

**FAFICS 2024**  
**FEBRUARY SESSION**  
**Bureau (hybrid) meeting on 26, 27 and 28 February**

**In attendance:** *Delia Barcelona (Secretary), Jerry Barton (President), Suzanne Bishopric, Abou Khadre Diakhate, Juan Casas-Zamora, Jayantilal Karia, Deborah Landey, Romesh Muttukumaru (Treasurer), Pierre Sayour, Marashetty Seenappa, Nancy Hurtz-Soyka (Rapporteur)*

***All meetings were held from 14.30 to 17.30***

***Day 1 - Monday, 26 February***

**Agenda 1a. Adoption of the draft Minutes of the 18 January meeting**

1. The draft Minutes from the 18 January meeting were adopted as presented.

**Agenda item 1b. Approval of agenda for hybrid meeting**

2. The agenda was adopted as presented.

**Agenda item 1c. President's updates**

3. **The President informed the Bureau that it was his intention to send out his next E-Newsletter at the beginning of March. In this connection, many interventions focused on what should be included in the E-Newsletter.**
4. The President presented his updated proposals for the Pension Board and its subsidiary bodies. During the discussion it was noted that all efforts were needed to find additional expertise in all areas of FAFICS work. As a result, the Bureau was requested to identify those from the Associations that could be named to the Pension Board and its subsidiary bodies over the next month. Those that were identified would need to submit their Expertise Panel form to their Association to then be forwarded to FAFICS Secretary. It was also noted that nominations were needed from both the African Associations as well as those from Latin America. The President said he would include this point in his E-Newsletter.

5. The President then named those that were before the Bureau for consideration before submission to the Council as follows:
  - a. **Pension Board** – Alnoor Nathoo to be replaced by Vladimir Youssifov
  - b. **Budget Committee** - two new representatives to be appointed now though 2025 – Clemens Adams (AAFI-AFICS) and Werner Blenk (ARICSA)
  - c. For the newly **established Governance Committee** – Gerhard Schramek (ARICSA) and Jay Pozenel (AFICS/NY).
  - d. For the **Ethics Policy Review Working Group** - Nancy Hurtz-Soyka (AFICS/NY) to be appointed to complete the term of Alnoor Nathoo. The Working Group should complete its report for the Council in July 2024.
  - e. **Standing Committee of the Pension Board** – Jerry Barton and Theresa Panuccio – no change
  - f. **Audit Committee** – Darshak Shah to replace Marco Breschi
  - g. **FSALM** – Suzanne Bishopric and Marashetty Seenapa are representatives with support from Vladimir Youssifov
  - h. **Succession Planning and Evaluation Committee** – Jerry Barton and Deborah Landey replacing Theresa Panuccio
  - i. **Plan Review Group** – remains the same with Suzanne Bishopric and Gerhard Schramek
  - j. **Standing Committee of FAFICS on Pension Issues** – Co-Chairs Suzanne Bishopric and Jay Pozenel
6. The Bureau considered the above nominations and noted that it was the President’s intention to inform Associations in his next E-Newsletter of the immediate change in the FAFICS representatives on the Pension Board’s Budget Committee and the newly established Governance Committee. The Bureau agreed to the above nominations and the immediate replacements.

**Agenda item 1d. Standing Committee on Pension Issues**  
**(Updates from the February Pension Board, TOR,**  
**preparations for the April Pension Board meeting)**

7. The Chair of the Standing Committee on Pension Issues, Suzanne Bishopric,

provided some details on the February Pension Board session saying that FAFICS was able to show their expertise in all discussions. The President added that this February meeting was essentially an administrative meeting with both the CEPA and the RSG making presentations to the Board. However, it was noted that the RSG provided only information on the positive results of their work not where they need further support from the Pension Board. He also noted that FAFICS was able to have the item on small pensions added to the Board's agenda for which FAFICS had prepared a short paper. This, he noted, was a FAFICS success point as the CEPA said that this request would be taken on board and her team would prepare some proposals for the April session with longer-term proposals being prepared by the end of the year. With this success, the Bureau felt that it was an achievement that should be included in the President's E-Newsletter. The Bureau concurred that the President should take every opportunity to not only talk about substantive FAFICS contributions but also the leadership and managerial side of FAFICS' work most especially the application of the Rules of Procedure and the principles underlying them. The absence of good leadership and management can cause reputational damage. It was stressed by many that it was important that all Associations were aware of the impact FAFICS has on the Pension Board's work. It was also important to disseminate the message on FAFICS' work as well as its new framework and its new set of principles.

The major event of the Pension Board was the time it took to approve the report. The TOR and preparations for the April Pension Board were not discussed.

8. The membership of the Core Teams of ASHIL, Pension Issues, the Communication Committee and Membership Committee should be posted on FAFICS' website or placed in the President's E-Newsletter along with their respective Terms of Reference which have been established explaining that these four areas of work are FAFICS four pillars which demonstrates the broad span of members from many of the Associations.

#### **Agenda item 1e. Standing Committee on ASHIL updates**

9. The Chair, Jay Karia, said that the Standing Committee was meeting once a month with a rapporteur chosen from the Committee assigned for each

meeting. The Committee was focusing on its workplan and recommendations of the Council which would be achieved by the Council' s session in July.

10. He also reported that the two health insurance questionnaires had been sent out and the Committee was hoping to receive many new suggestions in their responses. The other important task was the Committee's preparation of its report to the Council for which the Committee was working in teams so the work would be divided between Committee members.
11. On long-term care, he reported that the current thinking on this subject was that long-term care needed to be separated into two parts – first, health care needs which were covered through insurance and second, nursing home/assisted living care. So, the question then to ask was how to tackle the second part. In this regard, he reported that the Committee was thinking of putting together guidelines on how to plan for long-term care

#### **Agenda item 1f. Treasurer's updates**

12. The Treasurer reported that the 2023 Financial Statements were ready to be approved and sent to the Auditors. Subsequently, the Bureau approved the Financial Statements but noted that when presenting the Statements to the Council, consideration should be given to presenting them by demonstrating all the efforts being made to economize through efficiency measures. In addition, appropriate language should be employed, using words such as Council participation instead of travel costs.
13. The Bureau also agreed that consideration be given to better use of the UBS Accounts. Suzanne Bishopric and Romesh Muttukumar agreed to discuss how to better deal with these accounts.

#### **Agenda item 1g. FAFICS Travel policy**

14. The Bureau approved the Treasurer's proposals for a revised travel policy. However, justification for the increase of travel costs from previous years would need to be explained to the Council. Much of the increase was

due to the Increase of global costs, the travel of the Committee Chairs and Rapporteur and the fact that there had not been any travel increase in a number of years.

15. At this point during the session, the Bureau discussed the need to request the Council to consider establishing two other core groups (Standing Committees) - one for the Communications Committee and the other for the Membership/Revitalization Committee. This would again demonstrate a broader and more encompassing membership and inclusion of members from across the Federation. It would also allow for Committee members from neighbouring Associations to initiate and keep in contact with those needing support in establishing an Association or reestablishing themselves.

## **Day 2 – 27 February**

### **Agenda item 2a. Communications** **Strategy and Outputs for the year**

#### **FAFICS Brochure**

16. The Chair of the Communications Committee, Juan Casas, introduced the Communications items beginning with the new FAFICS brochure but before doing so, noted that there were nine Associations involved in the communications work. After discussion of the various possible sizes for the brochure, the Bureau decided that the new FAFICS brochure would be in **three languages (E/F/S).and set out as a 2-fold, three panel design.** It was also agreed that the photos included in the brochure should focus on the President in a group setting with captions. The Chair noted that the brochure would be available digitally for all Associations and would be easily updated as needed. It was also suggested that hyperlinks be included in the brochure which would allow Associations to link to the President's videos and documents.
17. **The Bureau approved the costs associated with the design and the Chair acknowledged that the contract would be signed with the company from the Philippines for production in April.**

## **FAFICS website**

18. The Chair introduced the process for a new FAFICS website and the provider based on the review undertaken by the Committee with the assistance of a consultant. The Chair reported that there were four potential contractors – one from the Philippines, two from Panama and one from Canada. The consultant, who joined the meeting for this item, provided an overview of the evaluation matrix that he used to evaluate their proposals which included technical fitness, scope of work, timelines, content management services, hosting and maintenance services, social media services, satisfaction of TOR requirements and cost and payment structure.
19. **The Bureau decided to award the contract to *Quattro Com Digital* from Panama with the proviso that hosting should be included in the \$6,600 two-year content and technical maintenance and support contract. The Bureau did not agree to the social media options at this time.** The total amount approved by the Bureau amounted to \$11,350 (\$4,750 for development as a one time cost and \$6,600 for a two-year content management support for a total of \$11,350). The Bureau noted that a meeting would be held with *Quattro Com Digital* on 11 March where final technical questions could be resolved, especially as regards hosting and security. Finally, the Bureau noted that the new website should be up and running by May/June and able to be demonstrated at the Council's session in July of this year.
20. Caution was raised as to cost increases after the first year. The Bureau advised the Committee to be sure that for the future years there would not be a huge escalation in costs which would force FAFICS to start again from scratch.
21. On the general subject of the Pension Fund, the President reported that he had met with the Geneva Client Services Team of the UNJSPF along with Delia Barcelona and Pierre Sayour and the Pension Fund was amenable to sending out a one-page letter (as written by an Association) to all the beneficiaries of

that Association via email. It was uncertain if physical letters could be sent. He also added that the Pension Fund had posted information on their website for surviving spouses which FAFICS could promote. A discussion ensued on future ways the Pension Fund could help surviving spouses. The other issue the Bureau discussed was the delay in receipt of benefits for those whose documents were not submitted due to circumstances beyond their control which delayed the start of their pension benefits. Several suggestions were made on how FAFICS could help in this matter including suggesting that dedicated staff be engaged specifically for retirees as is done by the Health and Life Insurance Section.

### **Agenda item 2b. Membership updates**

22. The Chairs of the Membership/Revitalisation Committee, Marashetty Seenappa and Abdou Khader Diakhate presented updates on their work involving the Associations/retirees from the following countries: Tanzania (on board), Nigeria (35 members but could be more: discussions on going), Liberia (ready to join), Zimbabwe (ready to join), and Laos (some communications from them on interest in joining). In addition, they added that they would continue to dialogue with Mauritania and the Côte d'Ivoire.
23. In light of the previous discussion on the work of FAFICS and travel costs some members of the Bureau felt it was time and necessary to establish a Standing Committee on Membership/Revitalization. It was felt that an enlarged committee could be started now and so reported to the Council on a non-objection basis in the President's E-Newsletter informing all Associations and requesting them to submit names to the Expertise Panel of those who could be helpful to the work of this Committee. It was also noted that this larger Committee would allow for better communication between Associations who might be geographically located closer making contacts easier and travel expenses less.
24. At the conclusion of this agenda item, the Bureau noted that emphasis should in attracting all retirees whether former local, national, or international staff with no distinctions made.

## Day 3 – February 28

### Agenda item 3a: Updates on logistical preparations for the 54<sup>th</sup> FAFICS Council

25. The Secretary began by reminding everyone of the dates of the 54<sup>th</sup> Council which are 22-25 July to be held in Bangkok, Thailand. She then proceeded to provide details on each of the **nine logistical items**.

#### **Tentative cost plan from ESCAP**

- The overall cost plan would be in the range, without additional negotiations, of \$6,800. However, based on actual numbers the amount could decrease.
- The Treasurer noted the higher costs from previous years for the three budget lines, including the Council, the secretarial costs, and the hospitality costs but in researching realized that because of the lack of payments from Member States, the UN must charge for everything, as well as the overall worldwide increase in costs
- It was also mentioned that if during the meetings physical breaks, such as coffee breaks were to be considered, then arrangements should also be made for online participants, so they did not find themselves waiting while the in- person participants were mingling with other Associations.
- As for the timing of the meeting, a question was asked if the meeting schedule could be changed to accommodate those Associations from other continents. The Bureau would take this under consideration, but the physical meeting had to occur during normal ESCAP operating times.

#### **Online registration**

- The INDICO system will be used and ESCAP will help to manage registration for both online and in person participants. The cost for this service is \$3.00 per person (already included in cost estimate) which will provide updates as participants register.
- It was suggested that a specific deadline be given earlier than last year. The President thought a deadline of end of June leaving one month before the session starts at the end of July as adequate.

#### **Hotel bookings**

- Arrangements have been made with The Royal Princess Larn Luang Hotel

which has a shuttle bus between the hotel and the UN Centre.

- Negotiated price is \$75/\$78 per night. A tentative contract has been made with a blocked booking of thirty rooms.
- The Secretary was asked to send out a note to Bureau members to determine who would need to reserve rooms.

#### **Information note**

- a template from ESCAP is currently being worked on

#### **Invitation to Member Associations**

- Invitations are in preparation and will be sent out at the beginning of March.
- As for the question of how many participants are permitted per delegation, it was advised that it should be the voter plus two whether in person or virtually for a total of six.
- It was also stressed that it would be useful to have someone to help monitor those online participants asking for the floor.

#### **Draft Council programme, including Bureau meeting**

- The 54<sup>th</sup> Council session will begin on 21 July with a Bureau meeting.
- Start time currently is set at 9 am and ending at 5 pm with a lunch break for one and half hours at 1 pm
- Closing would be at 4 pm on Thursday with a quick Bureau meeting for one hour after that.
- The pre-retirement seminar for ESCAP would be held on Friday, 26 July.

#### **Provisional agenda**

- The Bureau reviewed the provisional agenda which includes seventeen items.
- In terms of branding, it was suggested that the four FAFICS pillars be moved to the beginning of the session
- The next item would be FAFICS 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and then the Council should look at financial matters, that is, how all these activities are being financed and then finally the elections thus putting the substantive work upfront.
- As for Succession Planning, this should come right after the President's report.
- The President said that he would discuss with Suzanne Bishopric on the issuance of Pension Board reports to the Council as it was important for the Council to make decisions on what positions the delegation should have. Noting that the presentations by the CEPA and RSG are important as are the

details of statistics on performance as well as actuarial studies, consideration would be given to moving these items earlier than later in the week.

- The Treasurer advised on the title of reports under administrative and financial matters.

#### **Presiding Officer**

- It was suggested that the Presiding Officer should manage the interventions by summarizing but not repeating what each delegation said. Then either the President or the Presiding Officer should summarize and highlight what has been decided making it easier for the Rapporteur to report decisions in the Council's report.

#### **Critical timelines for submission of Council documents**

- The President noted that the decision and action points and what work was accomplished throughout the year should be included under each pillar.
- The Secretary also asked for information from the Chairs on whether a document would be issued so all documentation would be known well in advance of the session. The timeline for issuance of documents has been set for 1 July.
- It was also suggested that links to documents should be included when reference is made to them in reports.

### **Agenda item 3b. Initial brainstorming on FAFICS 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025**

26. It was suggested that a commemorative brochure be planned which could show the following highlights of FAFICS history:
- The growth of FAFICS over the fifty years, noting that FAFICS represents over 80,000 retired staff and beneficiaries as well as current staff who will eventually also be part of FAFICS
  - Future ideas on where FAFICS is going
  - Show a timeline of historical events
  - Include a message from past Presidents and others: Roger Eggleston, George Saddler, Richard Nottidge, George Kutukdjian
  - Include a tribute to past officers
  - Include pictures, history of FAFICS Council sessions including locations and how FAFICS overcome difficulties
  - Consider having a web-based site with links to documents

- Should also recognize that FAFICS not only represents retired staff but also their beneficiaries.
  - Brief documentary on historical background which would go beyond the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary
  - Hold a press conference or a TV interview
  - Printed copies are also important so people can hold a book
  - Have a senior official also talk about FAFICS, perhaps the Secretary-General
27. Consideration should be given to establishing an ad hoc Working Group with an accompanying work plan. The start-up of the WG could be before the Council this July and initiated in the President's Newsletter.

### **Agenda 3c: Any other business**

#### **UPU**

28. The President reported that some members of the Bureau would be meeting with UPU in Berne on Thursday, 29 February. The President noted that some concern had been raised in the past concerning the idea of UPU joining FAFICS and he wanted to be sure that the Bureau was in agreement with the meeting and going forward with their joining should that be the case. The President was convinced that their joining would not harm FAFICS standing with the Pension Fund. One of the questions he would ask at the meeting was whether they were looking to join the Pension Fund but the CEPA had advised that there was no one in the queue. The discussion that pursued covered a number of areas including whether they received bonuses and whether they were looking for other job opportunities as postage and mailing work was declining. It was also thought that perhaps their interests were not totally in alignment with FAFICS. On the other hand, some thought that their joining would make FAFICS look more inclusive noting their fuller participation in the UN oversight committees. It was highlighted that the question to ask would be see what they would bring to FAFICS and what FAFICS would bring to them. As it was also noted that FAFICS had no argument to reject them legally, another option raised was to invite them to become an Association under the umbrella of AAFI-AFICS

**FAFICS: Change and positive results**

29. The Bureau agreed that the President's next E-Newsletter would demonstrate positive results by making the following points:
- FAFICS Rules of Procedure have been changed
  - Decisions taken by President after full consultation with Bureau
  - Organizational change continues
  - FAFICS working transparently and applying due process especially with regard to Pension board and subsidiary body proposals
  - Any names for committee work comes from the Expertise Pool, then nominated by President and agreed to by Bureau and decided by Council
  - FAFICS does not insert itself in any UN management situations
  - The four pillars of FAFICS work should each have their TOR prepared and composition of core teams posted on the FAFICS website.
  - Reassure Associations that FAFICS represents all Associations through its Regulations and Rules and strong participation in committees.
  - FAFICS is the only entity recognized by the UN system to represent retirees

**Inquiry from a member of an Association concerning retirement locations**

30. The Bureau considered a request from a member of an Association inquiring about the possibility of conducting a survey to determine the best locations for retirement. The Bureau felt that linking surveys to the FAFICS website could be an option, but FAFICS did not have the means to conduct such surveys noting that any such survey would be subjective based on a number of variables. It was suggested that Associations could be asked to provide information on the taxation issue. However, since tax rules and regulations were changing all the time it was not considered information that FAFICS should provide on its website.

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