service health insurance programmes.
 - Requested that communications be shared with the Secretary-General, the CEB and the HLCM about FAFICS concerns regarding the adequacy of ASHI across the UN system and its costs to retirees. It was noted that provision for ASHI for UN retirees was formally approved by the UN General Assembly in 1967 (A/RES/67/238) to ensure retirees could continue to have access to medical coverage after their service, reflecting the Organizations' commitment to the welfare of its former staff. The variability and adequacy of existing coverage were highlighted in the recent JIU Report as was the need for effective representation of retiree bodies in UN and Specialized Agencies medical insurance committees and boards.
 - Requested that since the larger Associations located in Headquarters locations (New York, Geneva, Rome, Paris, Vienna) have established contacts/membership on Agency Medical Boards/Committees, and as such have the possibility of these Associations bringing up concerns of retirees in smaller cities raised by retirees with their national AFICS should be considered. For example, if retirees have ASHI issues related to FAO, WFP and IFAD medical plans these could be forwarded to FFOA through their national AFICS to raise with the respective Organization's medical/social security committee in Rome. Similarly, ARICSA could do this with the agencies in Vienna. This endeavor would bring associations closer together under the umbrella.
 - Noted that health care insurance was important to members but what was provided to members was a forum but no real response to the health insurance questions and challenges faced by retirees. It was through national Associations and FAFICS that answers could be provided which would also demonstrate the value of FAFICS. Many of those who withdraw from insurance programmes were from national associations because of costs, especially for those with small pensions.
 - Noted the importance of long-term care and that its need was more urgent.
87. Vice-President Deborah Landey commended Jay Karia and his team and informed the Council that what they were seeing in the ASHIL report demonstrated the incredible work of the Standing Committee and its members who represent many Associations across the Federation. She recalled how Georges Kutukdjian (AAFU-AFUS-France) who was responsible for setting up the Core Group on ASHIL where succession planning was emphasized and thought that another message of appreciation should be

sent to him especially since many other Committees are following this model which was critical for FAFICS' future. President Emeritus, Andres Castellano, congratulated Jay Karia and his team for their participation noting that their work was a real example for other Standing Committees to follow.

88. Jay Karia responded again to the issues raised beginning with the requirement that staff retiring must re-enroll in health insurance schemes within a certain amount of time or they lose the possibility of being insured through the UN. He stated that this was the situation because the premiums for insured retirees were collected through pensions and therefore there had to be a link to their pensions for health insurance premiums to be debited. This is a practical problem that has been discussed with the Pension Fund but there did not seem to be a solution at this time. However, he noted it was incumbent for all those giving pre-retirement seminars to be sure to highlight this requirement during their presentations, so retirees had the correct information in this regard.
89. As far as capacity building, Jay Karia added that there was a great deal of material on the UN website, but local Associations needed to raise their issues through their organizations considering the many and varied contracts with differences in benefits. As regards CIGNA, he thought it would be good to take an inventory of the complaints to determine where the problems were and if there were any commonalities and then to take them up directly with the appropriate Organization/Agency or with the Third-Party Administrator. As for long-term care insurance, the Standing Committee was aware of the current high costs in the US and the fact that in other countries there may be some form of long-term care so there was no intention to take anything away, but it must be realized that there was a delicate balance between high costs and appropriate care.
90. An additional round of comments was heard which included the following mentions:
 - Noted that one delegation had submitted appeals due to insurance costs and was waiting for a response from the UN's Administrative Tribunal as it was difficult to have to pay up to 25% of their pensions.
 - As reported in some countries, the UN insurance schemes were not accepted by relevant government departments, even if they are more comprehensive than nationally approved schemes. This has led to situations where a retiree may have to hold two more insurance schemes. Both Thailand and Australia reported problems of this nature.
 - Reported that some Associations were pleased to see MIP included in the Standing Committee's Report but noted that MIP did not provide world-wide coverage which was a problem.
 - Suggested that the dissemination of the FAFICS report which may be sent to the Secretary-General should also be sent to the Funds and Programmes.
 - Proposed that a symposium on the type and availability of long-term care facilities, and their pertinent coverage by insurance companies.
91. Lucien Back (AFICS-Netherlands) and a member of the Core Group of the Standing Committee on ASHIL noted during the discussion that the word 'harmonization' needed clarification. He also noted there were a number of complaints about TPAs as they are the front face for those insured but conditions were not established by them but by UN Organizations, but there was a need for more transparency with more visibility given to the health insurance offices in the Organizations. He added that the surveys clearly

indicated that staff and retirees have not been told about possibilities and requirements and find the system confusing.

92. The President noted the sense of general acceptance of all the recommendations found in the Report with a slight change in the wording of ‘harmonization’ to ‘harmonization towards best practices’ or some similar wording.
93. The Council then agreed that they had no objection to all eight recommendations and as such were approved.
 - **Decision 54/12: The Council approved the eight recommendations as presented by the Standing Committee on ASHIL in its report (Council 54/2024/D/10.c/1)with a change to recommendation 2 to change the world ‘harmonization’ to “harmonization towards best practices”.**
94. The President then mentioned that after the conclusion of this Council session, FAFICS would hold a pre-retirement seminar for ESCAP and UN staff in Bangkok. The half-day event would be a hybrid meeting would be hosted by President, Jerry Barton and Vice President Marashetty Seenappa and they would be sure to discuss after-service-health care insurance and all the pertinent health insurance service requirements.
95. AAFI-AFICS-Geneva provided information on a paper on mental health practice at work (Council 54/2024/D.10.c/4). This paper is a follow-up to the Joint Inspection Unit’s report JIU/REP/2023/4 on Mental health for the attention of FAFICS as the risks inherent in the international civil service are greater than the average in other private or public employment sectors, thus provoking a steady decline in the mental health of UN personnel. The JIU, as a result, called for the establishment of a single inter-organizational form and a common approach under the label ‘One United Nations’ bringing together all UN Agencies of the system and the establishment of the necessary structures, personnel and financing, in order to have a dedicated multifunctional management, addressing efficiently the mental health and wellbeing of staff. The strategy developed by the JIU to help reduce the risks inherent in the employment of the international civil services includes eleven recommendations.
96. AAFI-AFICS-Geneva invited the FAFICS Council to examine the JIU report and noted that today’s active staff are tomorrow’s retirees.
97. The President said that the Bureau would take this issue on board for next year and from his experience in the Staff Pension Committee for disability cases, there were many cases approved mainly due to burnout and thus an inability to continue with the job. He added that this was a real issue for existing staff which would then mean it would also be one for former staff. He believed FAFICS should consider looking into this critical issue perhaps in partnership with Organizations to help mitigate these risks.

Agenda item 8: Association matters (continued)

98. Member Associations were asked to provide information on their activities. Discussions began with AFICS-Myanmar who provided an update on their report presented last year to the Council highlighting the challenges retirees face because of lagging rates of exchange. However, he did point out that retirees started receiving their monthly

benefits at a more flexible rate starting from November 2023. He provided additional information on their interaction with UNJSPF, and especially UNFCU which was arranged by FAFICS. He concluded that challenges continue as armed conflict rages across the country with daily power cuts of eight to twelve hours. Other insecurities have surfaced, especially the increase in crime due to the breakdown of law and order as well as the recently imposed conscription law, all of which add to the increasing misery felt by all.

99. The President of AFICS-Myanmar also spoke and after which the President of FAFICS said that her comments on her personal assistance given to members were much appreciated. He added that this should serve as a role model noting that AFICS-Myanmar has data on all members so members can be easily contacted, and provision of assistance with other requirements such as Certificates of Entitlements all of which was very laudable.
100. Thirteen more highlighted then highlighted their activities as summarized below:
 - **AFICS-Japan** spoke of their interest in outreach activities with younger people holding lectures and events reaching out to university students in Japan and inviting them to participate in briefings and introducing and interesting them in international civil service for their future work. They also issue a newsletter twice a year and provide numerous services through pension seminars and help sessions for the digital certification of entitlement.
 - **AFUNPI-India** holds meetings monthly for both social and information sharing. specialists and other experts are called in to address these monthly meetings and members and spouses look forward to connecting, which helps to unite them all pre-retirement seminars are held on a regular basis, and they are looking forward to celebrating their 50th jubilee year in 2025.
 - **AFICS-Philippines** has six active committees and through their Membership Committee are being much more responsive to members, and they were able to contact colleagues through their letter that was sent through the UNJSPF. In January, they held a hybrid General Assembly where their Rules of Procedure were approved. A survey was also launched among retirees to understand their issues, which among many was the poor CIGNA response and small pensions. They are also exploring ways to raise funds with different activities including organizing a trip to Japan for retirees and organizing outreach to others in need. This year their focus will be on outreach for women deprived of freedom.
 - **UNAPATA-Tanzania** noted that their membership had increased and with the support of the Resident Coordinator were able to get identification cards and a meeting room and now were able to have regular meetings. Committees have been formed and they were planning to meet with the staff who were on the verge of retiring to inform them of the steps towards retirement. They have also opened bank accounts for the Association which were currently healthy. However, as medical insurance is expensive, UNAPATA contributes to help those who have difficulties with medical charges and considered it as a way to attract members. UNAPATA would be updating FAFICS on a regular basis.
 - **AFICS-Bangladesh** had sixteen members in 2008 and now there are three hundred. A yearly work plan had been developed, a database set up and a directory created. Retiree identification cards have been issued and they now have a newsletter. They also observe every year the international day for elderly people, hold workshops with experts on health issues and organize humanitarian efforts for those in need.

- **AFICS-Brazil** has 180 members and 560 beneficiaries mostly in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Brasilia. Their committee work is aligned with that of FAFICS' governance structure. They hold meetings regularly as well as their once-a-year General Assembly. As far as communications are concerned, they have a web page and handle communications through WhatsApp. They also have a newsletter issued every three months and promote social events and new member campaigns.
- **AFICS-Bolivia** expressed appreciation for being able to attend this Council session. They had lost many of their members and she felt that she was starting over from scratch. Their team is small with no structured work plan and has about one hundred and twenty members. With country offices shrinking she thought that there would be more difficulties ahead. She was also working with UNVs to see how people could help if they were seeking employment even as retirees. She counted on FAFICS support as she moved ahead to rebuild AFICS-Bolivia.
- **AFICS-Addis Ababa** has an appropriate office and is well supported by UNECA, especially during their General Assembly session every year. AFICS-Addis Ababa is in the process of restructuring its own Association. There are about eight hundred members, and they expect to do many more things and will report at the next Council session.
- **AAFU-AFUS-France** may be considered as a new Association as Georges Kutukdjian had been President for 20 years but now a new President has taken over. However, time is needed to make changes especially in light of the change of members and status. They reviewed their membership numbers and found that they were about five hundred less, but their commitment remains strong and expect even more dedication even with the lower membership numbers.
- **RUNSAN-Nepal** has about 140 life members. They meet once a month with many committees and have a committee on mental well-being. However, they are still requesting office space from UNDP. They are looking for information and ways on how to grow the Association.
- **AFICS-Burkina Faso** elected a new President yesterday. Information on the newly elected Bureau will be sent. They are hosted by the Information Centre.
- **AFICS-Chile** has around 600 members, but many are not very active, ECLAC is supportive and provides an office. They have a new website and are thankful for what they are learning from others at this Council's session.
- **AFICS-Niger** is represented on the Standing Committee of ASHIL and suggest that a letter be written to the Resident Coordinator because of their need for a meeting room and some administrative facility.

101. Vice-President Deborah Landey informed the Council that a letter had been drafted on behalf of the President of FAFICS for the UN Head of the Development Coordination and that the letter would be sent to all Resident Coordinators requesting them to assist all AFICS Associations. This is a formal request and FAFICS would inform all when the letter is signed and sent out .

102. The President said that the information shared was an excellent exchange of information and it was thanks to Member Associations that this item was put on the agenda. He felt it was important to learn of activities, challenges and initiatives taken by different Associations. This exchange was an effective way to make connections, share experiences and help grow the idea that information did not have to be from the Federation downward but also, horizontally, from AFICS to AFICS.

**Agenda 10d.5 Situation of the former UNJSPF participants from
the former USSR, Ukrainian SSR and Belorussian SSR**

103. The President introduced the next item (54/2024/d.5) which was to attempt to remedy the problem of those UN retirees who came from the Soviet Union and because of an agreement between the UN and the Soviet Union they had their pension payments paid directly to the Soviet Union. This problem still exists, but FAFICS did not know how many recipients still were alive and have been trying to be in contact with them over the last several years. The UNJSPF has also not been able to locate any of these people. Over the years, Katia Chestopalov was the contact person with these people, but she was no longer able to continue to do that. However, it was important to keep this item on the agenda as a show of solidarity. The President added that he would like to keep the responsibility with AAFI-AFICS-Geneva and to have them continue to be the driving force on this issue.
104. In response to a question the President said that if FAFICS found that some of these retirees were alive, then FAFICS would consider ways to help them. FAFICS would not go back to the General Assembly or the UNJSPF but would among us try to see if there was a way for them to receive some support. As to the question concerning whether FAFICS should provide consideration to fellow retirees in Palestine, the President answered ‘yes’.

**Statement by the Representative of the Secretary-General for
the investments of the United Nations, Mr. Pedro Guazo**

105. The Council welcomed the Representative of the Secretary-General, Pedro Guazo, who began by saying that this was his fifth time making a presentation before the Council. Over the five years, the Pension Fund has had some good times and some difficult times. Fortunately, today the Fund was going through some good times. 2022 was a very difficult year for the financial markets due to high inflation with dramatic increases in interest rates. With these higher interest rates, the market value, especially long-term assets, was affected. However, currently, the Fund has a record high in its market value of \$92.3 billion as of 30 June 2024, thanks to the recovery from the drawback in 2023 and the first half of 2024 where there has been a tremendous rally especially in public equities portfolios with rates of return close to 20% driven by the valuation of just a few entities that are related to AI companies. It was still too early to call it completely turned around as inflation has not been eliminated, there are many problems around the world and along with the upcoming US elections, he felt it was important to be cautious in the management of the Pension Fund’s portfolio. Last year, there was a restructuring of asset allocations and an increase in allocations to fixed income, which helps to protect capital and provide liquidity in times of crisis. So, with this positioning, the Fund remains defensive against whatever situation may occur, allowing the Fund to react fast to any potential uncertainty.
106. He then shared additional information that demonstrated the RSG’s full commitment to

transparency. He noted that there had been an increase in the number of Newsletters, as well as a redesigned website along with easily accessible useful information which can be used to help FAFICS brief its constituents and thus help them to find the information themselves, so they can go straight to the source.

107. He demonstrated the way to find Fund performance information by going into the UNJSPF website showing many different tables including one with historical data as well as the most recent information. He then turned to a fifteen-page report which he called the 'MRI' of the Portfolio's performance. The website table shows how much of the Portfolio is managed internally. He added that the Portfolio is only managed externally when there is a new unknown aspect to the Portfolio and once learned from external sources, that part of the Portfolio is brought back into the Fund. He concluded by saying that overall, the Fund was strong, well-funded, delivering a compliant Portfolio and doing so in an efficient way by managing most of the Portfolio internally and on an active basis.
108. He then turned his presentation over to questions which focused on the following aspects of the investments of the Fund:
 - Main risks to the Fund which cause him to stay up at night
 - The concept of 'dedollarization' and would this have an impact on the Fund.
 - For the sustainability of the Fund, actuarial studies have said that the performance rate should be at 3.5% and this figure has been maintained for many years but now this has been reduced to 3.4%. With the recovery of the financial situation and with the market value of the Fund now at its peak, should another figure be achieved, or should it remain at 3.4% or move back up to 3.5%?
 - How does the Pension Fund support those dealing with emergencies?
109. The President said that the Pension Fund was overall very complex as there were investments under the RSG and then the entire operation of the administration of the Fund under the responsibility of the CEPA. FAFICS was pleased with the focus on transparency and the RSG has responded by publishing all of this data and what has been the most transparent focus since Warren Sach was the RSG and offered his congratulations for this success. The President was also glad to see the RSG's comments on learning through outside management and then bringing what had been learned back into the Investment team. This implies that the Fund's staff was able and willing to work and learn and with better morale than a few years ago.
110. Other Associations asked the following questions:
 - Investment of funds should not only be in the US. What is the status?
 - External expertise would be provisional- what efforts have been made to train staff to deal with complex investments.
 - In times of financial crisis, gold is a good investment, so what about gold?
 - Industry standard reports vs. customized reports
 - Management of externally managed funds - where were they managed - US, Europe or elsewhere
111. The RSG provided further clarifications beginning with what were the three main risks in the investment of the pension funds:
 - **cyber security** - which is becoming a bigger threat for everyone, but with the name of the UN and the amount of the Fund, the UNJSPF is a large target. The

Investment team is doing everything in their power to stay on top of all technology to be protected as best as possible.

- **long-term economic situation/dedollarization** - concerned for the long term regarding the American and Chinese economy. For the American economy, the level of debt is high, and a crisis could occur if others become unwilling to invest in the US. Currently, the dollar keeps strengthening against hard currencies and it is still a haven, but it is important to be mindful that with the levels of debt anything could happen. As for the Chinese economy with its big operations, if a slowdown occurs that would mean less demand and that could create a difficult financial situation. It is also important to understand that the world is globalized which means that investing in a company domiciled in the US but with factories all over the world also means that revenue is distributed around the world as are the risks.
- **investment in adequate tools and people** - the General Assembly and Pension Board have recognized the importance in having adequate people and adequate tools. Results have shown that this is a good investment and plans to continue such efforts as the economic landscape becomes more difficult.
- The Fund complies with all the statutory demands and the OIM presents all financial records following an audited process and following all standards
- The chart of oversight circles previously shared showed all the oversight bodies that verify OIM's financial reporting. There is an audit committee, an internal and risk management committee and of course the ACABQ which everyone knows meticulously visits every detail.
- As for the 3.4% vs. the 3.5 %, the Committee of Actuaries with the consulting actuary produces every two years the actuarial validation reviewing many assumptions. However, there is one assumption which is the long-term rate of return. They decide on the term and what rate to use based on their own analysis. For many years it was 3.5% before that it was 2.5 % until last year. For investments. the real rate return with a fifteen-year horizon, had as its objective to achieve 3.5%.
- As for the rumors that the Fund was going to be privatized, he said this was just a lie. The top three charts on market value show the distribution and show which aspects of the Fund are managed externally or internally.
- On the question of gold - it is not good for our purposes or for our portfolio requirements. Gold might have reserve value, but it is not liquid and never shows up as a good option as it is purely speculative and eventually that bubble bursts and you must collect losses you cannot liquidate.

112. The RSG referred to the President's comments noting the OIM is strong financially but also is a solid team of 165 people which it is hoped to be a team of 185 people next year. Things are going well and OIM is committed to be the most responsible asset allocation investment portfolio aligned with the UN's values.

113. The President once again thanked the RSG for presenting so much information and noted that the UN has a defined benefit plan whereas the risk is not carried by individuals but carried by the Fund. This is becoming a rarity and therefore one of the best ways to protect such an important benefit is to have competent management and investments to provide for the next fifty years and credited the RSG and his team for doing just that for all of us.

**Statement by Ms. Rosemarie McClean
Chief Executive for Pension Administration (CEPA), UNJSPF**

114. The President was pleased to introduce Ms. Rosemarie McClean, Chief Executive of the Pension Fund, CEPA and Ms. Sarah Mathieson, Chief Data Analysis Unit, and Mr. Brian Casatelli, who is the local staff member of the UNJSPF in Bangkok. He commented that the UN's pension plan is a defined one which is a rarity in today's world and as such needs to be protected. As FAFICS has already heard from the RSG on the UNJPF's investment status, which is one side of the equation, it was time to hear from the CEPA on the other half of the equation which was the excellent performance of administering, collecting monies, paying benefits, handling inquiries, dealing with cyber security and protecting the assets of the Fund. He also reported that the beneficiary numbers by country could be found in a document on the FAFICS google documents website.
115. The CEPA reported that the Pension Administration was reporting a steady growth in plan participants and beneficiaries for which at the end of 2023 the Pension Fund had made over 86,000 periodic benefits with over 149,000 plan participants. The total benefits paid currently was almost equal with \$3.5 billion paid benefits versus \$3.4 million in yearly contributions. The total market value of the Fund as of 12 July 2024 was \$94.5 billion. She added that as a defined benefit plan of a significant size, the entire UN population should be proud of this programme and the responsible Fund staff who ensure that this Fund was still in existence years from now. The Fund is a picture of growth with increases in plan participants from the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) which was due to migration and geopolitical issues while the UN Secretariat was remaining relatively flat. And as for the Fund's population she noted that the population was aging as there were only five hundred retirees over the age of 90 in 2000 and now there are over 4,000.
116. She reported the importance of processing and client services, adding that 92.8 percent of benchmark benefits were processed within fifteen business days of the receipt of all the documents. The Fund was also working with Member Organizations on benefit processing and added that these were important partnerships as they provide critical information and complete the necessary forms and information that is needed for the Pension Fund to do its part, so pensions are paid on time.
117. In addition, pension payments continue to be paid on time. In 2024, there was a record low number of suspensions - only 953 suspensions, down from 1,264 the year before and commended the support given by the Associations from around the world to help find retirees who have not submitted their proof of life. A cost-of-living amount of 3.4% was given on 1 April 2024 for USD track and the Fund continues its efforts to prevent payment disruptions.
118. As concerns the two-track system there are around 15,000 benefits on the two-track which is only 17% of all benefits and are concentrated in ten countries. Those countries suspended from the two-track system, the basis of which is set out in paragraph 26 of the Pension Adjustment System, and which is a statistical approach to identifying

aberrant results under the two-track system, added six countries to those suspended in 2023 and seven in 2024. However, she did not expect to see further suspensions and

the Fund was looking to reinstate some countries previously suspended once the cost-of-living review is completed in April 2025.

119. She then referred to the Fund's strategy which consisted of three key pillars i) improving the client's experience, ii) modernizing pension services and iii) strengthening relationships with all stakeholders. She noted that some of the strategic achievements over the last year included the tracking of more than 33,000 digital certificates of enrollments while noting that the paper option would always exist. In addition, the new client relationship management system (CRM) was about to be deployed which would review the work procedures around the Organizations which would provide better information on outstanding cases and more targeted communications. The first phase would begin in September and the other phases would be delivered in the beginning of 2025. The CEPA was pleased that this work would not impact on the day-to-day pension business. The Fund has also been strengthening communications and outreach by holding monthly town halls meetings targeting different participants and sharing different pieces of information. They are also producing more newsletters and a valuable updated website.
120. The CEPA was then requested to respond to questions from Associations. Questions concerned the following items:
- Possibility for the Pension Fund to make an overall distribution of the FAFICS brochure or place a link on the UNJSPF website
 - Use of Spanish language in communications with access to Spanish speakers for retirees or a desk in NY or in Latin America.
 - a UNJSPF liaison office to be in Addis Ababa
 - Availability of a special email address for spouses after a death of a UN retiree
 - Lack of full FAFICS information on UNJSPF's website
 - Cyber security
121. The CEPA replied that she would like to have a conversation with her team to see whether forwarding the new FAFICS brochure to all Associations was possible but if by email could commit to this now. As for the request to have more availability of Spanish language documents and Spanish speakers, there has been some discussion of this in the Fund, but she noted that there were Spanish speakers in contact centers, so if any retirees needed to speak to a Spanish speaking Pension Fund staff member there were staff who could help. They were considering expanding the website to provide information in other languages and perhaps AI would be a help. With respect to opening new offices, the Fund, after much discussion on whether to expand, took the decision that it was not possible at this time, especially since the Fund was pressed to get any increases in their budget and the UN was under tremendous financial pressure. This meant that the Fund was not contemplating any new Offices in new locations at this time.
122. The President added that FAFICS would like to see more regional offices when possible and noted how important in-person meetings were for retirees. Despite the Pension Fund's current decision, FAFICS would still be calling for more regional offices which would be helpful for retirees.

123. As for the spousal benefit, she said that this situation would be solved when the new CMR system was in place as the Fund would be able to track actions in a more efficient way. She raised the point that there are isolated cases where the Fund did not know who the survivor was, or if there were a survivor, so it was important for retirees to provide information to their family members informing them of appropriate information as survivors. As for cyber security, the Fund takes this issue very seriously and they even go so far to have vendors try to infiltrate their site. They recently had a trial with their emergency response team walking through various scenarios. With respect to the budget, she thanked FAFICS for their support and noted that their focus this year was about upgrading their systems. She also mentioned that the Pension Fund now has client services in every time zone around the world, which are open twenty-four hours a day and five days a week along with fifty toll free numbers, so the Fund is always available.
124. As for the two-track system, AAFI-AFICS-Geneva commented that the algorithm that is used to define a suspension lacks transparency on how it was working, especially since the review was taken with data from 30 years ago which did not take into consideration the change in currencies. They also expressed concern over the large number of two-track suspensions in recent years.
125. The CEPA commented on the issue of transparency as many meetings were held to provide information on the two-track system and she felt that the Fund had been very transparent in this regard. Sarah Mathieson of the UNJSPF provided detailed information on the two-track system and the mechanisms used to assess the situation.
126. Further comments were raised by Associations concerning improvements for small and minimum pensions. The CEPA, with respect to small pensions, said that this would be a Board decision and was the purview of the Pension Board's Plan Review Group. The Fund administers programmes as they were written and adopted by the Board.
127. The President thanked the CEPA and those that raised questions and made note that responsibilities for support of retirees was moving from Organizations, due to their financial stress, and more to local AFICS Associations and FAFICS was hoping that the Federation could work with the Pension Administration to help simplify procedures and help with better responsiveness by taking over some of the work. He also noted that some organizations did not have retiree support on their Staff Pension Committees, which needs to be encouraged again. On the small pension issues, the Council had approved the paper before the Pension Board and FAFICS was very willing to contribute to the next steps. He also noted that there were some isolated cases of non-responsiveness that needed the CEPA's attention including that of Senegal and Tanzania who applied for emergency relief after flooding problems but had not received any answer. Nevertheless, FAFICS welcomed the CEPA's responsiveness and appreciated all that the Fund did for retirees. On those issues raised during this session, the President said he would take them up with the CEPA as soon as possible.

10.d. FAFICS Standing Committee on Pension Issues

Agenda item 10.d/2D: Plan Review Group

128. Gerhard Schramek provided a summary of the report on the Plan Review Group (Council 54/2024/D.10d/2D) which was set up in February 2022 by the Pension Board as a group composed of eight members: two representatives from each constituent group- Governing Bodies, Executive Heads, participants - and two representatives of FAFICS. Suzanne Bishopric and Gerhardt Schramek serve as the two FAFICS representatives. As part of its terms of reference, the Plan Review Group was tasked with considering proposals for simplification and/or clarification of the Regulations and Administrative Rules that would facilitate the administration of benefits without changing the nature of individual benefits under the plan. Other requests to be reviewed came from the Staff Pension Committees and the CEPA.
129. One of the PRG's mandates was to review the proposals by the earlier (2008-2010) Working Group on Plan Design and to determine whether priority should still be given to those proposals approved by the General Assembly to be implemented "when the actuarial valuation of the UNJSPF showed a clear upward pattern of surpluses, namely positive trends of actuarial surpluses (GA resolution 57/285). The four pertinent proposals were as follows:
- i) **Elimination of the remaining 0.5% reduction after the first cost of living adjustment due after retirement.**
 - ii) **Commencement of cost-of-living adjustments for deferred benefits from age 50**
 - iii) **Automatic restoration of deferred retirement benefits**
 - iv) **Removing the cap on benefits for participants at the ASG/USG levels**
130. The Plan Review Group, after taking into account the actuarial valuation results as of 31 December 2023, the costings of each proposal provided by the Consulting Actuary, and advice from the Committee of Actuaries, and the need to be prudent at this time, was of the view that the present funded status of the UNJSPF did not support a proposal for the Board to consider any Regulation changes that would generate a cost to the Fund at this time.
131. Gerhard Schramek concluded his presentation by recommending that FAFICS supports the recommendation with the proviso that the Board remain seized of the elimination of the four economic measures and to request the Committee of Actuaries to continue to study these items in conjunction with the next actuarial valuation of the Fund as of 31 December 2025, or subsequent valuations, for the Board's ongoing considerations. FAFICS should continue to prioritize the elimination of the 0.5 per cent reduction in the first cost-of-living adjustment due after retirement.
132. Delegations thanked Gerhard Schramek and Suzanne Bishopric for their hard work on this substantial review. However, considering the non-approval of the four priorities, especially the one on the elimination of the 0.5% reduction, questions were raised on the idea of demanding whether or not it was time to ask for interest on the non-

restoration of the 0.5 reduction and what elements would be necessary for the actuarial validation to lead to the restoration of the 0.5 reduction.

133. Gerhard Schramek responded by stating that the Board could not go to the General Assembly as there is reality in the numbers. The only thing that could be done now was for the FAFICS President to make a strong statement reminding the Board that retirees have been waiting since 2007 and the same situation prevails. This statement is important as it goes on the record and the Board's report is submitted to the General Assembly.
134. The President noted the four priorities listed in the report which he hoped the Council would support along with the recommendation that FAFICS should request the Committee on Actuaries to continue to study these items in conjunction with the next actuarial valuation of the Fund as of 31 December 2025, or subsequent valuations, for the Board's ongoing consideration. In particular, FAFICS should continue to prioritize the elimination of the 0.5 percent reduction in the first cost-of-living adjustment due after retirement. It was also suggested that the President make it very clear to the Board that the Federation is frustrated with this lingering situation and positive action should be taken as soon as it was deemed possible.
135. The Council approved the above recommendations.
 - **Decision 54/13: The Council approved the recommendation found in the document (Council 54/2024/D.10/d/2D) from the Plan Review Group, including the charge to the FAFICS Delegation to support the proposal for the Pension Board and the Actuaries to remain seized of the improvements proposed by the Plan Review Group, pending improved actuarial results.**

Agenda item 10.d.E. Small pensions

136. Gerhard Schramek then turned to the Report on Small Pensions (Council 54/2024/D.10.d/2E). He reported that the situation of small pensions under the Pension Adjustment System had been discussed at the 53rd FAFICS Council session in July 2023. At that time, some Associations requested FAFICS to take up the issue of small pensions with the Pension Administration as the threshold amounts contained in the relevant section of the Pension Adjustment System had not been updated since 2016. At its meeting in January 2024, the FAFICS Bureau decided to submit a short document on review of small pensions to the February 2024 session of the Pension Board. At its 76th session in February 2024, the Board considered the FAFICS report entitled "*Review of the current provisions for special adjustment of small pensions*". (JSPB/76/R.14)
137. In April 2024, there was a good reaction to the FAFICS report as the CEPA said that the Pension Administration would be looking at the issue to increase the threshold movement of the US CPI as there had been no increase since 2016. There was one more aspect to this recommendation that should be considered and that was shown to be the significant overlap between small and minimum pensions which meant that decisions relating to the small pension adjustment could no longer be considered in isolation. It would be for the Pension Administration to develop options for a longer-

term mechanism for the small pension adjustment, alongside the minimum pension threshold. Such an analysis could be presented at the April 2025 Board session with a final proposal presented to the Board at its July 2025 season and that FAFICS was very willing to participate and provide assistance in this regard.

138. The President said that this was again another complex issue and that this approach to the small pensions threshold adjustment is a small step and it meant that FAFICS must keep this item on the agenda and to continue to look at effects and try to move the Pension Administration forward to do an income replacement study as it was clear that in some low income countries the procedures that are followed were not keeping up with the cost of living. At this time, and with this partial step to at least increase the threshold and following the recommendation from the Working Group and that of the Standing Committee that FAFICS charge its delegates to accept the proposal from the Pension Administration for increasing the threshold and accept the proposal from the Pension Administration to continue to work solution between minimum and small pensions. FAFICS will continue to be involved on this issue and to provide inputs, as appropriate, to this study.
139. The Council agreed to the President's proposal and agreed to the following:
 - a) that the Board be requested to endorse the proposed new small pension thresholds and scale as detailed in table 3 of the report
 - b) to approve the proposed approach for the Pension Administration to develop options for a long-term mechanism and provide guidance on the extent to which it would like to consult with any relevant representatives prior to April 2024. Furthermore, with respect to recommendation (b) FAFICS affirms its offer to work with the Pension Administration in developing a longer-term mechanism for the small pension adjustment.
 - **Decision 54/14. The Council agreed to the recommendation as cited in para. 139 of this report concerning small pensions and charged the FAFICS Delegation to offer further assistance in modifying the minimum pension and small pension regulations.**

Agenda item 10.d.A Management of investments

140. Suzanne Bishopric provided information on the Management of Investments Report (Council 54/2024/D.10.d/2A) which reflected FAFICS comments on the Report by the Representative of the Secretary-General. To begin with she noted that the investments of the Fund are in the hands of the Secretary-General and delegated to the RSG. The Pension Board does not manage investments, but they do have the opportunity to make observations and suggestions.
141. As of 31 December 2023, the Fund was valued at USD 88.25 billion, an increase of USD 10.33 billion from the USD 77.92 billion as of 31 December 2022. In June, the Fund exceeded its year end 2021 value of USD 91.5 billion on a nominal basis, with a new record high value of USD 92.6 billion. The Fund hit USD 94 billion last month which is a tremendous recovery. However, while it is an important number to remember,

she noted that the actuaries work on a calendar year. so, when they went back to 31 December 2023, they did not see the same positive numbers being shown today.

142. In the report, the RSG gave a number of statistics on performance. which were carefully accounted for and audited with reliable numbers, but what was concerning was the frequency of changes of the benchmark as they usually refer to a three-year return over the benchmark, but the most recent benchmark changes were made on 1 February 2024. Another point to note was that this RSG was paying attention to environmental, social and governance issues which were more consistent with the values of the UN. However, as there are so many definitions of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) it was important to know how those ESG values were established. Another key development was that the RSG was starting to look at some issues brought forward by the General Assembly regarding impact investing for part of the portfolio. OIM has researched various investment opportunities and as of the end of 2023, had committed a part of the real estate portfolio to a climate-focused real estate fund. As for external funds, RSG did not yet have staff that had this experience, so he has obtained some expert advice from outside. This was a welcome initiative as the OIM staff can learn and then bring that knowledge back within the Organization.
143. One question arose concerning the benchmarks and a point on reporting was raised vis a vis Article 19 which stated that it shall arrange for maintenance of detailed accounts relating to the Fund. The Board received the audited reports but has not requested any other reports for examination. In the past more detailed portfolio reports have been provided. This was considered a useful practice and therefore should be revised.
144. In reply, Suzanne Bishopric said that the Fund has the most complicated history of benchmark changes. As for the detailed reports, Article 19 has two parts - part 1 gives the RSG investment authority, 19b requires detailed reports from the RSG. However, last year those reports were not requested and she noted that the listing of every stock does not add value to the Fund as one stock does not change into a \$92 billion portfolio. But if it was ever wanted, the RSG had a duty to provide this information to the Pension Board, but asking for everything in a \$92 billion portfolio did not add a lot of value to the stability of the Pension Fund thanks to its diversity.
145. The President noted that at the end of this document there were three recommendations for the Council to act on. They were:
 - i) FAFICS welcomes the solid investment performance and observes that the Fund balance reported on the website as of 30 June 2024 (preliminary and unaudited), was USD 92.2 billion, and has overtaken the peak last seen in 2021,
 - ii) FAFICS notes the significant improvements in financial reporting initiatives allowing FAFICS members to witness further progress. It also would be beneficial to combine such transparency with clearer performance assessment, avoiding the difficulty of benchmark changes seen in recent years,
 - iii) FAFICS appreciates the continued development and adaptation of industry-standard agreements to facilitate the Fund's investment strategies but in a manner that respects the status and the privileges and immunities of the Organization.

146. The Council approved these three recommendations.

- **Decision 54/15. The Council approved the recommendations in para. 145 above on the management of investments, noting that transparency has improved and investment values are increasing but further noting that the long-term benchmarks are too frequently modified.**

Agenda item C. Summary on the Thirty-seventh Actuarial Valuation as of 31 December 2023 of the UNJSPF

147. Suzanne Bishopric then provided a summary (Council 54/2024/D.10.d/2C) of the Thirty-seventh Actuarial Valuation as of 31 December 2023 of the UNJSPF. The actuarial valuation was based on the status of many variables at a single point of time. The UNJSPF retained Buck Global LLC as its Consulting Actuary. The actuaries found that the Fund remained sound, although the required contribution rate established by the actuarial evaluation increased from 21.40 to 23.02 percent of pensionable remuneration due to unexpectedly high inflation levels and the change in the expected real rate of return from 3.5 percent to 3.4 percent.

148. The President referred to the recommendations found in the report which are as follows:

- i) despite the decline in funded position the required contribution rate remains within the 2% corridor around the actual contribution rate of 23.70 percent of pensionable remuneration. This is within the range defined as the funding target in the Fund's Funding Policy.
- ii) Despite the challenging investment environment and the impact of inflation the Fund remains in a sound actuarial position
- iii) the Standing Committee on Pension Issues recommends that the Council endorse these findings and empower the FAFICS delegation at the July Pension Board to encourage continued due diligence and care in maintaining and improving the actuarial position.

149. The Council approved these recommendations.

- **Decision 54/16: The Council approved the recommendations as found in para. 148 above on the Actuarial Valuation as of 31 December 2023, noting that the funding surplus has decreased**

Agenda item B: Report of the Fund Solvency and Assets and Liabilities Monitoring Committee (FSALMC)

150. Suzanne Bishopric reported on the Note on the Fund Solvency and Assets and Liabilities Monitoring Committee (FSALMC) (Council 54/.2024/D.10.d/2B). She noted that the role of the RSG and the Pension Board comes into play through the FSALMC. The management of the Fund's solvency is the ultimate responsibility of the General Assembly who has delegated the responsibility for monitoring the solvency to the

UNJSPF. To facilitate the monitoring of the balance between assets and liabilities, the Board established the FSALM Committee.

151. The Committee provided presentations on specific issues as requested by the Committee regarding the long-term returns of the Fund. In addition, the RSG noted that the procurement of an Advisor was progressing. The FSALM Committee agreed with the recommendation of the Committee of Actuaries that it might not be prudent to recommend any of the proposed plan changes based on the current actuarial situation of the Fund and the short-term outlook.
152. Questions were raised by Associations concerning the restoration of the 0.5% and why it should not be pursued, and it could be said that there could be legal implications for those that never received this amount and have now passed away. However, other Associations noted that FAFICS had to be careful if this was not the appropriate time to push for this item.
153. The President said that it was his opinion that forcing the 0.5 reduction restoration back on the Board at a time when the UN was in a financial crisis and then when the actuaries said that an insufficient surplus was not appropriate. So, the appropriate action was to try to keep the subject on the Board's agenda. We have approved the recommendation that the actuaries include this subject in their next study. He would plan to emphasize at the Board meeting that FAFICS considers that the FSALM Committee is an important part of the Pension Fund and a place where the RSG and CEPA provide inputs and then the Committee releases an overall picture on behalf of the Board. FAFICS needs to continue to support FSALMC and in so doing support the recommendations to support having an advisor noticing that this year the RSG had provided the information that was requested and a 400-page list of all assets. He also commented that there has been an amazing amount of detailed work that has gone into this subject by Suzanne Bishopric, Gerhardt Schramek and Marashetty Seenappa on FAFICS behalf and suggested that the recommendations be approved.
154. The President summarized the conclusions/recommendations of the FAFICS report as follows:
 - i) FAFICS endorses the practice of prudent asset and liability monitoring, including the invaluable consultations between the FSALMC, Fund Management, the investments Committee, Consulting Actuaries and the Committee of Actuaries.
 - ii) FAFICS welcomes the progress made by management to identify an Advisor to ensure the Pension Board received solvency information and monitoring data that are consistent with best practices for global pensions.
 - iii) FAFICS concurs with the updated risk recommendations of the Committee of Actuaries and the FSALM Committee as summarized in the Solvency Risk Dashboard.
 - iv) FAFICS reiterates its concern regarding the frequency of changes in benchmarks and would welcome guidance from the external Advisor regarding a stable, industry-standard benchmark for long-term performance monitoring.
 - v) FAFICS applauds the increasing information available on the UNJSPF website, as well as the more detailed sharing of data with the FSALM Committee.

155. The Council approved these recommendations.

- **Decision 54/17: The Council approved the recommendations as found in para. 154 of this report on the FSALMC and charged the FAFICS Delegation to support the request for a more thorough procurement process for an FSALMC independent expert.**

Agenda item F: Currency Fluctuations and Suspension from the Two-Track System

156. Suzanne Bishopric reported in the next note (Council 54/2024/D.10/d/2F) providing an overview of the UNJSPF's Report on Currency Fluctuations and Suspensions from the Two-Track System. It was noted that in the course of the extended time frame (30 years) of the recent review of currency fluctuations, cases were noted where benefits for retirees who should have the same benefits, had vastly different outcomes simply because they retired at different dates.
157. However, the report noted that as of May 2024, a total of seventy-nine countries have been suspended from the two-track system and after 1 November 2024, more would be suspended bringing the total to eighty-six countries suspended. At the present time, no suspended country has even been reinstated into the two-track system. In a series of calls with the Standing Committee on Pension Issues, the CEPA and her staff explained that a more mathematically sound method of entitlement variations had been implemented. The new calculations were performed in accordance with a clear, more mathematically precise formula covering thirty years of benefits.
158. The Note concludes by stating that FAFICS acknowledges and supports the authority of the CEPA to determine suspensions from the two-track system as set forth in Article 26. The Standing Committee on Pension Issues, however, supports the preparation of a paper to be brought to the Pension Board at the earliest possible time (estimated to be April 2025) including a number of concerns as listed in para. 21 of the Note.

Agenda item 10.d.3 Additional papers from Member Associations AFICS-Uruguay and AFICS-Argentina papers

159. The delegate from Uruguay, supported by AFICS-Argentina presented a letter regarding the suspension of two-track that affects UN retirees in Uruguay (Council 54/2024/D.10.d/38. a).AFICS-Argentina in its document (Council 54/2024/D.10.d/3b.a) expressed its support for the points raised by AFICS-Uruguay who has suffered periods of two-digit inflation coupled with the devaluation of the dollar this has resulted in pension adjustments in the two-track and not for those linked to the dollar track. This did not seem to contribute to improving the situation of UN retirees in Uruguay. According to AFICS-Uruguay from a total of 215 retirees on the two-track this change would impact thirty-three beneficiaries with a reduction to thirty-one of them of more than 40%. Faced with this situation, AFICS-Uruguay presented some

proposals or alternatives for which AFICS-Argentina proposed the full support of the Council.

160. Gerhard Schramek intervened by saying that this had to be carefully considered and provided the background and history of the situation, noting that a new methodology had been put in place and a Working Group established. However, what he felt was missing was that the Pension Fund forgot that there were human beings behind every suspension. Therefore, he felt that consideration should be given to going back to the Board next year, as this item is not on the agenda for this year and requested a comprehensive review of the methodology. It was incumbent for FAFICS to try to move things along meaning that FAFICS should produce a document outlining its position and referring to the history and what kind of considerations need to be considered to make this methodology fair. This report could be prepared for the Pension Board's meeting of April 2025.

**Agenda item 10.d.3.A: Geneva paper:
UNJSPF's Two -Track System Challenges and Prospects**

161. AAFI-AFICS-Geneva provided a brief overview of the above-cited paper in document Council 54/2024/D.10.d/3a.
162. The President then clarified that he could not go into the Pension Boards July meeting and present a paper as it was not on the agenda. Any report would have to be prepared to go to the April meeting and then hopefully it would be approved to go to the July Board meeting. He noted that FAFICS was not challenging the authority of the CEPA but asking for a review. The way the Rule is written it would be best to say that it had been noticed that there was a large difference when one retires, even with the same grade and same service time, and to prevent such things happening in the future the two track should be once again reviewed. This situation is currently a work in progress, and it may or may not be successful, but he hoped to have some conversations with the CEPA over the next week or so and then it can be better ascertained on the way forward.
163. The Council was then requested to approve what the Standing Committee on Pension Issues recommends that is to prepare such a paper and that FAFICS should work with the Pension Administration to propose:
- a. A clearer explanation of the current system.
 - b. A proposal for a modification of the current system to emphasize more recent history.
 - c. A proposal for a method to reinstate countries to the Two-Track System
164. The Council approved these recommendations.
- **Decision 54/18: The Council approved the recommendations that FAFICS should remain seized of the suspensions from the Two-Track option and prepare a Board paper for the April 2025 session of the Pension Board.**

**Agenda item 10.d.3.C: Divorce Spouse Pension Benefit
FFOA position paper**

165. The President presented this document noting that the paper was proposing that FAFICS should advocate for a retroactive application to the Pension Board and then the General Assembly to advocate that surviving spouses who became surviving spouses before the 50% benefit was introduced should retroactively receive the 50% spousal benefit.

Unless there were other comments, the President's recommendation would be to note this request.

166. FFOA added a point of clarification on the retroactivity of paying the 50% of the beneficiary pension to the divorced staff stating that the main element of the Pension Board's decision on this issue in 1998 could be considered discriminatory and biased. Gerhard Schramek provided an explanation on the history of this decision.
167. The President took note of these comments and said that he would take this up with the CEPA at a future time.

**Agenda item 10.d.4: Establishment of the Standing Committee on Pension
Issues: Composition and Terms of Reference**

168. Suzanne Bishopric introduced this report (Council 54/2024/D.10.d/4) which presented the terms of reference for the Standing Committee on Pension Issues. These terms followed those that had already been established by the Standing Committee on ASHIL and its composition and meeting schedule.
169. The Council took note of this report.

Agenda item 13: Plans for the 50th Anniversary of FAFICS in 2025

170. The Secretary provided some background information on the history of FAFICS that was available in the FAFICS Geneva Office that included information on the establishment of FAFICS and its national Associations. She also introduced the Report on Celebrating FAFICS' 50th Anniversary in 2025 (Council 54/2024/D.12).
171. She also provided some suggestions for the celebration, which included suggestions from some Associations, as follows:
- Establish an ad hoc committee
 - Prepare a souvenir programme and/or commemorative brochure with statements from officials, partners, etc.
 - Encourage Member Associations to hold country level activities
 - Produce a commemorative item with FAFICS logo
 - Work with the new Communications Committee to position FAFICS within the UN and include the Secretary- General in the celebration
 - Produce the highlights of what FAFICS has achieved; this would be a great advocacy opportunity for current staff

- The 50th anniversary is an important event and would be an appropriate time to make FAFICS more known
 - Location: celebration - combine with regular Council session or hold it separately, Vienna or Geneva would be best locations
 - Prepare a publication on the occasion; use the book in preparation by Michael Atchia (AFICS-Mauritius) entitled “Glimpses of Life in the Service of the UN”
 - Brand a FAFICS 50 logo on any products produced
 - Opportunity to launch a series of national activities culminating in the holding of a meeting at the original founding location
 - Hold a Town Hall meeting
 - Recognize those that have created and worked to build FAFICS
 - Produce a digital poster
 - Request President to address a letter to the General Assembly
 - Declare a day of the international civil servant following UNESCO’s lead
 - Consider something musical (concert) on the day of celebration
 -
172. The President appreciated all these ideas which would be taken back to the Bureau for consideration and be part of the Bureau’s work plan for the next year.

Agenda item 14: Results of the election

173. The Secretary provided the results of the election as follows:

Juan Antonio Casas-Zamora (AFICS-Panama)	35%	32 votes
Marashetty Seenappa (AFUNPI)	28%	26 votes
Nancy Hurtz-Soyka (AFICS-NY)	26%	24 votes
Shahida Fazil (AFICS-Pakistan)	11%	10 votes

The Council congratulated the three Vice Presidents elected/re-elected and wished them well in the discharge of their roles in FAFICS.

- **Decision 54/19: The Council approved the election results for the three positions of Vice-President for the next two years, namely Juan-Antonio Casas-Zamora (AFiCS-Panama), Nancy Hurtz-Soyka (AFICS-NY) and Marashetty Seenappa (AFUNPI-India)**

Agenda item 15: Any other concerns from Member Associations

174. There were no other concerns raised by Member Associations.

Agenda item 16; Any Other Business

175. There was no other business discussed.

Agenda item 17: Date and place of the 55th session of the Council

176. The President informed that ARICSA was prepared to host the meeting as a five-day meeting with more time allotted to pensions and celebrations. It was thought that the Pension Board was 99% sure to be held in Vienna during the third week of July. As such, a conference room has been reserved for FAFICS for the second week of July. Both dates and venue are provisional.

Agenda items 18 and 19: Words of appreciation and closing remarks

177. The President gave thanks to Deborah Landey for the work that she has carried on behalf of FAFICS. She has been a Vice-President for the last four years and tremendously active in the work of the Bureau and the Working Group on the Rules of Procedure. She has also assisted in the implementation of the new Rules and has suggested many of the terms now in use and coined the term of the four pillars for FAFICS activities. He thanked Nancy Hurtz-Soyka for being a great Rapporteur and recording all Bureau meetings and the last four Council sessions. He also thanked the Presiding Officer, Adriana Gomez, for her wonderful and for her what was an unexpected responsibility, as Presiding Officer. He also thanked Secretary Delia Barcelona for her tremendous organization and the role she played in bringing this Council session to successful fruition.
178. Deborah Landey stated that it had been a privilege for her to work as a Vice-President of FAFICS and thanked Jerry Barton for his outstanding leadership and stewardship of FAFICS. She also added comments on the challenging work of the Bureau.
179. AAFI-AFICS-Geneva thanked AFICS-Thailand for their kind assistance and thanked the Secretary and the Presiding Officer for their work. The Secretary thanked ESCAP for all their assistance before and during the Council session. The Presiding Officer thanked all Associations for their cooperation and hoped to see everyone next year for FAFICS' 50th anniversary.
180. In conclusion, the President thanked everyone for their participation and noted that some Associations were going back to countries that have political problems and it was important to remember colleagues that could not be here and the over 150 staff from UNRWA that have died in Gaza. These memories must be kept in mind as FAFICS continues to serve colleagues and retirees around the world.

ANNEX

FAFICS BUREAU (2022-2024)

JERRY BARTON, PRESIDENT

ROMESH MUTTUKUMARU, TREASURER

DELIA BARCELONA, SECRETARY

MARASHETTY SEENAPPA, VICE PRESIDENT (H, APUNFI India)

JUAN ANTONIO CASAS ZAMORA, VICE PRESIDENT (v) (H, AFICS Panama)

DEBORAH LUCIA ELIZABETH LANDEY, VICE PRESIDENT

ABDOUKHADR DIAKHATE, VICE PRESIDENT (H, ASAFI Senegal)

PIERRE SAYOUR, VICE PRESIDENT

SUZANNE BISHOPRIC, CHAIR, STANDING COMMITTEE ON PENSION ISSUES

JAYANTILAL KARIA, CHAIR, STANDING COMMITTEE ON ASHIL (v)

NANCY HURTZ-SOYKA, RAPPORTEUR

FAFICS MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

ARGENTINA (AFICS ARGENTINA)

MERCEDES ACUNA, PRO SECRETARY (v)

ISABEL NARVAIZ, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE (v)

MIRTA ROSES PERIAGO, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE (v) (H)

AUSTRALIA (AAFICS AUSTRALIA)

JENNIFER ASHTON, PRESIDENT (v) (H)

AUSTRIA (ARICSA VIENNA)

WERNER BLENK, VICE-PRESIDENT ARICSA (H)

GERHARD SCHRAMEK, VICE-CHAIR (v) MANIJEH

TORABI, TREASURER

BANGLADESH (AFUNSOB)

JOYANTA ADHIKARI, PRESIDENT (H)

ABU KHALED MASOOD AHMED, PRESIDENT EMERITUS

TIM NURUNNABI KHAN, VICE PRESIDENT MAH
JABEEN MASOOD, VICE PRESIDENT

BOLIVIA (AFICS BOLIVIA)

MARIA MACHICADO, PRESIDENT (H)

BRAZIL (AAFIB BRAZIL)

MARIA ANGELICA GOMES, PRESIDENT (v) (H)

RALPH HAKKERT, DIRECTOR OF BRASÍLIA CHAPTER OF AAFIB (v)

FRANCISCO CLAUDIO MENEZES, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

ANA LUCIA PEDREIRA, COMMUNICATION SECTOR (v) GIOVANNI
QUAGLIA, CO-CHAIR ASHIL - FAFICS (v)

BURKINA FASO (AAFNU-BF)

HAMIDOU BAGUE, MEMBER (H)

CANADA (CAFICS/ACAFI MONTREAL)

JACQUES DAOUST, LIAISON OFFICER (H)

NAYIRI DOLABJIAN, COUNCILLOR (ASHI) (v)

MARCELLE LEFEBVRE, COUNCILLOR (PENSION) (v)

JEAN-PIERRE MERCIER, VICE PRESIDENT (PENSION) (v)

CHILE (AFICS CHILE)

ADRIANA GOMEZ SAGUEZ, PRESIDENT (H)

CAROL CHATTERTON, VICE PRESIDENT (v)

MARIA VERGARA, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SECRETARY

COLOMBIA (ASOPENUC COLOMBIA)

JORGE RINCON, PRESIDENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS (v) (H)

RODRIGO RODRIGUEZ, VICE-PRESIDENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS (v)

PATRICIA SANCHEZ, SECRETARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS (v) ENITA ZIRNIS,
TREASURER BOARD OF DIRECTORS (v)

ETHIOPIA (AFICS ADDIS ABABA)

AFEWORK TESSEMA, PRESIDENT (H)

TEDLA TESHOME, PRESIDENT EMERITUS (v)

MESERET ASSEFA, OFFICE ASSISTANT (v)

SEBLE DEMEKE, COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICATION EXPERT

FRANCE (AAFU/AFUS PARIS)

JOSIANE TAILLEFER, PRESIDENT AFUS (H)

JACQUES RAO, MEMBER OF DELEGATION (CHARGÉ DE MISSION) (v)

INDIA (AFUNPI INDIA)

MAGDALENE CHAND, HONORARY SECRETARY (v)

GIRIJA DEVI, EXECUTIVE MEMBER

NANJUNDAPPA SRINIVASAN, VICE PRESIDENT

ITALY ROME (FFOA ROME)

EDWARD SEIDLER, PRESIDENT (v) (H)

MARIAM AHMED, MEMBER (v)

MARIUS DE GAAY FORTMAN, MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY (v)

JAPAN (AFICS JAPAN)

NORIKO NAGAYOSHI, EXECUTIVE MEMBER -PENSION RELATED MATTER (v) JUNKO SATO, VICE-PRESIDENT (v) (H)

MALAYSIA (AFICS MALAYSIA)

WEI- MENG LIM, PRESIDENT (H)

KAH SIN CHO, COMMITTEE MEMBER

MAURITIUS (AFICS MAURITIUS)

MICHAEL ATCHIA, SECRETARY GENERAL (v) (H)

MEXICO (AFPNU MEXICO)

MARIA LUZ DIAZ-MARTA, PRESIDENT (H)

ADRIANA ROMERO, VICEPRESIDENTA

MYANMAR (AFICS MYANMAR) KYI

KYI NYEIN, PRESIDENT (H)

KHIN SAN AYE, VICE-PRESIDENT

SANDRA CHIT HPO, GENERAL SECRETARY

AYE WIN, INDEPENDENT COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT/ VICE CHAIR FAFICS COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

NEPAL (RUNSAN NEPAL)

GANGA RAM CHOUDHARY, PRESIDENT (H)

BHAI RAJA SHAKYA, IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

PREM SHRESTHA, JOINT SECRETARY (v)

LEELA STHAPIT, GENERAL SECRETARY (v)

NETHERLANDS (AFICS NETHERLANDS) LUCIEN

BACK, PRESIDENT (v) (H)

RICHARD DICTUS, COMMITTEE MEMBER (v)

NIGER (AAFNU-N NIGER)

KADRI TANKARI, PRESIDENT (v) (H)

ARI TOUBO IBRAHIM, MEMBRE (v)

AMADOU MAIGA, SECRETARY GENERAL (v)

RENE WRIGHT, CHAIRMAN FOR PENSIONS (v)

JEAN MARIE TRAPSIDA, CHAIRMAN FOR ASHIL (v)

PAKISTAN (PAFICS)

SHAHIDA FAZIL, PRESIDENT (v) (H)

SHABBIR AHMED, ASSISTANT FINANCE SECRETARY (v)

PERU (AEFNUP PERU)

AMALIA OROZA, PRESIDENT (v)

HAYDEE OLCESE, SECRETARY (v)

PHILIPPINES (AFICS PHILIPPINES)

MARIA MAGDALENA ARDUO, VICE PRESIDENT - PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

ANTONIO L FERNANDEZ, MEMBER

MARY ANN MAGLIPON, SECRETARY (H)

CARMELITA VILLANUEVA, MEMBER, FAFICS COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE (v) MARIA ELENA FILIO BORROMEO, AFICS MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

PORTUGAL (APAFI)

WILLEM VAN MILINK, VICE-PRESIDENT (v) (H)

CAREL DE ROOY, MEMBER (v)

WILTON FONSECA, MEMBER (v)

JOÃO MAGALHÃES, SECRETARY (v)

SENEGAL (ASAFI SENEGAL)

DJIBRIL NDIAYE, SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL (v)

LOUM ALIOUNE, UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL for COMMUNICATION (v)

SPAIN (AFIJUB SPAIN)

ANGEL ESCUDERO DE PAZ, PRESIDENT (v) (H)

SWITZERLAND (AAFI-AFICS GENEVA)

ODETTE YAGGI ÉP. FOU DRAL, PRESIDENT (H)

BARBARA FOUNTAIN, MEMBER PENSIONS SC CORE GROUP (v)

ANATOLI KONDRACHOVA, TREASURER

MOHAMMED SEBTI, MEMBER

ANN VAN HULLE-COLBERT, MEMBER ASHI SC CORE GROUP (v)

TANZANIA (UNAPATA TANZANIA)

EVA RUHAGO, CHAIRPERSON (v) (H)

MWANGAZA KIBWANA SALUM, MEMBER (v)

FESTO KAVISHE, MEMBER (v)

COLLETA KIBASSA, MEMBER (v)

ILLUMINATE MAERERE, MEMBER (v) AISHA

MAJENGO, MEMBER (v)

THAILAND (AFICS THAILAND)

SURAPHON SONGWEERA, PRESIDENT (H)

PETER HEGENBARTH, VICE PRESIDENT DUANGLUTAI

KHOMSON, TREASURER

UNITED KINGDOM (BAFUNCS UK)

ANDREW FLATT, CHAIR, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (H)

CLAUDINE PICHON, MEMBER (v)

STEPHEN RUDGARD, MEMBER (v)

URUGUAY (AFICS URUGUAY)

JAN STEVERLYNCK, PRESIDENT (v) (H)

ANNE BOURGEOIS, SECRETARY (v)

GUSTAVO CASAS, VICE PRESIDENT (v)

USA (AFICS NY)

DARSHAK SHAH, PRESIDENT

JAY POZENEL, SECOND VICE PRESIDENT AND ALSO VICE-CHAIR FAFICS SCPI (v)

III. PROPOSED FOR ADMISSION IN THIS COUNCIL

ASSOCIATION OF RETIREES AND PENSIONERS OF THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (ARPUPU)

ACHIM VAN DER WEG, CHAIRMAN OF ARPUPU (v) (H) ARNE

JOHNSEN, BOARD MEMBER OF ARPUPU (v)

**IVORIAN ASSOCIATION OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (AIAFI-SNU) SOULEYMANE DIABATE, PRESIDENT (H) IV. FAFICS
EMERITUS/HONORARY MEMBERS**

ANDRÉS CASTELLANOS DEL CORRAL, PRESIDENT EMERITUS (v)

JAY SUNDARESAN, HON. SECRETARY (v)

LYDIA ONTAL, HONORARY ASST. SECRETARY (v)