



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

"Bringing together Associations of retired International Civil Servants from the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies of the UN"

Geneva, Switzerland Address: Palais des Nations, Room E-2072, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Vienna, Austria Address: Room C0249B, Vienna International Centre, Vienna, Austria

email: president@fafics.org; secretary@fafics.org | **telephone #:** +43 676 790 7401; +1 201 779 7552 | **website:** www.fafics.org

Council 55/2025/E/D.zzz
(as of 29 August 2025)

FINAL REPORT

Fifty-fifth session of the FAFICS Council

14-17 July 2025

Vienna

Table of Contents

Introduction

1. Opening of the Plenary Council
2. Election of the Presiding Officer and Rapporteur
3. Minute of silence for colleagues who have passed away since the last meeting
4. Adoption of the Agenda and the Work Programme
5. Status of membership and admission of new members
6. Report of the President
 - a. For information
 - b. For approval
 - c. For approval
7. Election Procedures
8. Association Matters
9. Administrative and Financial matters
 - a. 2024 Accounts and Report of the Auditors for the year ended December 2024
 - b. Utilization of Assigned Reserves and Exceptional Stand-Alone Budget for FAFICS@50
 - c. Interim Report on the Management of the Budget for 2025
 - d. Proposed Budget for 2026
 - e. Appointment of the Auditors
10. FAFICS pillars
 - 10a. Standing Committee on Pension Issues
 1. Report of the Standing Committee
 2. Presentation by the Chief Executive for Pension Administration, (CEPA)
 3. Presentation by the Acting Representative of the Secretary-General, (RSG)
 - 10b. Standing Committee on After-Service Health Insurance and Long-Term Care (ASHIL)

- 1. Report of the Standing Committee
- 10c. Standing Committee on Communications
 - 1. Report of the Standing Committee
- 10d. Standing Committee on Membership
 - 1. Report of the Standing Committee
- 11. Results of the Election
- 12. Association Matters
- 13. Any other Business
- 14. Date and place of the 56th session of the Council
- 15. Words of appreciation
- 16. Closing/Adjournment

Friday, 18 July: FAFICS@50 Commemoration event

ANNEXES

Link to google drive:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ZJZ2ErDP0PrZMUfP8eLMaT7sLA0RsQV?usp=drive_link

- 1 List of Participants
- 2 Agenda
- 3 List of documents
- 4 President's Keynote Address on 18 July
- 5 Presentation by UNFCU
- 6 Planning for Long-Term Care: A Guide for FAFICS Association Members

ABBREVIATIONS

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
ASHIL	After-service Health Insurance and Long-Term Care
CE/DCE	Certificate of Entitlement/Digital Certificate of Entitlement
CEB	Chief Executives Board of the UN System
CEPA	Chief Executive for Pension Administration
CET	Central European Time
CCISUA	Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations
FICSA	Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations
FSALMC	Fund Solvency and Assets and Liabilities Monitoring Committee
HLCM	High-Level Committee on Management
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
MIP	Medical Insurance Plan
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 United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF)
SPC	Staff Pension Committee
UNDCO	United Nations Development Coordination Office
UNDGC	United Nations Department of Global Communications
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNECLAC Caribbean	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UNFCU	United Nations Federal Credit Union
UNHLIC	United Nations Health and Life Insurance Committee
UNHLIS	United Nations Health and Life Insurance Section
UNIC	United Nations Information Centre
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNISERV	United Nations International Civil Servants' Federation
UNJSPF	United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund
UNOLA	United Nations Office of Legal Affairs
UNOV	United Nations Office at Vienna
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

List of Decisions taken by the Council at its Fifty-fifth Session

- **Decision 55/1: The Council approved Ms. Theresa Panuccio as Presiding Officer and Ms. Deborah Landey as Rapporteur by acclamation**
- **Decision 55/2: The Council approved the Agenda and Work Programme**
- **Decision 55/3: The Council approved the proposals made by the President for the FAFICS representatives to the Pension Board, its subsidiary bodies and two working groups and FAFICS Standing Committees. The FAFICS delegation to the Pension Board for 2026 thus will consist of Mr. Jerry Barton, FAFICS President, Ms. Suzanne Bishopric, Chair of the FAFICS Standing Committee on Pension Issues, Ms. Theresa Panuccio, FFOA-Rome, and a replacement for Mr. Gerhard Schramek (to be determined before the end of 2025), plus Mr. Vladimir Yossifov, AAFI-AFICS Geneva, and Ms. Annick Vanhoutte, FFOA-Rome, as alternates**
- **Decision 55/4: The Council approved the establishment of a Working Group on Succession Planning**
- **Decision 55/5: The Council approved the Chair of the Working Group on Succession Planning, Vice-President Ms. Nancy Hurtz-Soyka, who will finalize the membership of the Working Group in consultation with the President**
- **Decision 55/6: The Council approved a process will be put in place to identify individuals to replace Mr. Gerhard Schramek on the Pension Board delegation**
- **Decision 55/7: The Council approved that Rule 13.9 in the FAFICS Rules of Procedure have an additional sentence added: “The tenures and re-appointment limits of such representatives shall be that designated by the Terms of Reference of the Pension Board Committee or Working Group”**
- **Decision 55/8: The Bureau will include the issue of UN IDs for retirees in its work plan**
- **Decision 55/9: The Bureau will take up the sending of a follow-up communication to United Nations Resident Coordinators (UNRCs) and Country Teams with the United Nations Development Coordination Office (UNDCO) regarding collaboration with FAFICS Member Associations at country level**
- **Decision 55/10: The Council exceptionally provided retroactive approval for the stand-alone budget for the FAFICS 50th Commemoration Activities to be resourced from the FAFICS General Fund and contributions from Member Associations**

- **Decision 55/11: The Council approved the proposed budget for 2026**
- **Decision 55/12: The Council approved the reappointment of the Auditors, Mr. Ambi Sundaram and Mr. Mohammed Bachiri, for an additional year**
- **Decision 55/13: The Council approved the recommendations regarding pension issues set out in Council 55/2025/D.10.a/2, Council 55/2025/D.10.a/3 and Council 55/2025/D.10.a/4 and took note of Council 55/2025/D.10.a/1 regarding the Pension Board Governance Review Working Group (GRWG)**
- **Decision 55/14: The Council approved the seven recommendations, as presented by the Standing Committee on After-service Health Insurance and Long-Term Care (ASHIL)**
- **Decision 55/15: The Council took note of the Report of the Standing Committee on Communications and the priorities established for the coming reporting period**
- **Decision 55/16: The Council took note of the Report of the Standing Committee on Membership and the priorities established for the coming reporting period**

REPORT OF THE 55TH COUNCIL SESSION

Introduction

1. The Fifty-fifth session of the Council of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) took place from 14-17 July 2025, in hybrid mode (in-person and virtually). On the afternoon of 18 July, the Council held a special event to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of FAFICS.

2. There was a meeting of the FAFICS Bureau on 13 July 2025.

Agenda item 1: Opening of the Plenary Council

3. On 15 July 2025, the President of FAFICS, Mr. Jerry Barton, welcomed both those in person and those online to the 55th FAFICS Council. He noted that open meetings on Pension Issues and After-service Health Insurance issues had been held on Monday, 14 July, and hoped that people had attended and found them useful.

4. The President explained the voting process. This year, two Vice-Presidents have finished their terms. There are four candidates for these two positions, so there will be an election, to be held electronically for both those present and those connecting remotely. The President introduced Ms. Monireh Damestani, serving as Polling Officer for the election. The President advised that Heads of Delegation had received an email, with a link in the message to click on to cast their vote and that Heads of Delegation had until the end of 16 July to do so.

Agenda item 2: Election of Presiding Officer and Rapporteur

5. The President had discussed his suggestions with the Bureau and proposed Ms. Theresa Panuccio, FFOA-Rome, for Presiding Officer and Ms. Deborah Landey, AFICS-NY, for Rapporteur. Both were approved by acclamation.

- **Decision 55/1: The Council approved Ms. Theresa Panuccio as Presiding Officer and Ms. Deborah Landey as Rapporteur by acclamation**

Agenda item 3: Minute of silence for colleagues who have passed away since the last meeting

6. A minute of silence was held to remember colleagues who had passed away since last year and a message of solidarity was offered for all those caught up in wars, conflicts, violence, natural disasters and other difficult situations around the world. These crises affect large numbers of people including retirees in terms of displacement and difficulty accessing pensions.

Agenda item 4: Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme

7. Secretary Ms. 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 Secretary reported there were 119 participants, from 40 Member Associations with 27 Member Associations represented in person.

8. The Council considered the Provisional Agenda and Work Programme contained in Council 55/2025/D.1z and Council 55/2025/D.2z respectively. As there were no additions or changes to the Provisional Agenda or Work Programme, both were adopted. It was noted some agenda items were for information only. A separate item to review last year's Council report, with the summary of key decisions, was not a separate item on the agenda as these items would be taken up during the sessions as part of Standing Committee reports.

- **Decision 55/2: The Council approved the Agenda and Work Programme**

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

9. The Secretary advised there are currently 65 Member Associations. There were no new members to be admitted to the Federation at the 55th Council. Two Member Associations had been revitalized, AAFNU-Mauritania and UNPAI-New Delhi. Both were present and warmly welcomed.

10. UNPAI-India said the Association looked forward to learning, building relationships and serving its members. AAFNU-Mauritania indicated it was the first time the Association had attended a FAFICS Council meeting. Particular appreciation was expressed for all the support received from Vice-President, Mr. Abdou Khadre Diakhate, Co-Chair of the Membership Committee, to revitalize the Association.

Agenda item 6: Report of the President

11. The President introduced his report, Council 55/2025/D.6, the draft of which had been reviewed and commented upon by the Bureau. He started by thanking volunteers who would be ceasing or decreasing their work with FAFICS. First, he thanked Ms. Marlene Ardou, AFICS-Philippines, who had served as an alternate on the Pension Board delegation, and had to step down for personal reasons, for her insights and support. He thanked Mr. Pierre Sayour, AAFI-AFICS Geneva, who had decided to step back as Vice-President, after many years of service to FAFICS. He had served on several FAFICS and Pension Board Committees and also as FAFICS Secretary.

12. The President then spoke about Mr. Gerhard Schramek. Gerhard is well known and highly regarded throughout FAFICS and the Pension Fund, most recently for his expert advice regarding the adjustment of small pensions. Even before Gerhard retired, he was active in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Staff Council as Vice-President, representative on the IAEA Staff Pension Committee, member of the IAEA's JAC Sub-Committee on Health and Life Insurance and Chair of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) Standing Committee on General Service Questions. Upon retirement, he joined ARICSA-Vienna and has been an active Vice-President and retiree representative on those same Committees. Gerhard's first service as a FAFICS representative to the Pension Fund was in 2008, although already in 2007, he was appointed as an Advisor to the Bureau on Pension Issues "due to his extensive experience". Before then, he also represented ARICSA-Vienna at FAFICS Councils. From 2011-2022 he was Chair of the Standing Committee on Pension Issues. Since 2008 he has been a powerful and well-informed voice on the FAFICS delegation to the Pension Board, and since 2009 one of our representatives on the Pension Board's Standing Committee. His service on the Pension Board's Plan Review Group to propose improvements in the way the Fund works, and the Governance Review Groups that propose better functioning of the Pension Board were particularly notable. The President indicated Gerhard is not disappearing, simply reducing his active commitment. Many of his recommendations are embedded in the way FAFICS works today.

13. The President also paid tribute to two people who had passed away. First, Ms. Mary Johnson, AAFICS-Australia. She had been a strong supporter of FAFICS and of local Associations, a former President of AAFICS-Australia for many years. Just recently she was considering starting work to form an AFICS-South Pacific. She served as a FAFICS Vice-President and was the first Presiding Officer many years ago.

14. Second, the President paid tribute to Ms. Shahida Fazil, President of PAFICS-Pakistan, one of the original members of the core group of the Standing Committee on After-service Health Insurance and Long-Term Care (ASHIL). Shahida was a valuable member of the Committee for the last few years seeking to improve health insurance services in the UN system, especially for locally recruited former staff members.

15. The President indicated it had been an extremely busy year as the Bureau worked to implement decisions made by the Council last year. While acknowledging the importance of in-person meetings for team building, all Bureau meetings in the past year had been virtual due to financial and time pressures. The year had been an almost full-time job for both himself and the FAFICS Secretary, Ms. Delia Barcelona, who had done a remarkable job, including working on the preparation of the FAFICS@50 commemoration, communications and supporting the President and Bureau.

16. The President recognized the excellent Bureau team and thanked them all for their skill, dedication, teamwork and the immense amount of work delivered. Bureau members were asked to stand and given a round of applause.

17. The President discussed his efforts at trying to be present and ensuring enhanced transparency and communication. Regular President's letters, with French and Spanish versions, and video messages had been issued. Opening statements were made at some Association annual meetings and pre-retirement seminars. The President attended the AFICS-Chile annual meeting in person, met the Executive Director of the United Nations Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) for Chile and held a virtual meeting with Latin American Associations. He attended the annual meeting of AFICS-New York and held several side meetings. He met with the leadership of AAFU-Paris, prepared a written statement for their annual conference and presented a statement virtually to the FFOA-Rome annual meeting. The President attended the annual meeting of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Association (FICSA) and gave an opening speech as part of efforts to re-establish strong links between FICSA and FAFICS. The President hopes to visit one or two Associations next year. The President welcomed feedback on his efforts to be present and transparent.

18. The President said his tenure could be characterized as a time of transition, focusing on implementing the tenets and spirit of the Rules of Procedure, increasing communications, presence, transparency as well as handling the topics in the work plan and challenges that arose during the year.

19. The President indicated the four FAFICS Standing Committees, representing the FAFICS four pillars, are active and strong. Sufficient succession planning remains an issue. Taken together, there are over 30 people from 18 Member Associations participating in the work of FAFICS through these Committees. They had made great teams. There could be more as without them FAFICS would not be as effective. The President thanked them all for their work which has made FAFICS effective, and its advocacy prominent and competent.

20. The President indicated he is still the President of ARICSA-Vienna and believes he had done a good job of separating ARICSA-Vienna and FAFICS duties. The President has not yet decided whether to run for ARICSA-Vienna President again in October this year. He said he would keep the Council informed.

21. The President indicated travel expenses represent a significant portion of the budget. Even while making use of virtual technologies, he was of the view in-person meetings help build teams and create enthusiasm for projects. The President said however that FAFICS needed to continue to be mindful of the reality of the climate crisis, and the belt-tightening across the UN system, maximize the use of technology and be judicious about the frequency of travel.

22. The President said some of the travel budget is to support Associations to attend annual Council sessions. Attendance facilitates discussions, improves cohesion among Associations, making the Federation stronger. Attendance can also further personal friendships and improve skills exchange and networking. The subsidies for Association travel need to be increased.

23.The President indicated some selective travel by Bureau members on FAFICS business to a group either establishing or reactivating an Association can be a powerful force towards making that group an active Association. Travel to conferences where retiree matters are discussed can ensure that retiree interests are not sidelined.

24.The President reminded that the Council was informed in 2023, that the Pension Board decided to fund only two delegates from FAFICS to Pension Board meetings. It is important to have the full FAFICS delegation of four attending the Pension Board, especially since there are different expertise sets among members of the delegation. The question of funding at the Pension Board was raised last year without success, and this year again – in a time of extreme financial stress and belt-tightening in the UN system – only two FAFICS delegates are to be funded. He said FAFICS will continue to ask the Pension Board to include travel for the complete delegation in its budget proposal.

25. The President mentioned his President's Newsletters and asked for feedback including on the attempts to create French and Spanish versions. The Standing Committee on Communications, under the leadership of Mr. Juan Antonio (Tony) Casas Zamora, AFICS-Panama, had continued to work on implementing the Council approved Communications Strategy. An active core group met frequently to implement the FAFICS communications agenda. A Google Group to send documents and emails to all Associations had been created. The website is alive and doing well. Work had continued on procedures and content to ensure that the site remains lively, user-friendly and useful.

26.The President indicated the Standing Committee on Membership, under the co-leadership of Mr. Marashetty Seenappa, AFUNPI-India and Mr. Abdou Khadre Diakhate, ASAFI-Senegal, had several initiatives underway, especially in Africa. A broader membership for the core group and regular meetings are needed for two reasons: first, there are inquiries from other parts of the world that need to be encouraged and supported, and second, ways have to be found to support growth in membership in existing Associations, especially in the coming year or two, when a higher number of new retirees is expected.

27.The President spoke about the Standing Committee on After-service Health Insurance and Long-Term Care (ASHIL), with Mr. Jay Karia, AFICS-NY, as Chair and Mr. Giovanni Quaglia, AAFIB-Brazil, as Vice-Chair. The Committee had continued to be very active. A Guidance Note on planning for Long-Term Care had been produced. The issue of funding after-service health insurance liabilities has not disappeared. Indeed, there was a report using the words 'financial burden' when referring to UN system retirees. Receiving health insurance that we have paid into over our active years is not a burden, but an acquired right of eligible retirees and current staff.

28.Further he said, cost and coverage issues had also arisen in locations with high inflation, especially locations where retirees need to travel to other countries for the required care due to inadequate local medical facilities. These points will continue to be on the agenda. FAFICS would of course need to be judicious on proposing additional

benefits, considering the current financial situation of the UN system organizations so that we maintain our credibility.

29. With regard to the Standing Committee on Pension Issues, led by Ms. Suzanne Bishopric, AFICS-NY, as Chair and Mr. Jay Pozenel, AFICS-NY, as Co-Chair, the Council had agreed the core group that would meet throughout the year would be the FAFICS Pension Board delegation and individuals from the Expertise Pool to facilitate capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and succession planning. Expanding the core group to include all FAFICS Pension Board Committee representatives and additional talent from Associations will be done in the coming year. One source of skill mentioned are retiree representatives on the Staff Pension Committee (SPC) of organizations. If there is no retiree representative on a local SPC, there should be. Rule C.1 of the Pension Fund stipulates that *“two UNJSPF retiree representatives shall be entitled to attend meetings of the SPC.”* This was a FAFICS initiative and is not being implemented everywhere.

30. Concerning pensions, the President said the news was good. Pension administration continued to improve, and investments had passed the 2021 peak. Along with the required reliability of payments, no payments have been missed and the quality of service keeps improving. Telephone calls are now answered within one minute. Queries through the ‘contact us’ web page are responded to within one day, unless the situation is too complicated. The Geneva office had been working well. Initiatives were underway to further improve “customer service”, i.e. service to the retirees, to active staff, and to organizations. Dedicated “help sessions” had been organized to support retirees wishing to use the Digital Certificate of Entitlement (DCE). A “Digital ID” is being piloted by the UN that eventually could simplify the submission of documents and help eliminate fraud. Many of the improvements are in part due to FAFICS advocacy.

31. The President emphasized that the communications initiatives of the Fund are important and worthy. In addition to Liaison Offices, the leadership of the Fund had been actively holding town hall meetings and briefing organizations and Associations in person. This ‘close contact’ is very important and useful.

32. The President indicated the Pension Board now meets three times annually, in February and April virtually and in July physically. After this Council meeting, the FAFICS delegation would be participating in the Pension Board. The President, Ms. Theresa Panuccio, Ms. Suzanne Bishopric and Mr. Gerhard Schramek would participate in person, and alternates Mr. Vladimir Yossifov and newly appointed Ms. Annick Vanhoutte, replacing Ms. Marlene Ardou, virtually.

33. The President and Ms. Theresa Panuccio had been busy as the delegates on the Pension Board’s Succession Planning and Evaluation Committee, preparing the search and evaluation of candidates for the Deputy Chief Executive of Pension Administration, to be chosen by the Pension Board from a short list the Committee had prepared. The President and Theresa, as well as Suzanne and Gerhard, also serve on the Pension Board’s Standing Committee, reviewing the Chief Executive’s decisions on appeals cases. The members of this Standing Committee must come from the delegation.

34.All the key issues that FAFICS had carefully followed and advocated for are still on the table. However, with the significant budget and staffing cuts foreseen in the UN (the so-called UN80), FAFICS would not at this time be proposing any changes that might increase costs. FAFICS is quite happy that the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund Chief Executive of Pension Administration's (CEPA) major service upgrades (under the acronym of CARE) are still proceeding. Assurances that the Pension Administration can handle promptly the many requests from staff leaving under the UN80 plan had been received.

35.The President indicated that concerning investments, although the investments have recently reached an all-time high of over \$100 billion, this is a time for business as usual and not for seeking changes. The Representative of the Secretary-General (RSG), Mr. Pedro Guazo, had resigned and the Secretary-General would be appointing a new Representative. The last few years had seen increasing value of the investments, a more motivated team in the Office of Investment (OIM), and more transparency in their strategies, tactics and results. It is hoped that the new RSG will continue to strengthen the Fund's assets.

36.One of the major issues during the last year had been the increasing numbers of countries excluded from the two-track option. Over half the world's countries have been excluded as of November, thus removing those beneficiaries from the purchasing power protection based on the local cost of living. The process followed by the Chief Executive of Pension Administration is "objective", i.e. it follows an algorithm that does the analysis for each country, but that does not necessarily mean that it is fair or that the results are solving current problems. It is very clear in the Pension Fund's Rules that the authority to suspend the two-track option lies with the Chief Executive of Pension Administration. Even the Pension Board has no authority to intervene. In April of 2025, the CEPA had announced that for the first time, that a few countries will be reinstated to the two-track option, and that all beneficiaries in those countries will be given the choice whether to keep the dollar track or opt for the two-track system, based on the current exchange rate. This advancement is welcomed, and it is hoped that more countries will be reinstated in April 2026 as more of the 'abnormal results' become historically obsolete.

37.The President made special mention of the Pension Board subsidiary bodies that had met during the year. The Fund Solvency and Asset and Liability Monitoring Committee (FSALMC) met a dozen times, always with the expert contributions from Ms. Suzanne Bishopric and Mr. Marashetty Seenappa. Mr. Darshak Shah had ably supported the Audit Committee, and Mr. Clemens Adams and Mr. Werner Blenk had advanced FAFICS issues in the Budget Committee. Mr. Gerhard Schramek and Mr. Jay Pozenel were still working very hard on the Governance Review Working Group (GRWG), trying to formulate more effective procedures for the Pension Board. Ms. Nancy Hurtz-Soyka and Ms. Elia Armstrong had represented FAFICS on the Ethics Review Working Group. The President thanked them all for their diligent and expert work on our behalf.

38.The President paid tribute to the team that had worked so hard on the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of FAFICS. He thanked Mr. Jacques Daoust CAFICS-Montreal and

Mr. Aye Win AFICS-Myanmar and the entire Anniversary Planning Committee for dedicating their time, energy and expertise to make this event special.

39. In addition to the souvenirs and the preparations for the podium events, two other lasting reminders of our anniversary had been produced. First, a video of FAFICS in action. Additionally, an electronic publication about FAFICS had been produced. The President announced the launching of the publication and invited Associations to visit the FAFICS website where it had just been uploaded. Association contributions had been put to great use in these two professionally done outputs to mark our anniversary.

40. The President had been required to make several appointments during the past year that are now being reported to the Council. The President is committed to ensuring FAFICS plans for succession, drawing on the Expertise Pool and ensuring full transparency of the process, in compliance with the Rules of Procedure. The President is proposing a Working Group be established under the leadership of Vice-President Ms. Nancy Hurtz-Soyka to prepare a succession planning strategy and operational plan.

41. During the past year, the President had endeavored to be transparent in his nominations and had looked for talent where possible. Rule 5.8 states that Standing Committees and Working Groups shall be expressly charged with inducting new expertise with a view to planning and managing succession. It had been gratifying to see the core groups established for the Standing Committees on Communications and After-service Health Insurance. The Chair of the Standing Committee on After-service Health Insurance plans to expand the group. For the Standing Committee on Pension Issues, its Chair Ms. Suzanne Bishopric and the President had ensured that the two alternate delegates to the Pension Board are informed of all the issues. A Co-Chair, Mr. Jay Pozenel, AFICS-NY, was added this year. Expanding the Pension Issues core group to include all the FAFICS Pension Board Committee representatives and additional talent from Associations from around the world in the coming year will help ensure quality support and succession.

42. With regard to the Expertise Pool, the President said it had been established and is useful in identifying people willing and skilled to support the work of FAFICS. All representatives of FAFICS who are not elected, namely all recommendations for Pension Board delegates and representatives to Pension Board subsidiary bodies, have come from the Expertise Pool. All Associations are urged to continue to encourage submissions so that FAFICS can access the incredible talent in our Federation around the world as needed. More individuals with knowledge and experience on pension, health insurance, human resource management, ethics, communication, website, IT, budget, finance, and treasury issues are needed. The President urged all Associations to submit individuals to the Expertise Pool.

43. As to the Bureau, the President had performed the duties outlined in the Rules of Procedure. The energy of the Bureau had been fantastic. It meets monthly, and the Minutes are published in a very timely way. Ms. Deborah Landey had done an excellent job as Rapporteur. Also, and as appropriate, comments are made through the President's

Newsletters. The Bureau had drawn up and implemented a work programme and a monitoring tool to keep track of implementation.

44.The Council had been prepared and run according to the new Rules, including timelines for sending out documents prior to the Council. In addition, there are efforts to improve document preparation times and the hybrid nature of the meeting (although the meeting remains primarily a physical meeting).

45.The President thanked Ms. Delia Barcelona for all the advance work she did to set up this Council meeting. There had been a tremendous amount of background work, requiring coordination between Delia, the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV), ARICSA-Vienna, and with Associations. The entire ARICSA-Vienna office team had been working with Delia to ensure the Council would run smoothly. Council reports are now public, and more efforts have been made to translate them into French and Spanish where feasible. In addition, efforts had been made to provide summaries in French and Spanish for important Council documents. English remains the working language for FAFICS, but efforts will continue to publish as much as possible in three languages, making use of technology for much of the work and volunteers for the Council reports. These volunteers deserved thanks and appreciation. Interpretation had not been affordable.

46.The President advised there are private groups of people trying to find a way to support the UN Charter, which seems to be under severe financial strain and lack of respect for its principles. There are petitions being circulated and some actions suggested by these groups. He felt this was not a Federation-wide matter, and it should be up to individuals to participate or not.

47.The first purpose in the FAFICS Statute is to support and promote the purposes, principles, programmes and achievements of the United Nations system. This aim is more urgent than ever. The President asked for any suggestions on how FAFICS can do this.

48. The President thanked all for the support shown to him during the previous year and was grateful for the opportunity to serve this important Federation, representing people who have served the world in their careers and continue in many ways to represent the principles of the United Nations in their daily lives.

49.The President welcomed the presence of the Emeriti Presidents, Mr. Andres Castellanos, Ms. Linda Saputelli, Mr. Marco Breschi and Honorary Secretary, Mr. Jay Sundaresan, and Honorary Assistant, Ms. Lydia Ontal.

50.Associations expressed great appreciation for the President's excellent and comprehensive report, his outstanding cordiality, dynamism, determination, energy and outreach to Associations including his video, letters, visits to countries, participation in Association assembly meetings, problem solving for Associations experiencing difficulties

and support for the work of the FAFICS@50 Anniversary Planning Committee. Appreciation was also expressed for the Bureau and Standing Committees for their outstanding work. FAFICS was congratulated on its 50th anniversary.

51. The Secretary, Ms. Delia Barcelona, was in particular thanked for her tremendous work and support to Associations particularly during the weeks ahead of the Council, especially for Associations that had experienced difficulties with visa acquisition.

52. Special appreciation was expressed for Mr. Gerhard Schramek. A standing ovation was given to Gerhard in honor of his immense contribution to FAFICS and retirees over so many years, his technical expertise, political skills, knowledge, wisdom and kindness.

53. Appreciation was also expressed for the work of the Standing Committee on After-service Health Insurance and Long-Term Care (ASHIL), particularly with regard to issues faced by retirees in Africa, for the service of Ms. Mary Johnson, Ms. Marlene Ardou, Mr. Pierre Sayour and Ms. Lydia Ontal. A special tribute was also paid to Mr. Miguel Angel Espinar Sierra, the founder and former President of AFIJUB-Spain and Ms. Yolaine Noguier, former President of AAFU-France, both of whom had passed away recently.

54. On succession planning, Associations spoke of its crucial importance and supported the establishment of the Working Group on Succession Planning. Identifying individuals to participate from across the Federation in the work of the organization is vital. One Association is putting together a database of experts in that country and will share it with the Bureau.

55. On growing the organization, the importance of increasing the number of Associations and members within Associations was recognized. The possibility of Associations affiliating with other Associations was raised. Associations networking with other Associations, including attending meetings of other Associations, is a good way to share experience and support. The model of the group of Associations in Latin America was mentioned. Having more people on the Standing Committee for Membership, perhaps having one individual responsible for each region designated, was mentioned and the need to continue to reach out to parts of the world where there are still no Associations. Encouraging still active staff members to join Associations was raised. One Association suggested attention be given to long-term planning for the future of FAFICS and potential financial risks in the future.

56. On pension issues, the importance of the role of retirees on pension committees was emphasized. On health insurance issues, it was said priority must continue to be given to this issue.

57. Associations mentioned the letter that had been sent to United Nations Resident Coordinators (UNRCs) to support Associations and that it would be useful if there could be a follow-up. The issue of ID cards for retirees was raised and whether this could be done through the Resident Coordinator or Pension Fund.

58. The Council welcomed and accepted the Report of the President.

Agenda item 6b. Succession Planning

59. The President presented Council 55/2025/D.6.1, *for approval*. He indicated that FAFICS is trying to be more forward looking on the issue of succession planning as called for in the Rules of Procedure. He elaborated some of the issues that had been faced. One of them is that there are insufficient submissions from Associations for the Expertise Pool. His own knowledge of the individuals in the Pool is inadequate, and there is a tendency therefore of relying overly on long-serving representatives. He mentioned the need for FAFICS to maintain its reputation for collegiality, expertise and working together with partners in the Pension Board, its subsidiary bodies and various working groups and other fora in which FAFICS representatives participate. He also mentioned the short timeframes provided for FAFICS to provide names of individuals to be put forward for various bodies. He indicated there was insufficient planning, capacity building, knowledge sharing and shadowing/overlapping opportunities.

60. The paper summarized the decisions on appointments the President had made during the year, about which Council had been informed, as well as his proposals for appointments for Pension Board delegation, subsidiary bodies and working groups, FAFICS Standing Committee Chairs and Vice/Co-Chairs. The President also proposed the setting up of a Working Group on Succession Planning to be chaired by Vice-President Ms. Nancy Hurtz-Soyka. The Working Group would be tasked with establishing a succession planning strategy and operational plan.

61. On the appointment of the Pension Board delegation, the President noted that Mr. Gerhard Schramek would be stepping down from the delegation thus ending his tenure at the end of the year. With this information, there would be sufficient time to canvas and obtain more entries for the Expertise Pool. The Pension Board delegation would then consist of the President as Head of Delegation and Ms. Suzanne Bishopric as Chair, Standing Committee on Pension Issues, as required under the Rules of Procedure, Ms. Theresa Panuccio and Mr. Gerhard Schramek until he is replaced.

62. Associations welcomed the high quality and informative report. The analysis of issues identified as well as the need for a change of mind set were appreciated. It was felt the proposals represented a real step forward in implementing the Rules of Procedure demonstrating compliance, transparency and good governance. People have to be identified to move into the Pension Board delegation, Pension Board subsidiary bodies and FAFICS Standing Committees and working groups. Continuity and managed succession, knowledge sharing and capacity building were all seen as essential. The Expertise Pool needs to be expanded and, as important as getting people into the Pool is, it is important to get them out of the Pool into the work of FAFICS. In this way, Associations and their members will see that there are real opportunities when they volunteer. It was said that there must be more universal participation in the work of FAFICS and that more effort must be made in this regard. All Associations can help.

63. There was full support for the proposed Pension Board delegation, representatives for the Pension Board subsidiary bodies and working groups, nominations for FAFICS Standing Committee Chairs and Vice/Co-Chairs as well as a good transparent process to be put in place for the replacement of Mr. Gerhard Schramek. Associations fully supported the setting up of a Working Group on Succession Planning to develop a succession planning strategy and operational plan, under the leadership of Vice-President Ms. Nancy Hurtz-Soyka, and for the Group to report back to Council next year.

64. The following names were put forward for the Working Group by Associations, Mr. Clemens Adams, AAFI-AFICS-Geneva, Ms. Promita Chadha, UNPAI-New Delhi, Mr. T I M Nurunnabi Khan, AFUNSOB-Bangladesh, Ms. Deborah Landey, AFICS-NY, Ms. Alcestis Mangahas, AFICS-Philippines and Mr. Claudio Menezes, AAFIB-Brazil. The Chair of the Working Group will finalize the membership of the group in consultation with the President.

- **Decision 55/3: The Council approved the proposals made by the President for the FAFICS representatives to the Pension Board, its subsidiary bodies and two working groups and FAFICS Standing Committees. The FAFICS delegation to the Pension Board for 2026 thus will consist of Mr. Jerry Barton, FAFICS President, Ms. Suzanne Bishopric, Chair of the FAFICS Standing Committee on Pension Issues, Ms. Theresa Panuccio, FFOA-Rome, and a replacement for Mr. Gerhard Schramek (to be determined before the end of 2025), plus Mr. Vladimir Yossifov, AAFI-AFICS Geneva, and Ms. Annick Vanhoutte, FFOA-Rome, as alternates**
- **Decision 55/4: The Council approved the establishment of a Working Group on Succession Planning**
- **Decision 55/5: The Council approved the Chair of the Working Group on Succession Planning, Vice-President Ms. Nancy Hurtz-Soyka, will finalize the membership of the Working Group in consultation with the President**
- **Decision 55/6: The Council approved a process will be put in place to identify individuals to replace Mr. Gerhard Schramek on the Pension Board delegation**

Agenda item 6c. Proposal to align the tenures of FAFICS representatives on the Pension Board subsidiary bodies and Working Groups to Pension Board regulations

65. The President presented Council 55/2025/D.6.2, *for approval*. He explained that the Pension Board is currently reviewing the tenures of Pension Board subsidiary bodies and working groups. The proposal in the document is that FAFICS aligns its tenures with whatever the Pension Board establishes regarding Pension Board subsidiary body/working group tenures. The President proposed that the Council approve that Rule 13.9 in the FAFICS Rules of Procedure regarding FAFICS representatives, other than the

delegation, have an additional sentence: “The tenures and re-appointment limits of such representatives shall be that designated by the Terms of Reference of the Pension Board Committee or Working Group”.

66. Most Associations did not have an objection to FAFICS aligning the tenures of FAFICS representatives on Pension Board subsidiary bodies/working groups with those of the Pension Board Committee or Working Group.

- **Decision 55/7: The Council approved that Rule 13.9 in the FAFICS Rules of Procedure have an additional sentence added: “The tenures and re-appointment limits of such representatives shall be that designated by the Terms of Reference of the Pension Board Committee or Working Group”**

Agenda item 7: Election Procedures

67. The Presiding Officer referred delegations to Council 55/2025/D.7, *for information* and Council 55/2025/D.7.1 *for approval*. The President explained the ballot process. He indicated there were 40 registered voters. Heads of Delegation had received an email with a link to click on connecting to a browser containing the ballot. Voting was open until the end of 16 July. Voting would be electronic for all delegations. The Polling Officer had already been announced by the President and approved. The Secretary advised there were four candidates for two positions. Vice-President Mr. Abdou Khadre Diakhate, ASAFI-Senegal, had completed two years and was eligible to run for a second two-year term. Mr. Pierre Sayour had stepped down for personal/health reasons. Four nominations had been received from Associations.

- Mr. Abdou Khadre Diakhate, ASAFI-Senegal
- Ms. Adriana Gomez, AFICS-Chile
- Mr. Venkatasubramanian Srinivasan, UNPAI-India
- Mr. Clemens Adams, AAFI-AFICS-Geneva

68. The Presiding Officer asked the four candidates to introduce themselves to the Council and to briefly present their credentials for fulfilling the role of Vice-President. The four nominees presented their candidacies and current roles in FAFICS.

Agenda item 8: Association Matters

69. Two Associations had submitted documents.

- **AFICS-Addis Ababa:** *UNJSPF Liaison Office in Addis Ababa at the UN/Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Compound*
- **AEFNUP-Peru:** *Proposal on the issuance of standardized Identification Document (ID) Cards*

70. Regarding the possibility of a UNJSPF Liaison Office in the UN/ECA compound, this would be raised with the CEPA.

71. The President of AEFNUP-Peru presented the document on standardized identification document (ID) cards for retirees. He indicated research had been done and there are a variety of practices around the world. He explained that for retirees in Peru, such an ID would be helpful for dealings with local authorities. The proposal is to have one ID for all retirees around the world. This could help retirees with their dealings with local authorities as well as with access to United Nations facilities.

72. On the issue of the purpose of retirees having an ID card, it was said we need to be clear about the purpose and be realistic in our expectations. Is the purpose to help deal with local authorities or access to United Nations facilities or both. It was recognized having an ID valid in all countries and for all United Nations facilities was a complex undertaking. One Association said that at present UN ID cards are issued in the context of each organization and confer certain rights and duties which are different from national IDs. These UN ID cards vary in countries from organization to organization. The goal should be an ID card which allows retirees access to all buildings all over the world. One Association said having access to such an ID could be an incentive for retirees to join an Association.

73. In terms of experience with ID cards, in some countries, Resident Coordinators and the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) have been helpful in issuing IDs for retirees and in other countries not. One Association indicated the United Nations Regional Commission had also been helpful. It was felt that a follow-up letter to Resident Coordinators and Country Teams to support retirees, including on this issue, would be helpful. One Association shared they had developed a digital ID which is available to life members of the Association. The United Nations Educational Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) provides an ID to retirees for access to the premises, bank and conferences. The International Labour Organization (ILO) provides a pass, but this does not enable access to the premises. In Geneva, there had been an effort to harmonize security access for serving staff across agencies, and it had not been possible. In Vienna, former staff members in receipt of a pension have a building entrance badge for five years but not surviving spouses. Some agencies do not provide any ID for retirees.

74. Regarding which entity was thought to be appropriate to provide a globally recognized ID, several suggestions were made. One was the UNDSS. Another was the UNJSPF, which has the data base of retirees and digital technology already developed for the DCE which it was felt could be adapted. It was also recommended this be taken up with the Chief Executives Board (CEB).

75. The President thanked Associations for the rich discussion and indicated the Bureau would include this issue in its work plan and take up the sending of a follow-up communication to Resident Coordinators and Country Teams. The CEPA would be asked to clarify the purpose of an ID they are developing.

- **Decision 55/8: The Bureau will include the issue of UN IDs in its work plan**
- **Decision 55/9: The Bureau will take up the sending of a follow-up communication to United Nations Resident Coordinators (UNRCs) and Country Teams with the United Nations Development Coordination Office (UNDCO) regarding collaboration with FAFICS Member Associations at country level**

Agenda item 9. Administrative and financial matters

2024 Accounts and Report of the Auditors

76. The President introduced the Report on the 2024 Accounts and the Report of the Auditors, Council 55/2025/D.9/1, *for information*, on the state of the financial affairs of FAFICS during and at the end of 2024. He pointed out FAFICS had stayed within its budget and received a clean report from the auditors. The auditors indicated the Balance Sheet and the Statement of Income and Expenditures, as at 31 December 2024, gave a true and fair view of the affairs of the Federation as of 31 December 2024 and the 2024 accounts had been correctly maintained. At the same time the auditors expressed their concern regarding sustainability of the budget with declining membership and related income, as well as increased expenditures and that there was a need for FAFICS to explore ways to increase income and in containing expenditures.

77. Associations thanked the President and Treasurer and offered congratulations on a clean audit report. The auditors, who perform the audit function pro-bono, were also thanked. It was noted that some Accounts Receivables in 2024 and prior years have still not been paid, and Associations were encouraged to pay their outstanding fees. It was noted there had been a 62% increase in travel in 2024 over 2023 and that travel should be contained also bearing in mind the impact on the environment and advances in technology. It was suggested that increasing the number of Associations, particularly in Europe where there are only nine Associations, would help on the income side. It was also said that the operating reserves were sound as long as these do not drop below one year of operating expenses, and that increased membership should be sought to ensure FAFICS was more representative of a greater number of UN system retirees, which in turn would result in increasing income.

78. Mr. Romesh Muttukumaru was thanked for his excellent stewardship of the finances of FAFICS.

Utilization of assigned reserves and exceptional stand-alone budget the FAFICS 50th Commemoration Activities to be resourced from the FAFICS General Fund and contributions from Member Associations for retroactive concurrence by Council

79. The Treasurer introduced Council 55/2025/D.9/3, *for information/approval*. He reported on the four assigned reserves for the information of the Council: a **Reserve for the establishment of new FAFICS Member Associations**, a **Solidarity Reserve** for helping Associations that had been dormant, a **Reserve for Bad Debts**, and a **Capital Reserve** for the re-vamping of the FAFICS website and communications-related initiatives. The only reserve against which expenditures had been incurred was the capital reserve, for a total of \$6,776.25, for the design and roll out of the new website. Only expenses for website upgrades would be charged to the reserve in future following the initial maintenance costs. Ongoing maintenance costs for the website would then need to be absorbed by the regular budget.

80. The Treasurer also introduced the exceptional stand-alone budget for the FAFICS@50 commemoration for retroactive approval by the Council. The holding of the commemoration had been agreed at the 54th FAFICS Council. A Committee had been set up under the leadership of Mr. Jacques Daoust, CAFICS-Montreal, and Mr. Aye Win, AFICS-Myanmar. A programme had been developed with an accompanying budget which is being exceptionally funded from the FAFICS General Fund and would be reduced from voluntary contributions from Associations. So far contributions totaling \$3,506.00 from ten Associations had been received which will be offset against the budget. Additional contributions were welcomed.

81. Associations raised several issues. With regard to increasing income, the need to increase the number of Associations and members within them was emphasized. Some Associations remarked on the significant gap between the number of retirees in their home countries and those that belong to their Associations and that the main source of income for FAFICS is the retirees. One Association suggested that the FAFICS@50 commemorative materials be used to educate members and prospective members about the importance of what FAFICS does. The option of a modest increase in FAFICS fees was also mentioned. The option of raising resources from donors and other external entities was raised. On this it was said that \$10,000 a year had been received from the United Nations Federal Credit Union (UNFCU) since 2017 which ensures the FAFICS budget is sustainable. The President indicated caution needs to be exercised regarding resource mobilization from external entities. There might also be a legal issue regarding fundraising and research needed to be done to confirm the exact legal status of FAFICS in Switzerland and the US. The President also indicated his aspiration to explore that in future sufficient resources might be available to support Associations dealing with emergency situations of individual retirees, a fund comparable to the emergency fund of the Pension Fund.

82. There was a discussion about resources for translation into French and Spanish. There was recognition of the efforts that had been made to translate documents. This had been achieved using a translation app with the help of Bureau members who review the translations to ensure reliability of content. The Council was reminded of the efforts in the past of Associations in Latin America and Europe, who had helped with translation to avoid additional costs for FAFICS, and that Associations look into providing this support in future. It was also mentioned that FAFICS is looking at technology that allows for

simultaneous AI-generated live spoken interpretation. Associations were reminded that the FAFICS Statutes indicate the working language is English.

- **Decision 55/10: The Council exceptionally provided retroactive approval for the stand-alone budget for the FAFICS 50th Commemoration Activities to be resourced from the FAFICS General Fund and contributions from Member Associations**

Interim Report on the Management of the Budget for 2025

83. The Treasurer introduced Council 55/2025/D.9/2, *for information*. Council had approved a budget of \$48,755. Income is expected to exceed expenditures by \$1,265.

Proposed Budget for 2026

84. The Treasurer introduced Council 55/2025/D.9/4, *for approval*. Annex 2 provides an estimated total income for 2026 of some \$50,000 and expenditure of \$49,805. Individual budget lines are similar to those of 2025.

85. One Association mentioned the issue of reflecting the decline in membership in the proposed budget with, for example, fewer retirees from the UN in New York now able to stay in the US after retirement. Another Association reported an increase in members in 2025. It is hoped that more Associations with increasing numbers of members will be created going forward to offset the decline in members due to mortality. One Association mentioned its outreach efforts to members who had not paid their dues which had been successful. A suggestion was made to launch a special appeal to Associations for additional resources during this 50th commemorative year. The Treasurer indicated that if in early 2026 income is not materializing as forecast, the budget will need to be adjusted. He also indicated that while contributions are expected by end March every year, according to the FAFICS Rules of Procedure, that this deadline was not being met thus making management of the budget challenging. He also made a request that when Associations send in their contributions, they identify their Association so he can better track which Association was making the contribution payment. It was mentioned there is now a UNFCU report which provides the details of who has made the deposits. A suggestion was made for a half yearly report on the number of members from Associations which would be helpful to Associations. It was suggested that securing new Associations needs to be strategic. It was noted that four Associations currently provide 47% of the revenue. It was suggested Annex 1 of the report could be expanded to include numbers of members in prior years, and in Annex 2 that the number of years covered be reduced. Furthermore, in Annex 2 a suggestion was made for the table to show actual income and expenditure compared to projected. Having a table which shows the status of payments by individual Associations was also suggested. Two typographical errors were noted in the document, one relating to the proposed 2026 expenditure item on communications and outreach, with the amount shown as US\$2, instead of US\$2,000. However, the total proposed 2026 expenditures did include the US\$2,000. The other

typographical error related to the 2023 UNFCU contribution in Annex 2 with the amount shown as US\$10 instead of US\$10,000. However, the total income for 2023 did include the US\$10,000. Accordingly, both typographical errors (which have been subsequently corrected) have no impact on the proposed 2026 budget as presented.

86.The issue of travel costs was again raised. It was clarified travel is for the President, Bureau members and for Associations to participate in the Council.

- **Decision 55/11: The Council approved the proposed budget for 2026**

Appointment of Auditors

87. The President indicated the Auditors, Mr. Ambi Sundaram from Geneva and Mr. Mohammed Bachiri from France, have done an excellent job. They have been nominated by their Associations and are willing to continue.

- **Decision 55/12: The Council approved the reappointment of the Auditors, Mr. Ambi Sundaram and Mr. Mohammed Bachiri, for an additional year**

Agenda item 10: FAFICS Pillars

10.a Standing Committee on Pension Issues

88. The Chair of the Standing Committee on Pension Issues (SCPI), Suzanne Bishopric, introduced Council 55/2025/D.10.a/1, Council 55/2025/D.10.a/2, Council 55/2025/D.10.a/3 and Council 55/2025/D.10.a/4, *which included the recommendations of the Standing Committee.*

89. The Chair began by recalling the differences between defined benefit and defined contribution pension plans. She observed that defined benefit plans, such as the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Plan (UNJSPF or Fund) are those in which employers promise beneficiaries a specific monthly payment upon retirement based on a predetermined formula involving a percentage of final salary and length of service. The benefit is a fixed amount regardless of the plan's investment returns. By contrast, defined contribution plans are those in which employers and beneficiaries contribute a fixed monthly amount, usually a percentage of salary, during the period of employment and the resulting retirement benefit depends on investment returns on that amount.

90.The Chair emphasized that because the UNJSPF is a defined benefit plan, the Fund's administrators must manage the actuarial costs of the liabilities for the fixed benefits owed to beneficiaries as well as the returns on investments for the assets of the Fund needed over the long term to ensure payment of such benefits. With respect to the Fund's

investments, she emphasized that they were performing well, that the portfolio was prudently managed and balanced among a variety of safe investments, and that the Fund's assets currently amounted to over US \$100 billion, an amount sufficient for the Fund to pay benefits for several decades.

91. Under Article 19 of the Fund's Regulations, the assets of the UNJSPF are managed by the Secretary-General after consultation with the Fund's Investments Committee and on observations and suggestions from time to time made by the Pension Board of the UNJSPF on the Fund's investment policies. Article 19 further requires the Secretary-General to account to the Pension Board on the investment of the Fund's assets. For this purpose, the Secretary-General has appointed a full-time Representative of the Secretary-General for the Investment of the Assets (RSG) of the UNJSPF in accordance with the procedures and terms of reference approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/247 B, Part VIII, of 9 April 2014. The RSG, in turn directs the Fund's Office of Investment Management (OIM), which performs or manages the Fund's investment activities.

92. The Chair emphasized that while prudently managing the Fund's investments over the time needed to pay benefits was key to its sustainability, so too was accurately measuring and predicting the Fund's long-term liability to pay those benefits. For this, the Fund relies on its Consulting Actuary and a Committee of Actuaries, both appointed by the Secretary-General upon the recommendation of the Pension Board. The Fund's actuaries examine the Fund's contribution rate, which is currently 23.7 percent of participant's pensionable remuneration, with a third of that amount being paid monthly by the participant from salary deductions and the remaining two-thirds being paid by the participant's employing organization in the Fund. The Fund's actuaries examine a variety of statistics concerning the population of UNJSPF participants and beneficiaries, such as life-expectancy, growth rates in participation, age at entry of service, average length of service, etc., as well as operations of the Fund's organizations, such as growth or decline in operations, particularly peacekeeping and humanitarian operations which relate to short-term and immediate operational needs. Based on such an examination, the Fund's actuaries determine whether the Fund's contribution rate is sufficient to meet its expected long-term liabilities.

93. In order to make such a determination on the Fund's contribution rate, every two years in accordance with the Fund's Regulations, the Fund's actuaries produce an actuarial valuation of the Fund, i.e., a measure of the Fund's expected long-term liabilities against the actuarial value, or five-year average market value, of the Fund's assets.¹ In years

¹ By taking a rolling year average of the market value of the Fund's assets for purposes of their actuarial valuation, the Fund's actuaries are able to better control for and smooth the effects of short-

between those actuarial valuations, the Pension Board establishes the Fund's actuarial assumptions that form the basis of the actuarial valuation. The Chair mentioned that for this July's Pension Board session, to assist the Pension Board in establishing the actuarial assumptions for the biennial actuarial valuation to be performed as of 31 December 2025, the actuaries had produced a detained actuarial study.

94. In this regard, the Chair introduced three papers. The first summarized for the FAFICS Council the reports of the Fund's Actuaries, Council 55/2025/D.10.a/2 (Report on Actuarial Matters). In addition, she introduced both the paper summarizing the report of the RSG on the investment of the Fund's assets, Council 55/2025/D.10.a/3 (Report on Investments) and the paper summarizing the work of the Fund Solvency and Assets and Liabilities Monitoring Committee of the Pension Board, on which she and Mr. Marashetty Seenappa represent FAFICS, Council 55/2025/D.10.a/4 (Report on FSALM).

95. The Chair noted that the Fund's actuaries had emphasized that the UNJSPF was in a strong, well-funded position actuarially. That is, based on the most recent actuarial valuation as of 31 December 2023, the Fund's contribution rate was adequate to meet its long-term liabilities, even when accounting for the costs of the Pension Adjustment System (i.e., which adjust benefits for increases in the cost of living and allows payment of benefits in currencies other than the US dollar). The Fund's actuaries also emphasized that the UNJSPF's annual income from its contributions and investments (e.g., dividends on stocks, interest on bonds, and operations income from private equity investments) was sufficient to meet its annual payment of benefits, currently over US \$3.8 billion. That together with the Fund's approximately US \$100 billion in assets means that the Fund has sufficient money to pay benefits for the next several decades.

96. Nevertheless, the Chair indicated, the Fund's actuaries reported that, in light of the world's current political-economic situation, they were carefully monitoring various financial, operational, and actuarial uncertainties that could affect the Fund's long-term sustainability. Such uncertainties include wars, humanitarian crises, the effects of climate change, potential heightened inflation due to the imposition of tariffs, currency fluctuations, and the defunding and down-sizing of the Fund's member organization operations. Setting the actuarial assumptions for the upcoming actuarial valuation as of 31 December 2025 would be made more difficult for the Pension Board as a result.

97. The Chair stated that, in addition to the biennial actuarial valuation carried out by the Fund's actuaries every two years, the Fund has for several years now conducted an Asset and Liabilities Management Study (ALM Study) every four years. In contrast to an actuarial valuation, which measures the Fund's assets and liabilities at a discrete point in

term market swings and volatility, such as those resulting from the 2000-era dot com crisis, the 2008 mortgage-backed securities crisis, and the SARS-COV-2 pandemic.

time (i.e., on 31 December of every other year), the ALM Study runs tens of thousands of computerized scenarios using the Fund's actuarial data, economic and market data and trends, and various compositions of the Fund's investment portfolio of stocks, bonds, alternative investments and cash. The RSG together with the Fund's actuaries, the Investments Committee, and the Pension Board, through its Fund Sustainability and Assets and Liabilities Monitoring (FSALM) Committee, considers the ALM Study's scenarios in order to recommend to the RSG the most optimal Strategic Asset Allocation (SAA) for the Fund's investment portfolio.² The Fund's most recent ALM Study was conducted in 2024 and is available on the Fund's website.³ The Fund's SAA as of 31 December 2024 was reported in the Financial Statements⁴ as follows:

Strategic asset allocation as of 31 December 2024:

<u>Asset Classes</u>	<u>Minimum (%)</u>	<u>Target SAA (%)</u>	<u>Maximum (%)</u>	<u>Benchmark weight (%)</u>	<u>Portfolio weight (%)</u>
<u>Global equities</u>	<u>35.0</u>	<u>43.0</u>	<u>51.0</u>	<u>43.0</u>	<u>44.9</u>
<u>Private equity</u>	<u>3.0</u>	<u>7.0</u>	<u>11.0</u>	<u>7.0</u>	<u>8.5</u>
<u>Real estate</u>	<u>4.5</u>	<u>8.5</u>	<u>12.5</u>	<u>8.5</u>	<u>7.4</u>
<u>Real assets*</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>7.5</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>0.4</u>
<u>Subtotal (growth assets)</u>	<u>52.0</u>	<u>60.0</u>	<u>68.0</u>	<u>60.0</u>	<u>61.2</u>
<u>Global fixed income</u>	<u>31.0</u>	<u>39.0</u>	<u>47.0</u>	<u>39.0</u>	<u>37.1</u>
<u>Cash and equivalent</u>	<u>0.5</u>	<u>1.0</u>	<u>3.0</u>	<u>1.0</u>	<u>1.7</u>
<u>Subtotal (non-growth assets)</u>	<u>32.0</u>	<u>40.0</u>	<u>48.0</u>	<u>40.0</u>	<u>38.8</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>

*Real Assets include infrastructure, timberland and commodities.

98. The Chair emphasized that because the Fund undertakes both an actuarial study to determine the Fund's actuarial position every two years and an ALM Study to plan its strategies to meet the Fund's long-term investment goals, both sides of the Fund, i.e., the

² According to paragraph 68 of the Fund's 2023 Investment Policy Statement (<https://www.unjspf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/IPS-2023.pdf>) "a full ALM study is performed every four years unless the Pension Board considers it necessary to conduct an ALM study more frequently. The purpose of the ALM study is to examine the financial condition of the Fund, estimate the feasibility of achieving the desired long-term investment return targets, set an appropriate Long-Term Investment Objective consistent with maintaining the Fund's long-term financial sustainability, and propose a reasonable, feasible, and implementable Strategic Asset Allocation consistent with the Long-Term Investment Objective, the Fund's Risk Appetite and its current financial condition."

³ See <https://www.unjspf.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/UNJSPF-2023-ALM-Study-Report.pdf>

⁴ See <https://www.unjspf.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Financial-Statements-2024.pdf> (Note 33, page 17).

RSG and OIM and the Fund Administration and Fund's actuaries, can be brought together with the Pension Board, through the FSALM Committee, to monitor and ensure that the Fund is in a sustainable position to meet its obligations now and in the future.

99. With respect to some of the actuarial issues facing the Fund, the Chair noted that the lifespan of the Fund's beneficiaries has continued to grow, suggesting that even after the SARS-COV-2 pandemic, the Fund's beneficiaries are generally living healthy and longer lives than ever. This has been periodically addressed by the Fund over the years by increasing the Fund's normal age or retirement from 60 to 62 and more recently from 62 to 65, with corresponding increases in the age of early retirement.

100. The Chair also noted that concerns had been raised by both participants and beneficiaries over funding and staff cuts faced by member organizations of the Fund, such as the UN80 reform proposals currently being considered. She made clear that the Fund's actuaries did not see this as a particular problem for the long-term sustainability of the Fund. This is because while the total amount of contributions to the Fund may diminish as a result of programmatic and staff losses from the member organizations, fewer staff would be staying on to full retirement and collecting benefits. Indeed, the Fund's actuaries noted that when participants exited the Fund before collecting retirement benefits by taking a withdrawal settlement, those participants would leave part of their employing organization's contributions to the Fund behind. Those could then be used for paying benefits for those who take retirement or other benefits from the Fund. Moreover, the Fund had sufficient liquid investments to be able to handle a "run" on the Fund if numerous participants were to simultaneously take withdrawal settlements. Thus, programmatic and staff losses did not pose much, if any, of an actuarial risk to the Fund.

101. The Chair addressed the change made by the Pension Board in 2023 to the actuarial assumption regarding the real (i.e., discounted for inflation) long-term rate of return on the Fund's invested assets. For nearly three decades, the assumed real rate of return used by the Board had been a 3.5% real rate of return over the long-term. For the 31 December 2023 actuarial valuation, the Pension Board lowered that assumed real rate of return to 3.4%, largely on the advice of the Fund's actuaries. The actuaries were then principally concerned about high rates of inflation that were affecting leading economies and costs for borrowing for the first time in several years. Since the real rate of return is discounted for inflation, the actuaries considered it prudent to lower the assumed real rate of return lest the actuarial valuation. Nevertheless, the RSG decided to continue to maintain the prior assumption of 3.5% as the target real rate of return over the long-term for OIM's strategic and tactical investment goals.

102. The Chair turned to the question of the Fund's Pension Adjustment System (PAS). She noted that both the Fund's Actuaries and the FSALM Committee had taken note of

the potential for increased inflation in the near term because of tariffs and the downward trend in the value of the US dollar in recent weeks. Both would potentially increase the utilization and cost of the PAS, as more beneficiaries might switch to a non-dollar track and cost of living adjustments made annually to pensions under the PAS would potentially increase. Despite such trends, the actuaries have decided to maintain the assumed cost for the PAS at 2.1 percent of pensionable remuneration going into the upcoming actuarial valuation of 31 December 2025 and ascertain any changes to that assumption through the valuation process.

103.Finally, the Chair discussed other concerns being monitored by the Fund's Actuaries and the FSALM Committee. These include whether inflationary pressures might outpace adjustments to salary, potentially reducing needed income from contributions by participants and their employing organizations. Likewise, downsizing, while not considered a particularly worrisome prospect for the Fund's sustainability might become problematic if artificial intelligence or political economic pressure affected too many programmes and forced staff cuts thereby threatening the sustainability of the entire UN System and, consequently, the Fund itself. In this regard, the Chair stated that while the Fund's actuaries and the FSALM Committee would monitor any such critical potential developments, neither the actuaries nor the Committee saw the risk of their happening as being of immediate concern.

104.With respect to the role of the FSALM Committee, as further detailed in the Council paper on its activities, the Chair observed that, as a committee of the Pension Board, the FSALM Committee seeks to distill the complex actuarial information and investment strategies and tactics of the RSG for the Pension Board. In addition, the FSALM Committee oversees the terms of reference for the quadrennial ALM Studies, and meets regularly with the Fund Administration, OIM, the Investments Committee and the Fund's actuaries to review such information potentially affecting the matching of assets to liabilities and the long-term sustainability of the Fund. She recalled that the RSG was the exclusive fiduciary for deciding on the investment of the assets of the Fund, and the Board's role was simply to provide observations and suggestions from time to time on the investment policy. The FSALM Committee is recognized for helping bring the two sides of the Fund together (i.e., the investment arm and the Administration and actuaries) and to provide information to the Board on the long-term financial status of the Fund.

105.Regarding the Council paper summarizing the RSG's report to the Pension Board on investments, the Chair cautioned the Council about focusing on short term results and whether the investments outperformed or underperformed the Fund's establish portfolio benchmarks. She noted that the Fund invests for the long-term and the goal set by the RSG of a 3.5 percent real rate of return on investments over decades reflects that long-

term approach. She noted that the Fund has consistently met this goal over its lifetime, and the Investments Committee identified no significant risks to its ongoing success.

106.The Chair also noted that the Fund's investments were globally diversified. By participating in a wide geographic basket of markets around the world in stocks, bonds, and alternative investments, the Fund protects itself from market swings affecting one or a handful of economies. This also matches the worldwide distribution of the Fund's beneficiaries. She noted also that the Fund's portfolio was highly liquid, meaning that if the Fund had a need to liquidate investments quickly, there ready markets available for doing so. That said, she noted, the Fund has never had any difficulties so far in meeting its annual cash requirements from income generated by the Fund's investments (e.g., dividends on stocks and interest on bonds). Finally, she noted that there has been much scrutiny recently in the Secretary-General's instance that the Fund's investments be socially responsible, whether from environment, corporate governance, or adherence to good labor and related standards. She noted that, thus far, taking such an approach to responsible investing (e.g., avoiding petrochemicals, armaments, or other areas inconsistent with UN aims and values) has not interfered with the Fund's ability to meet its long-term investment objectives.

107.Finally, the Chair observed that the UNJSPF was now a mature fund from an actuarial perspective. In its early days, the Fund took in more contributions than it paid out in benefits, given that from the founding of the UN System organizations until the turn of the century, there had been more income in the Fund from participants than liabilities to its beneficiaries. The result was a surplus of income that formed the basis of the Fund's assets which through prudent investing have grown to some US \$100 billion. Now that the Fund has matured, its annual liabilities of US \$3.8 billion slightly exceed its income from contributions of US \$3.6 billion, with the shortfall being made up from income from the investment of the Fund's assets. No use of the corpus of the assets has yet had to be made.

108.Based on this, the Chair emphasized how important it is to the Fund's long-term sustainability to prudently manage the investment of the Fund's assets, both to generate sufficient income to balance liabilities but also to grow the corpus of the assets for the long-term. She noted that despite market swings and volatility, the Fund has managed to meet its long-term goal of a real rate of return of 3.5 percent growth in value and that the Secretary-General. She noted that, following the mandate of the General Assembly given repeatedly over the years, as a fiduciary for the participants and beneficiaries of the Fund, the Secretary, the RSG, and OIM have made sure that the Fund's assets are invested safely, profitably, with overall liquidity and convertibility among currencies. She noted that while the FSALM was monitoring the RSG and OIM's performance against the Fund's external investment benchmarks as well as efforts by the Fund to ensure

responsible investing in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, the investment performance has been and should continue to be solid.

109.The FAFICS President intervened to note that Mr. Marashetty Seenappa's tenure on the FSALM Committee as a FAFICS representative was drawing to a close and that he was nominating Ms. Kathryn Bruchmann, APAFI-Portugal, to join Ms. Bishopric on the Committee. Ms. Bruchmann had been a participant representative on the Pension Board from the World Health Organization for many years. The FAFICS President thanked Mr. Seenappa for his exemplary service on the FSALM Committee representing FAFICS.

110.Associations thanked the Chair for her excellent presentation and for the enormous amount of work accomplished during the year. One Association noted that the paper on Investments had indicated that the Fund's investment performance in recent years had gone down compared to previous years and asked whether retirees ought to worry about that. The Chair reminded the Council that as the Fund is a defined benefit plan, the beneficiaries' benefits were fixed. She further recalled that the Fund's financial position was strong enough to ensure payment of current and future benefits for decades to come. She further noted that since the proportion of retirees is going to grow faster than the proportion of active participants, the Fund in the long run is going to be more reliant on investment income. Finally, she reminded Associations that the investments had continued over the long-term to outperform the RSG's stated goal of a 3.5 percent real rate of return. Thus, she assured Associations, that the Fund was in a very strong and stable financial position.

111.Another Association asked whether, even if the benefits for retirees were fixed and could not be reduced, such benefits could keep up with inflation. The Chair recalled that, unlike many other pension plans, the UNJSPF has a Pension Adjustment System. That PAS includes provisions to adjust UNJSPF pensions annually for increases in the cost of living exceeding a minimum threshold of 2.5 percent in the U.S. Consumer Price Index. Given that pensions are paid in US dollars, that is the inflation factor used by the Fund. The PAS also adjusts for currency changes for those on the non-US-dollar track.

112.Another Association commented on the three papers presented by the Chair. The Association stated that the paper summarizing actuarial matters, which provides a good overview of the financial situation of the Fund and raises issues addressed in the papers on the FSALM Committee and on the Fund's investments. The Association questioned whether, given the current turbulent political-economic conditions, the ALM Study should be carried out more frequently than every four years. Apart from concerns raised by the Actuaries, the Association supported the conclusions and recommendations in the three papers to continue to be informed and to monitor the actuarial and financial soundness of the Fund. On the paper regarding investments, the Association cautioned that some

of the information and issues raised were politically sensitive and that, therefore, the paper should not be widely disseminated.

113. With respect to the frequency of ALM Studies, the Chair pointed out that given the thousands of scenarios run in each ALM Study and the information that could be gained through the biennial actuarial valuation, there was no need to conduct ALM Studies more frequently than every four years. Given that the Fund invests for the long-term and that the ALM Study helps to establish investment policies and the strategic asset allocation, it would not be prudent to conduct such studies and make strategic changes to investment management more frequently.

114. Another Association raised the issue of increased longevity among the Fund's beneficiaries. It was noted that when the Fund was established, beneficiaries did not live as long as they do now. The Fund addressed this by raising the normal age of retirement over the years. However, it was noted that national pension systems are also concerned about longevity and are too raising the age of full benefits. The question was whether this trend was being monitored by the Fund's Actuaries and the FSALM Committee and whether it would have any effect of the Fund's long-term sustainability. The Chair noted that many national pension systems do not have reserves from contributions and assets like the UNJSPF. Consequently, they are more susceptible to budget cycles and political changes, whereas the Fund has been financially stable for several decades now, even with increased longevity.

115. Another Association raised concerns about the prospect of inflation outpacing the growth of staff salaries and its potentially negative effects on the Fund's income from contributions. The Association mentioned that the issue, perhaps, could be addressed between FAFICS leaders and staff representatives among the Fund's member organizations. The Chair noted that while the Fund's Actuaries and the FSALM Committee were cognizant of the issue, it was purely hypothetical at this point.

116. Another Association asked whether, given the current political-economic conditions, an actuarial valuation of the Fund should be carried out sooner rather than later. Jay Pozenel, Co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Pension Issues, answered from the floor that an actuarial valuation would be carried out as of 31 December 2025, that is, later this year, and that the Pension Board would be establishing the actuarial assumptions for that valuation at its upcoming July session. He reminded the Council that, as the Chair had previously mentioned, the actuarial assumption of a 3.4 percent real rate of return on the Fund's assets was a number used to gauge the financial condition of the Fund and that the RSG could set his target for investments at or above that number.

117. The FAFICS President intervened to summarize for the Council's decision and the main takeaways from the presentation.

118.First, he emphasized that our pensions are safe, now and for the future. In addition, the Fund has sufficient liquidity to handle any effects of the downsizing of staff in the Fund's member organizations. He encouraged the members of the Council to take those two messages back to their respective Associations.

119.Second, he suggested that he had heard only support for the recommendations in the three reports. These are as follows:

a. From the Report on Actuarial Matters, Council 55/2025/D.10.a/2

- i. To support the solvency analysis and monitoring work of the Committee of Actuaries, the Consulting Actuary, the FSALM Committee and the Pension Administration staff as they inform and advise the Pension Board in its oversight of the Fund.
- ii. To concur with the recommendation to renew the contract with the Fund's Consulting Actuary for a final two years before a new procurement exercise is undertaken.
- iii. To support and strengthen the collaboration between the Consulting Actuary, the Committee of Actuaries, the Investments Committee, and the FSALM Committee, enabling them to guide the Board in safeguarding the solvency of the Fund.
- iv. To note that a reduction in the population of active participants means that FAFICS may represent a larger constituency of the Fund.

b. From the Report on Investments, Council 55/2025/D.10.a/3

- i. Determine whether more attention should be placed by the RSG, the Investments Committee and the OIM on the risk and return of elements of the Fund's portfolio, given the recent history of underperformance.
- ii. Being mindful of the political sensitivity of such an inquiry, seek to determine the reaction of Member States on the Secretary-General's increased focus on socially responsible investing and the use of resources in OIM for this purpose.
- iii. Review the impact of the RSG's and OIM's diversification of the Fund's fixed income portfolio (i.e., bonds) into high yield but riskier bond instruments.

c. From the Report on the FSALM Committee, Council 55/2025/D.10.a/4

- i. To welcome the commencement of an external expert consultancy for the FSALM Committee, as recommended by the Pension Board, and to support the inclusion of the Chair of the FSALM Committee, as appropriate, in the procurement process for the next ALM Study.
- ii. To welcome and encourage the continued collaboration between Pension Administration, OIM, the Committee of Actuaries, the Investments Committee, and the FSALM Committee in providing guidance to the Pension Board.
- iii. In keeping with Article 19(a) of the Fund's Regulations, acknowledge that the RSG may use short-term tailored benchmarks as operational portfolio management tools, but to recommend, however, that a long-term benchmark be reestablished for long-term performance reporting and solvency monitoring.
- iv. To request that the impact of benchmark changes should be disclosed, by reporting performance versus both old and new benchmarks.

120. The Council agreed to endorse those recommendations and to ensure that the FAFICS delegation to the Pension Board, including to the FSALM Committee, articulate those concerns and observations and suggestions concerning the Fund's sustainability over the long-term. The President of FAFICS also announced the FAFICS delegation to this year's Pension Board and mentioned that a replacement for Mr. Gerhard Schramek would have to be found, as he was concluding his service on the Pension Board as of the end of 2026.

121. Regarding Council 55/2025/D.10.a/1, the status regarding the work of the UNJSPF Governance Review Working Group (GRWG), Mr. Gerhard Schramek and Mr. Jay Pozenel had reported on the progress of the Governance Review Working Group (GRWG) on 14 July. The GRWG which was established by the Pension Board in February 2024 following a decision to do so that had been taken by the Board at its July 2023 session. Mr. Schramek and Mr. Pozenel are the FAFICS representatives on the GRWG. Its principal functions were to ascertain from those involved in Fund governance (e.g., Board members, alternates, representatives, and observes, as well as Staff Pension Fund secretaries, and officials of the Board secretariat) whether prior reforms made to Fund governance since 2018 had been effective. Additionally, based on the views garnered through such polling process, the GRWG was asked, based on the views garnered through such polling process, to propose further measures to improve Fund governance. While the GRWG was scheduled to complete its work by the July 2025 Board session, two issues remain outstanding. The first concerns the composition of the Board and attendance at the Pension Board's in-person July session. Given the current political-

economic conditions and budgetary constraints on member organizations of the Fund, the GRWG is proposing to maintain this item open until the July 2028 Board session, when the situation regarding levels of participation by member organization would likely be clearer. In addition, the GRWG had made proposals to make changes to the Fund's Rules of Procedures to reflect the fact that, with the Board now meeting three times per year, the role of the Standing Committee of the Board as essentially only handling reviews and appeals under Section K of the Fund's Administrative Rules. The GRWG had likewise proposed that procedures for the Standing Committee in carrying out this role be revised. However, these proposed procedures are still the subject of discussion with the Fund's Secretary and the Fund's Legal Office. Thus, the GRWG is asking the Board to continue its mandate but restricted to those two issues. The GRWG confirmed that the reforms to the Fund governance had largely been well received. In particular, the change in which the Board meets in three sessions annually has been widely considered to be effective. The GRWG has proposed procedural changes to the role of the spokespersons of the tripartite groups in the Board, has proposed that the head of the FAFICS representatives be included also in the spokesperson group, and that procedures for formulating Board reports on a rolling basis during Board sessions be further reformed. In this regard, the GRWG and members of the Board's various groups expressed support and appreciation for the role of FAFICS on the Board and its committees and working groups. Accordingly, the GRWG had proposed at the Board's February 2025 session that the Board's budget committee consider the restoration of the Board's former practice of fully funding the travel costs for all four FAFICS representatives to the July in person sessions.

- **Decision 55/13: The Council approved the recommendations regarding pension issues set out in Council 55/2025/D.10.a/2, Council 55/2025/D.10.a/3 and Council 55/2025/D.10.a/4 and took note of Council 55/2025/D.10.a/1 regarding the Pension Board Governance Review Working Group (GRWG)**

Presentation by the Chief Executive for Pension Administration

122. The Chief Executive for Pension Administration (CEPA), Ms. Rosemarie McClean, together with her key staff addressed the Council.⁵ Ms. McClean began by emphasizing that the UNJSPF is in a very strong financial and operational position. On one side of the ledger, the Fund's assets comprising contributions and investment returns are balancing the Fund's liabilities to its beneficiaries and the Fund's operating expenses. Based on the Fund's actuarial valuations over the past 35 years, the Fund looks to have extremely long-term sustainability.

⁵ The CEPA's Power Point presentation given to the Council was already shared with Associations.

123. Ms. McClean also emphasized that the Pension Administration is continuing to modernize to ensure that the benchmark of processing over 92 percent of claims for the award of benefits within 15 days of receiving all required documentation. She noted that much effort has been placed on ensuring that those who call the Fund's call center don't have wait times exceeding a few seconds. Ms. McClean noted that for the first time, the Fund was able to reinstate the two-track that had been suspended in two countries and that five new countries had seen an introduction of the two-track benefit system. Ms. McClean mentioned that there had been a dramatic reduction in the number of benefits suspended because of a lack of a certificate of entitlement, a reduction to 802 cases from 2,800 cases, as a result of a concerted effort by the Fund in cooperation with Associations around the world to contact beneficiaries who had not submitted their certificates. She thanked Associations for their time and cooperation in working with the Pension Administration to achieve such results.

124. With respect to efforts to improve client servicing, Ms. McClean highlighted the key achievements of the Fund's CARE strategy. She noted that the Fund's new customer relationship management system had gone live in November 2024, helping to improve client servicing. She mentioned that over 40,000 digital certificates of entitlement (i.e., more than 50 percent of beneficiaries) had been employed as of the date of the Council meeting. Ms. McClean stated that other efforts to modernize the Fund included upgrades to the Fund's financial management systems and simplification of forms for beneficiaries. She noted the Fund's efforts to clean up its data, including allowing for better transparency on the identities of survivor beneficiaries. Ms. McClean highlighted the Fund's efforts to improve communication with its clients, including by having regular town hall sessions, improving the Fund's website and social media presences, and ensuring that monthly and annual newsletters were available multilingually.

125. Ms. McClean discussed the Pension Administration's proposed budget for 2026, as it would be presented in the Pension Board meeting the following week. She noted that the Fund was asking for a modest increase in resources to cope with the likely increased work resulting from downsizing in the Fund's member organizations. She also pointed out that the budget proposal included a small percentage for new projects and initiatives to improve client servicing.

126. Ms. McClean then introduced Ms. Sarah Gail Mathieson, Chief, Data Analysis Unit, to discuss the two-track system and related matters. Ms. Mathieson noted that beneficiaries in ten countries, mainly in Europe, were the top users of the two-track system, which accounted for payment of 35 percent of overall periodic benefits. She emphasized that the two-track system was performing as designed for beneficiaries in those countries. She noted that many beneficiaries had not opted to take benefits under the non-dollar track, even though they resided in countries where doing so was available

to them. Finally, she noted that while a few countries had been suspended from the two-track system as a result of missing consumer price data or because of aberrant results in currency volatility, the Fund was able for the first time in its history to reinstate countries to the two-track system earlier this year. She emphasized that the work of the Fund in developing and implementing methodologies to monitor and address issues with countries in the two-track system had made this possible.

127. In this regard, Ms. Mathieson highlighted that 83 percent of benefits are paid on the dollar track, and that for those on the two-track system, the majority of benefits are paid in Euros or Swiss Francs. She noted that there had been concerns recently about the potentially weakening US dollar and its effects on payments of benefits under those two currencies. However, she noted that a 36-month average exchange rate was used to calculate initial benefits under the two-track and that this had the effect of smoothing out issues regarding the exchange rate between the US dollar and those main two-track currencies.

128. Finally, Ms. Mathieson focused on the issue of small pensions, which FAFICS had worked to bring to the Pension Board in recent months. She noted that the scale for small pensions had not been updated for nearly a decade since 2016, even though over this period there had been high inflation. While the PAS provided some relief for those with 15 years of contributory service through the small pension adjustment system, the fact that the underlying scale of small pensions had not been regularly updated meant that those beneficiaries might have been disadvantaged by currency fluctuations and inflation in the intervening years. Noting the complexity of addressing changes in the scale of small pensions and its distinctions from the Fund's minimum pension benefits, Ms. Mathieson noted that in 2024 the Board had agreed to update the scale for those retiring as and from 1 April 2025. She also made clear that the Pension Administration and the Board would continue to monitor the situation with small pensions to ensure that any anomalies could be addressed more frequently by the Board.

129. Associations expressed great appreciation for the presentations and work of the Pension Fund Administration. One Association raised a serious concern for individuals who retired prior to the effective date of the updated scale of 1 April 2025 who are the most affected. The Association asserted that their salaries were low during their time of service, their pensions are smaller than more recent retirees, inflation is high, and this causes hardships, particularly for women. Furthermore, the Association was of the view that a contributing factor to low pensions is the UN local salary scale which it believes is inadequate and it recommended a decent/livable base local salary scale be established for least developed countries. A question from another Association concerned the possible suspension of benefits for those spending substantial time in places other than their permanent country of residence. Ms. McClean emphasized that beneficiaries had

an obligation to submit their Certificates of Entitlement in a timely way, whether on paper or digitally, even if outside their permanent country of residence. But, she noted, the digital Certificate of Entitlement was sensitive to location and would set off warning signals in the Fund Administration if submitted from a country other than that of permanent residence. Ms. McClean suggested that if traveling, beneficiaries should wait until they return home to submit the certificate.

130.Regarding a question on the Fund's resiliency and disaster recovery planning, Ms. McClean stated that the Pension Administration had robust plans to ensure continuity of its operations and to ensure that, working with the UN Secretariat's finance team, benefits could still be paid in countries in which, because of conflict, the banking system had collapsed. With respect to a question as to whether the Fund would consider opening liaison offices in Nairobi or Bangkok, Ms. McClean stated that the Fund had no immediate plans to do so but rather was focusing on potential increases in the volume of work resulting from any downsizing in the member organizations and ensuring the timely processing and payment of benefits.

131.In response to a question about simplifying the process for survivor beneficiaries to apply for benefits, Ms. McClean noted the efforts being made to simplify and improve applications for benefits. She emphasized that dealing with survivors to ensure continuity of benefits was a top priority for the Pension Administration, and that, therefore, such cases are carefully monitored so that they can be timely addressed. With respect to questions about how downsizing in member organizations might have a negative impact on the Fund because of lower participation rates, Ms. McClean emphasized that the actuaries had determined that this would not have a significant impact on the financial health of the Fund, though she anticipated an increase in work for her team resulting from such workforce changes.

Presentation by the Chief Investment Officer of the Office of Investment Management

132. The Director and Chief Investment Officer of the Fund's Office of Investment Management, Mr. Toru Shindo, gave a presentation on behalf of the RSG on the Fund's investments.⁶ He began by noting that Mr. Pedro Guazo, the RSG, had resigned with effect from 15 July 2025 and that he, Mr. Toru Shindo, would serve as Acting RSG until 15 August 2025 and that the Secretary-General had appointed Robert van der Zee, Chief Financial Officer of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to serve as RSG from 15 August 2025 until the appointment of a full-time RSG could be completed in

⁶ Mr. Shindo's Power Point presentation given to the Council was already shared with Associations.

accordance with the terms of reference approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/247 B, Part VIII, of 9 April 2014.

133. Noting the authority and fiduciary responsibility of the Secretary-General under Article 19 of the Fund's Regulations to manage the investment of the assets of the Fund, Mr. Shindo made clear that in undertaking that responsibility, the RSG and OIM ensured that the Fund's investments were safe, profitable, liquid, and convertible in liquid currencies. This is achieved by having a diversified, worldwide portfolio of prudent investments in stocks, bonds, and alternative investments and ensuring that the portfolio was constantly reviewed to ensure it was meeting long term goals for returns. Mr. Shindo presented the Fund's Strategic Asset Allocation (SAA) showing the targets and minimum and maximum allocations for that mix of stocks, bonds and other forms of investments. He noted that the SAA is determined by the ALM Studies carried out every four years. He provided information on the percentages of the various asset classes in the Fund's portfolio as of the end of June 2025.

134. With respect to the Fund's investment performance, Mr. Shindo emphasized that the Fund was exceeding its goal of a 3.5 percent real rate of return (i.e., after discounting for inflation) over the long-term (i.e., 15 years or longer). He noted that the Fund's assets had now exceed US \$100 billion, both because of adherence to the Fund's SAA but also because of the Fund's active internal management of the portfolio by OIM. He emphasized that OIM had a lower cost of operations than many peer funds and was growing in staff to ensure effective management of the Fund's investment. He assured the Council that the Fund's portfolio continued to deliver solid returns ensuring the Fund's long-term sustainability while maintain a rather conservative approach to investment risk.

135. Associations thanked Mr. Shindo for his excellent overview. In response to a question as to whether it was prudent for the Fund to continue hold U.S. Government treasury notes and bonds, particularly when credit rating services had downgraded such instruments, Mr. Shindo emphasized that this issue was being looked at very carefully. In consultation with the Investments Committee, OIM continued to believe that US Government notes and bonds were a safe and liquid investment. But OIM was looking to determine if it could begin to shift investments in such non-growth assets to other fixed income securities, including those producing higher income at slightly higher risk.

136. The President of FAFICS took the floor to praise OIM's improvement in its website and sharing of information on investment performance with the Fund's participants and beneficiaries. He emphasized the hard work being done by OIM to balance investment risk against portfolio returns. And he thanked Mr. Shindo and his team at OIM for their work and wished them well during this period of transition to the appointment of a new RSG.

10.b. Standing Committee on After-service Health Insurance and Long-Term Care (ASHIL)

137. The Chair of the Standing Committee on After-service Health Insurance and Long-Term Care (ASHIL), Mr. Jay Karia, presented Council 55/2025/D.10.b/1, Council 55/2025/D.10.b/2, Council 55/2025/D.10.b/3, *consisting of information and the recommendations of the Standing Committee regarding the work plan for the next reporting period*. He took the opportunity to thank all the members of the Committee on ASHIL who have actively participated in the work: Mr. Giovanni Quaglia, Vice-Chair, Mr. Hamidou Bague, AFICS-Burkina Faso, Ms. Carol Chatterton, AFICS-Chile, Mr. Richard Dictus, AFICS-Netherlands, Ms. Shahida Fazil, PAFICS-Pakistan, and Ms. Ann Van Hulle, AAFI-AFICS Geneva. Regretfully, Ms. Shahida Fazil had passed away on 13 June 2025. She was one of the original members of the Committee. Shahida was a valuable member for the last few years and actively participated in providing her contributions to improve health insurance services in the UN system, especially for locally recruited former staff members. He said the Committee has fond memories of her gentle demeanor and collegial relationship with all members which will be missed. He thanked Ms. Delia Barcelona, Mr. Pierre Sayour and Mr. Juan Antonio Casas Zamora for their assistance in translating the report, as well as the Guidelines for Long-Term Care, in French and Spanish respectively.

138. The Chair presented **Section B** of Council 55/2025/D.10.b/1, which outlined the status of the work accomplished by the Standing Committee on the eight recommendations adopted by the 54th Council in July 2024. Most of the recommendations from the 54th Council had been implemented, and a few were considered as on-going work.

1. Continued engagement on ASHIL

The Committee had submitted a detailed summary of its progress on priority issues in a letter from the Chair to the President of FAFICS. A letter based on the points raised was then sent to the United Nations Secretary-General in his capacity as Chair of the Chief Executives Board, Council 55/2025/D.10.b/3.

2. Improve Representation of retired staff in governance mechanisms

This issue was included in the letter from the President of FAFICS to the Secretary-General. The letter urged full representation of retired staff in health insurance governance mechanisms of organizations, not merely as Observers. This issue will continue to be followed up with the Secretary-General and his representatives.

3. Expansion of coverage and flexibility of benefits

The Chair indicated that the challenge faced is obtaining information on the various health insurance plans within UN system organizations to be able to compare plans. It is recognized that in some cases the ceilings on certain categories of benefits are too low. Also recognized are the problems encountered in some instances for claims submission, direct payment, guarantees and delays in obtaining prior approval when required. While these have been brought to the attention of some organizations' insurance offices, work on this broad area is ongoing and will continue in the forthcoming reporting period.

4. Long-Term Care (LTC)

The Committee had devoted significant time to the issue of long-term care (LTC) reviewing extensive literature available on this issue. It had analyzed global trends and examined LTC policies in UN system organizations. It looked at what exists under the various health insurance plans of the organizations as assistance towards financing this type of care. As already recognized in the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) Report on health insurance within UN organizations, JIU/REP/2023/9, long-term care remains an unmet need. The Committee concluded that UN-wide long-term care insurance is unrealistic at least in the short to medium term. The Committee therefore had focused on advocating good and timely planning for this eventuality. In this regard a Guidance Note, Council 55/2025/D.10.b/2, had been prepared.

It was recommended the Guidance Note be adapted/expanded by Associations to suit the local context.

5. Addressing inequities for retired staff in Africa and similar regions

Of particular concern had been the issue of the lack of emergency medical evacuation support for retired staff, a particularly acute issue in Africa where sometimes the required medical care is not available or insufficient in the place of residence.

To address this, applying the same medical evacuation criteria used for active staff to retired staff in exceptional, life-threatening cases had been recommended. Several other actions were suggested for consideration such as the viability of a separate insurance scheme to cover medical evacuation support; feasibility of voluntary solidarity funds and considering whether existing hardship mechanisms such as the UNJSPF emergency fund could be expanded for this, although this would entail an expansion of what already exists.

6. Reform of the Medical Insurance Plan (MIP)

The MIP for locally recruited active and retired staff, is limited in coverage. The Standing Committee had engaged with the United Nations Health and Life Insurance Section (UNHLIS) which has formed a Working Group on the MIP. The Chair had submitted recommendations to be considered during this review. UNHLIS has informed the Standing Committee that the Working Group has not yet finalized its work and will be reviewing all potential enhancements of MIP as part of its review within existing financial parameters. The Chair indicated that while this issue had been brought to the attention of the UN Secretariat, FAFICS has also recommended that a comprehensive review of MIP through the CEB needed to be carried out involving other UN system organizations as well.

7. Monitor legislative bodies and advocate for sustainable funding

Developments in the General Assembly and other UN bodies continue to be monitored. Although no new Secretariat report on ASHI had been issued, the concerns on unfunded liabilities had been heard. The letter from the FAFICS President to the Secretary-General, called attention to the US20 billion+ ASHI liability, of which as little as 31% is funded in some instances. Some organizations are in better shape with over 80% funded. Thirteen Organizations have not funded this liability. The JIU has recommended that both assessed and voluntary contributions must be structured to cover ASHI liabilities which FAFICS has fully endorsed. In the letter to the Secretary-General, the CEB and High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) were urged to act swiftly on this matter.

8. Strengthen engagement with staff federations

The Committee engaged with the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA), FICSA and the United Nations International Civil Servants' Federation (UNISERV) to collaborate on health-insurance issues affecting both active staff and retirees. At the FICSA meeting held at UNESCO in February 2025, the President had emphasized FAFICS and FICSA's commitment to working together on two key issues: pensions and health insurance. Standing Committee member Ms. Ann Van Hulle attended the meeting and shared key findings of the JIU report. The Committee plans to continue its further collaboration with these organizations.

139. The Chair indicated that **Section C** of the report the Standing Committee made six recommendations to the Council for work to be done during the next reporting period. The first two recommendations relate to the on-going work conducted by FAFICS on a regular basis. The remaining four recommendations relate to priority areas on which the Committee will focus its attention during the next reporting period as a continuation of the work already undertaken by the Committee in these areas. An additional recommendation is being recommended based on the proposal of AFICS-Netherlands,

on the issue of the appeals procedures of Third-Party Administrators (TPAs) and mechanisms for participants to appeal decisions of TPAs, possibly with the involvement of the relevant UN system organization's health insurance. This is to address the issue raised related to participants being denied settlement of claims by TPAs without having access to appeal mechanisms. The relationship between TPAs and the various ASHI schemes needs to become more transparent.

140. In formulating its recommendations and further actions in implementing them, the current financial constraints facing most UN system organizations will need to be taken into account. While FAFICS is committed to securing the best possible outcomes for retired staff, it must also demonstrate a clear understanding of the current realities.

141. The Chair presented the main issues that had been raised during the plenary Standing Committee meeting on 14 July and the actions he had indicated would be taken, as follows:

- Associations had raised the problem of dealing with TPAs, in particular communication regarding claims administration. On claims, the Chair had advised Associations there are distinct steps to be taken. A retiree should first try to address their issues with the TPA or other claims administrator. If they are not satisfied with the response, they can turn to the health insurance unit of their former organization for action. In case their problem remains unsolved, they can approach their AFICS at the country level who may deem it appropriate to raise it with the AFICS at the Headquarters level of the organization. In the case of generic issues, FAFICS could then be involved. On the other hand, FAFICS cannot get involved in resolving individual cases which occur across the 65 Associations. The Chair indicated that in view of the number of issues highlighted with TPAs, conducting a survey to assess the performance of TPAs will be considered.
- The problem of retirees who are not eligible for ASHI when they leave the organization was raised. The Chair said this issue will be reviewed with the aim of possibly identifying alternate health insurance arrangements.
- The importance of more timely communication from organizations to participants on changes in benefits, contribution levels, claims processing cycles had been raised. The Chair indicated this matter will be taken up as part of the workplan.
- The possibility of having observer status on the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and UN system Human Resources (HR) network on health insurance issues affecting retirees was raised. The Chair indicated this possibility will be explored.
- The Chair indicated the response to the various issues raised by AFICS-Philippines in their separate communication will be shared.

142. Associations congratulated the Chair for his presentation and expressed appreciation for the work of the Standing Committee. Associations supported the adoption of the seven recommendations. Appreciation was expressed for the Guidance Note on Long-Term Care and the letter that had been sent to the Secretary-General. It was suggested the Guidance Note on Long-Term Care could be shared with Staff Unions/Associations.

143. It was pointed out that Jay Karia together with Dr. Narula (former Medical Director of the UN) participate in the monthly meetings of the UN Health and Life Insurance Committee (HLIC) in New York where they vigorously defend retiree interests. Great appreciation was expressed for the outstanding work carried out by Mr. Jay Karia on this Committee. The Council gave a standing ovation for the work of Mr. Jay Karia.

144. The issue of modalities for those not eligible for ASHIL was again raised. It was important to try to identify a solution for those leaving the organization without after-service health insurance.

145. With regard to governance mechanisms in organizations, it was suggested the governance arrangements in the various organizations could be mapped so that Associations would know who to turn to and how to guide their members in case of problems related to their health insurance. This could include information on retiree membership status in the governance committees and whether they had voting rights or not. One Association said they would now raise the issue of retiree representation on the governance mechanism of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The Chair indicated the mapping of each plan's governance structure would be a difficult task in view of the number of plans involved and their complexity, but the Standing Committee will see what it can do in this regard. He recommended that the JIU Report on Health Insurance, JIU/REP/2023/9, be consulted by Associations as extensive information had been provided on the various plans of the UN system and the challenges of the Committees having full representation for retirees.

146. Regarding eligibility issues, types of insurance (self-insured, self-administered or third-party administrator) and procedures for addressing complaints in relation to claims, the Chair indicated these will be included in the workplan under the Standing Committee's Recommendation 5.

147. With regard to medical claims, the issue concerning the World-Wide Plan and the authority of third-party administrator Cigna was raised. One Association expressed several concerns. The first related to the provisions of the prevailing Cigna World-Wide Plan which in its view should be revisited. The second concern questioned the medical ethics and the discretionary roles of Cigna's administrative and medical consultants in

deciding pre-approval and approval requirements for hospitalization and prescriptions issued in their country by qualified medical and surgical practitioners. It was also not clear on what basis claims were being denied. The Chair indicated the health-insurance landscape is indeed extremely complex with each organization having its own arrangements (self-administered, third-party administered, self-insured or otherwise) and each with their own set of rules. Cigna administers several schemes on behalf of the organizations. It is frustrating for participants when their claims are refused, and they have no clear mechanism for contesting the decision. The Chair pointed out that the health insurance rules are established by the organization and not by Cigna who processes claims on behalf of the relevant organization based on a set of rules. There is an appeals process within Cigna to deal with contested claims and appeals. If this appeals process does not resolve the problem, the participant can appeal to the organization's health insurance. This relationship is currently not always transparent. The Chair gave the example of the UN Secretariat in New York. It logs incoming questions and complaints received from insured retirees so that they receive a response in a timely manner of two weeks or so. If the issue concerns the third-party administrator, they are contacted by the UN Secretariat. The Chair confirmed the issue of the appeals procedures of Third-Party Administrators will be added as a seventh recommendation for the work plan, as proposed by AFICS-Netherlands. It was pointed out that whatever is being proposed should be verified to ensure that it is consistent with the appeals process outlined in the agreement with the Third-Party Administrator.

148. The importance of supporting particular services for retirees as they age such as optical and dental care, was seen to be very important and the Chair indicated that this will be taken up under Recommendation 5. Telemedicine was mentioned as a way for retirees to be supported. The Chair pointed out that care needed to be taken in exploring telemedicine as some TPAs offer telemedicine but then increase premium charges for this service. It was mentioned that Cigna does provide LTC and this option could be explored by organizations.

149. Regarding the MIP, if benefits are to be expanded, this will entail an increase in contributions as reserves would not be sufficient to cover an expansion. The Chair indicated retirees would apparently not be opposed to an increase in premiums in return for better benefits. The HLCM and CEB should be involved in this discussion.

150. With regard to support for survivors, a number of organizations have prepared guidelines on actions required on the part of a retiree and those of survivors in the case of the death of the retiree. A booklet produced by AFUNPI-India for retirees and survivors, which includes FAQs on health insurance, is a good example and available as a soft copy for other Associations. The Chair indicated that these information materials that have been prepared by Associations are to be included on the FAFICS website.

151. A question was asked about whether FAFICS has any connection to the work being done in the context of the UN Decade on Healthy Ageing. The Chair indicated the Standing Committee will obtain more information on this.

152. Regarding participation in the work of the Standing Committee, the Chair explained that anyone with experience on health insurance matters in the UN system and willing to participate in the work can come forward. Responsibilities for various work plan deliverables are distributed among the members. The work involves sharing expertise, preparing reports and analysis and meeting notes on a rotating basis. Meetings are held virtually (Zoom or Teams) every month. Members must have an in-depth knowledge of health insurance matters and work well as part of a team. Interested individuals should submit their names through their Association to the Expertise Pool. Some Associations have also volunteered to assist on an ad-hoc basis rather than as fully fledged members of the Standing Committee and their support is appreciated. The Standing Committee does not get involved in personal problems of retirees' health insurance. It deals with generic problems and strategic issues related to health insurance. Various Associations/Committees do hold periodic open meetings with retirees to assist with personal problems related to their health insurance. Associations were also reminded to make sure that focal point/s on health insurance for their respective Association are communicated to the FAFICS Secretary.

- **Decision 55/14: The Council approved the seven recommendations for the work of the Standing Committee on After-service Health Insurance and Long-Term Care (ASHIL) in the next reporting period**

10.c Standing Committee on Communications

153. The Chair of the Standing Committee on Communications, Mr. Juan Antonio Casas Zamora, presented Council 55/2025/D.10.c/1, *for information*. The Chair indicated the Committee had been established by the 54th Council to replace the ad-hoc Committee previously in place. Mr. Aye Win, AFICS-Myanmar has served as Co-Chair. Members of the Standing Committee are from AAFIB-Brazil, AFICS-Chile, AAFI-AFICS-Geneva, AFICS-Myanmar, AFICS-NY, AFICS-Panama, AFICS-Philippines and ASAFI-Senegal. Members have 2-year renewable terms. He thanked them for their incredible commitment and hard work. The overall goal was to enhance internal/external communications of the Federation. The mandate was to develop communication strategies, maintain the website, support Associations with their own communication efforts, and promote engagement and training. The strategic priorities for 2024-2025 were to upgrade the digital infrastructure, strengthen engagement with Member Associations, produce multilingual content and develop advocacy tools.

154. Last year, the FAFICS brochure had been launched in English, French and Spanish, designed with the support of Medramos in the Philippines. The brochure had not yet been produced in Portuguese, as suggested at last year's Council, or any other language. In the next version of the brochure, some of the information contained in the FAFICS@50 material will be included. The Standing Committee had supported the FAFICS@50 Anniversary Planning Committee, of which Mr. Aye Win was the Co-Chair, providing inputs to the content of the FAFICS@50 commemorative e-pub and video.

155. In terms of transparency and accountability, a standardized template for the Terms of Reference, work plans and membership of the Standing Committees had been developed. For the Standing Committee on Communications these have been posted on the website, and those of other Standing Committees are being posted. There is a member only segment, for which a case-sensitive password is needed for access, where minutes of monthly Bureau meetings and other information were posted. Associations were strongly encouraged to look at the members only segment, in particular at the Bureau minutes where details are provided on the work being carried out and decisions taken by the Bureau. Google groups had been set up, a global one for messages from the President and communications related to Council, one for the President and Officers, one for the Bureau and one for some Standing Committees. The aim is set up functional google groups for the focal points of Standing Committees in future.

156. A major achievement had been the launch of the FAFICS website. An intense process of design, review and activation, using a Wordpress platform, had taken place between March and October 2024, with the assistance of Quattro Medios Digitales, Panama. Key website features were its modern layout, easier navigation, links to partners such as UNJSPF, UNFCU, the UN Secretariat, updated Association Directories, dynamic country-specific member news, the standardized Standing Committee pages, and back-end administrative support including tutorials. Efforts to provide more up-to-date information from Associations had been made. The call to update Association Directories is normally made at the beginning of every year but Associations were reminded that whenever there are changes to submit them immediately. There is a standard form to be completed which can then be uploaded. A ticketing system for uploading content had been established. Associations were reminded that when they submit material to be uploaded, they should indicate if it is restricted and for members only. Guidelines will soon be developed to enable Associations to upload directly. Some Associations with websites are already linked to the FAFICS website. For those Associations without their own websites, possibilities are being explored, for example to enable an Association page to be placed on the main FAFICS website.

157. Analytics from January to June 2025 had been completed. Key findings were:

Overview

- 4,102 sessions of which 3,006 were individual users
- 11,740 page views, with 3 pages per session
- Bounce rate 47.7%

User language and Device Use

- 80% English users
- Spanish and French follow
- Device use: 81.2% desktop, 17.6% mobile, 1.2% tablet

Visitor Locations and Traffic Sources

- Top countries: US, Germany, France, Switzerland, Ireland, Netherlands
- Traffic: Direct 48%, Organic 39%, Referrals 13%

Top pages visited

- Home page
- Membership Association List
- About Us
- Pension Issues
- Contact Page

158. The Chair indicated that: the analytics showed a good number of individual users remain on the site as the bounce rate was less than 50%, many people were interested in seeing if there is an Association in their country, a major concern of users is pensions so there is a need to ensure the information on pensions is as comprehensive and up-to-date as possible. He also indicated the contact page is used a lot and it is very important that Association Directories are up-to-date, and that questions raised by users are responded to more effectively.

159. An online user survey had been conducted. There were 50 respondents from 30 Associations.

Highlights:

- 82% would recommend the site, 86% considered it was well-organized, 68% said it was mobile friendly, 58% said the design was modern and 52% wanted more updates. 96% said the site was easy to navigate, 82% found useful information and 72% indicated the overall experience was excellent or very good.

160. The Chair indicated that challenges identified were back-end usability issues, delays in the setting up of the help desk, member update lags and unclear content protocols.

Key recommendations were the need to improve the back-end training of the web administrators, finalize Association Directories by the next Council, launch a News feature by 2025 and establish a process of editorial oversight, which would have to be done with the other Standing Committees and Bureau. Content development will need to be sustained, a multilingual and social media presence ensured, an editorial cycle established, and outreach sustained. Association focal points will need to be trained to support communication efforts. The Chair indicated all these actions will be prioritized by the Standing Committee moving forward.

161. Associations congratulated the Chair for the excellent presentation and work accomplished by the team.

162. On the question of who the website is for, some Associations felt strongly it was to strengthen communication, cohesion and solidarity among Associations and that the audience was an internal one. It was mentioned that the purpose of the website needs to be derived from the FAFICS Statutes which indicate that solidarity among Associations is one of the primary objectives of FAFICS. It was said a key purpose of the website is to support the learning of Associations so they could respond to questions from their members. It was said it is not a global website and if there is an external audience, it should be the constellation of retirees who are not members of an Association. One Association indicated how important the FAFICS website is as they do not have the resources to develop their own. Another Association indicated it was looking at the cost of having a website, in terms of both upfront and recurrent costs as well as the capacity needed, which it thought would be particularly useful for external entities with which it interfaces. It said guidance from the Standing Committee would be helpful. The Chair indicated some felt FAFICS needed to be more visible to the outside world and undertake advocacy regarding what FAFICS does and that this might lead to more members. However, he also said the main clients are Associations as can be seen by the fact that the Member Association List is the most visited page of the site and, where there is no Association found, people want to know why.

163. On the content of the website, one Association said it was important to determine what users need. Another Association said it would be useful for there to be a content navigation map, more balance between photos and text, a more intuitive interface given the lack of technology savvy of an older population. Another Association indicated it had found the website to be modern, liked the news portion, the posting of Bureau minutes and asked for the President's letters to be in larger font. Another appreciated the multilingual nature of the website. A question was raised regarding the questions mechanism for the President on the website, what was being asked and could the questions be addressed by others. In this regard, it was said FAFICS should not usurp the role of Associations, who should be the first port of call for questions, and that it would be too much of a burden for FAFICS to have to answer questions from multiple

Association members. Another Association indicated the website needed to be used to dispel the misconception that only retired international staff and not retired local staff can join Associations. A strong interaction with the Pension Fund, as it constructs its new website, was recommended and that the Fund should be urged to also have its content in Spanish. The Chair said information on the website has to be useful for retirees, comprehensive and helpful for problem solving, and be a website that provides links to other sites. He said Associations can upload their publications on the website and through links to other websites.

164.Regarding content creation, one Association said content creators were needed and that has a cost. Another Association indicated that some of the Council documents used very UNese language and requested the language used be more user-friendly. Another Association raised the issue of language. It was recommended 10 zoom licenses be obtained which would have AI interpretation included and this would broaden participation in the work of the Federation even though the working language is English. Each Standing Committee could have its own zoom account to facilitate the conduct of meetings. One Association said an inventory of all Association publications would be useful. The Chair agreed more user-friendly documents and summaries need to be created. He also said frequent content updates on pension and health are needed.

165.With regard to social media, although it was recognized such platforms reached a broader audience, some Associations indicated caution was needed going forward including regarding what would be shared externally, who would have access and potential malignant use and targeting of individuals. One Association expressed the view that social media is for more informal communications whereas the communication needs of FAFICS are for more formal purposes. It would therefore make better sense to invest in improving the website. Another Association said there are many social media options, and each has its own specific characteristics. It is important to determine the best option for FAFICS purposes. Whichever option might eventually be selected, it would have to be funded. Another Association said content had to be tailored for social media and that requires capacity. Given that older users like information provided in a certain way, a gradual process to different forms of communication would be needed.

166.Individual Association experience with social media was shared. One Association said it had developed a Facebook page only for its life-time members and there had been good participation. Another Association said it had developed a Facebook page, including detailing its social activities, which had attracted the attention of retirees in another country who wanted to join that Association. It was said Whats App, Signal or Viber could be the way to stay in touch. A general point was made regarding transitioning to paperless meetings and the concern for older members. Both systems may need to continue to enable participation of some members. The Chair indicated that an appropriate social media strategy will need to be developed, and different options reviewed. The first step

would be consultation with the Association communications focal points. He further indicated a survey of the social media experience of Associations would be a very useful starting point. The Chair asked Associations to designate a communication focal point and submit the name as soon as possible.

167. As to the security of the site and confidentiality issues, one Association spoke of the need to exercise care in what was posted particularly on pension issues to ensure material was not released prior to it being released by the Pension Fund given that Pension Board delegates sign confidentiality agreements. The Chair advised the current site was 99% secure and that no personal information is included on the site. The Chair advised strict standards for confidentiality will be developed and appropriate editing of communications ensured.

168. It was announced that the United Nations Department of Global Communications (DGC) had sent a message to all United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Directors to encourage collaboration between UNICs, Resident Coordinators and Associations.

- **Decision 55/15: The Council took note of the Report of the Standing Committee on Communications and the priorities established for the coming reporting period**

169. The President took the floor to share information on two matters. First, he announced that he had received a copy of a letter from the Secretary-General, addressed to the Chair of the Board of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. The letter stated that the Secretary-General had accepted the resignation of Mr. Pedro Guazo, the Representative of the Secretary-General (RSG) for the Investment of the Assets of the UNJSPF, with effect on Tuesday, 15 July 2025, the prior day. The letter further stated that the Secretary-General had appointed Mr. Toru Shindo, the Director and Chief Investment Officer of the Office of Investment Management (OIM) to serve as Acting RSG until 15 August 2025 and that the Secretary-General had appointed Mr. Robert van der Zee, Chief Financial Officer of the United Nations World Food Programme to serve as Acting RSG from 15 August 2025 until the appointment of a full-time RSG could be completed in accordance with the terms of reference approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/247 B, Part VIII, of 9 April 2014. The UNJSPF had previously announced that Mr. Guazo had accepted a position with the London office of the Northern Trust Corporation of Chicago, Illinois, and, consequently, would be resigning effective 15 August 2025.

170. Second, the President wanted to share a letter he had received from three UNDP retirees, at least two of whom are members of AFICS-NY, who had written to him regarding their concern that “recent events are weakening the global consensus among nations to aspire to the UN Charter’s promise of a world of peace, justice and progress. Given these new realities, they felt compelled to propose an initiative to leverage the potential power of the retiree community to help counteract this state of affairs”. The

President indicated their idea is to create a “United Nations Retiree Community”, a network of UN retirees who would be dedicated to promoting the goal of increasing global understanding about the unique role played by the UN in peacebuilding, humanitarian relief and international development. He briefly summarized some of what the Community would focus on: publicizing success stories and examples where UN System organizations have influenced policies, advocating for the United Nations through various mediums, mentoring students, sharing knowledge and experience, tools and strategies that promote UN impact and influence. A Convenor was needed for the Community and the President of FAFICS was seen by the three UNDP retirees who had written the letter as the ideal choice for such a role. The three UNDP retirees would take responsibility for managing the Community, preparation, roll-out and operation. The President asked for the views of the Council on this initiative.

171. A question was raised as to whether the letter had been addressed to Mr. Jerry Barton personally or in his capacity as President of FAFICS. It was clarified it had been sent to the FAFICS email address of the President. The letter said: “This Community requires a Convener, typically a person in a position of authority who would be seen by the members as the natural choice for this role. It is our view that you, as President of FAFICS, would be the ideal choice”. Associations felt it would be important for the President to meet the group to discuss their proposal. What the relationship with FAFICS would be, potential commonalities and synergies could then be considered. Caution should be exercised. It should be clear what the link between FAFICS and the proposed Community would be. FAFICS has Statutes and has well defined objectives. It was said that FAFICS has a specific role, as outlined in its Statutes, focused on the wellbeing of retirees and protection of their rights and has the sole responsibility for representing retirees and beneficiaries of the Fund in various United Nations system and intergovernmental fora. FAFICS is not a technical body of UN retirees as it relates to global development. While continuing to support and advocate for the role and work of the United Nations around the world, the focus of the work of FAFICS is not on global issues such as peacebuilding and development. There are organizations specifically focused on these topics, in which United Nations system retirees participate and one of them, the Foundation for Global Governance and Sustainability (FOGGS), was mentioned. The question was is this solely a platform where like-minded people exchange views on substantive global issues or are they likely to move into the business of representation which would be problematic especially in light of past initiatives calling into question the legitimacy of the role FAFICS as the sole representative of retirees. It was said a legal opinion might be needed. One or two Associations felt FAFICS has the potential to contribute to global discussions, and an activity of each Association could be to contribute to the debate at the national and international level on substantive national and global issues. Another Association felt there is gap in FAFICS in terms of using the enormous amount of substantive and technical expertise which retirees have. Another Association felt it could be a good opportunity to show solidarity and to reach out to new generations and share experience.

172. One Association said the AI overview indicated a community “is a group of people who interact and share a common location, values and social structures, fostering a sense of belonging. An Association, on the other hand, is a formal organization created by individuals to pursue specific shared goals with defined membership criteria and rules.” Some Associations felt the use of the words “retiree community” in the title of the group could cause confusion for retirees particularly at country level. Some felt it was important to be careful not to have a proliferation of organizations focused on retirees which could lead to a dilution of influence. One Association shared the experience of workers setting up representation when unions already exist and that this can lead to conflicts and less effective representation. Another shared the experience of having more than one retiree association in an organization and mentioned the difference between recognized and representative status. One or two Associations felt the timing of the letter was interesting coming during the FAFICS Council and ahead of the Pension Board meeting.

173. The Chair thanked Associations for their very helpful comments and suggestions. He concluded by saying the Bureau will take the matter up and that he will respond to the letter and as recommended will meet with the group.

10.d. Standing Committee on Membership

174. The Chair of the Standing Committee, Mr. Marashetty Seenappa, AFUNPI-India, and the Co-Chair, Mr. Abdou Khadre Diakhate, ASAFI-Senegal, introduced Council 55/2025/D.10.d/1, *for information*. Other members of the Standing Committee are Ms. Maria Machicado, AFICS-Bolivia, and Ms. Eva Ruhago, UNAPATA-Tanzania. In the coming year, the Committee will have five members and will meet on a bi-monthly basis on the first Monday of the month starting from September 2025.

175. The Chair reminded Council of the background to the creation of the Standing Committee. He recalled that originally there were only two FAFICS Standing Committees, on pension issues and health insurance and long-term care. The ad hoc Committee on Communications became the third Standing Committee. The Chair recalled the deep concern the Treasurer had expressed to Council regarding Associations faltering, not paying dues, not attending Council meetings, and declining membership numbers and income. The Council had subsequently suggested an ad hoc Committee be established to look into the issues. The Bureau had then appointed Vice-Presidents, Mr. Marashetty Seenappa and Mr. Abdou Khadre Diakhate as the ad hoc Committee two years ago to take on the task. In 2024, Council had approved the creation of a Standing Committee on Membership. The goal of the Standing Committee is to have all 65 Associations fully functioning and participating in the work of FAFICS and to increase the number of Associations from 65-70 over the next two years.

176. Part of the work in the past year had focused on Associations that were faltering. Some of the issues faced were that in many Associations membership numbers are dwindling due to the age factor, and there is a lack new members joining. The downsizing across the UN system may lead to new members, but they may well have different retirement conditions including smaller pensions. Weak leadership had also been a factor. Political upheavals in countries and social divisions made it challenging in some countries to bring people together. Another issue is that local staff retirees think Association membership is reserved for former international staff. Getting in contact with retirees can be challenging. Information about each Association is not updated. Another issue is the question of dues. Retirees do not want to pay the dues when they do not know what they get in return. Efforts to attract new younger members had not always been successful. Resident Coordinators, who in some countries had been very helpful, are reassigned. It was also pointed out the outreach efforts have taken a lot of time, commitment, dedication and resources, very often the resources of the Chair and Co-Chair themselves.

177. Looking at the list of individual Association membership numbers, the Chair noted some Associations have only 20-30 members. The FAFICS Statutes indicate there must be at least 25 members to form an Association and for it to be affiliated to FAFICS. He noted that several Associations were approaching the minimum threshold, for example, Israel has only 20 members, Mauritius 25, Nicaragua 20, Cote D'Ivoire 25, Benin 25.

178. One Association that had been successfully supported was Tanzania, as the Association had been inactive for four years. The Chair knew the context and many retirees, having served there for ten years. The Association had been housed in the UNDP premises which had been flooded, and a lot of Association documentation had been lost contributing to the hiatus of four years. The Association has now been revived, its dues paid, with now 104 members, and the Association is fully participating in FAFICS.

179. A particular effort had been made in West Africa. The Association in Mauritania had been reactivated thanks to the enormous support provided to it by the Co-Chair. The Association in Mauritania had been created in 2018. It had gone through difficult periods dealing with COVID, the death of two of its Presidents. Many of its members live a long way from the capital. With the election of a new President in 2023, and the support of the Co-Chair, the Association had been revived. After the sudden death of the President earlier this year, the Co-Chair had continued to provide indispensable support enabling the Association to be present for the first time at this Council meeting and to now be in a position to participate in the different activities of FAFICS. In Senegal, there were many more members now. New initiatives including the use of Whats App, google and work on a new magazine had been undertaken to mobilize members. Focal points for agencies had been established to expand membership.

180. Tremendous support had also been given by the Co-Chair to Cote d'Ivoire to create an Association. The Association started with 20-25 members and now has between 40-45 members. Focal points were established for each agency and they had met in May. The potential to further grow the Association is significant. A letter had been sent by the Pension Fund to all retirees in the country which had helped generate interest. The letter that the President of FAFICS had sent to the Resident Coordinator had been of great help. The Association in its meeting with the Resident Coordinator had developed a Concept Note for collaboration.

181. The Association in Mexico had led efforts in Latin America and briefed on progress. It was said the AFICS-LAC is very active and includes fourteen Associations. Nicaragua and Costa Rica had been invited to join. The intention is to support El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Venezuela in the coming year to form Associations as well as countries in the English-speaking Caribbean. In Paraguay, there are simply not enough people to form an Association and how retirees there can affiliate will be explored.

182. The Chair indicated that for the rest of the year, the Committee will be focusing on several countries in Europe, where several countries have expressed interest, the English-speaking Caribbean, and a number of countries in Africa including Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Liberia had expressed interest and had been in touch with FAFICS. Cyprus had been inactive but recently contacted FAFICS to update their details in the Directory.

183. Associations expressed great appreciation for the work and results achieved. It was said that a good practice is to have someone in a region in charge of reaching out in that region. Two countries where it may be particularly challenging to organize an Association, Afghanistan with 471 retirees and Sudan with 690 retirees, support for retirees is nonetheless needed. For example, in Afghanistan retirees need to access the UN compound to get money. It was noted that four Associations, ARICSA-Vienna, FFOA-Rome, AAFI-AFICS-Geneva and AFICS/NY make up 47% of total revenue. It was suggested that an analysis be done to determine where FAFICS could get the biggest financial contribution, where there is a large presence of staff, in particular a large number of national officers and international staff. A follow-up letter to Resident Coordinators emphasizing the importance of supporting the establishment of Associations was recommended. It was suggested sharing a summary of Council sessions with Resident Coordinators might be useful. The preparation of a tool kit was also suggested. It was noted there is a constant need to recruit new members. The best time to recruit is when staff separate from the Pension Fund. The suggestion was to request that the Pension Fund to provide a FAFICS handout about local AFICS Associations to staff at the time of retirement.

184. In terms of modalities for participation and affiliation, a number were mentioned. One option is to have retirees in multiple countries group together in one Association. This had been done for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei which in the past had been one Association. There can be more than one AFICS in a country which is helpful for larger countries. The Association in Somalia had been founded in refugee camps in Kenya. In Australia, the Association is organized on a state basis with six chapters. Retirees can also belong to several Associations. When an Association is founded, contact has to be established with the civil authorities in the country. In a couple of countries there had been an obstacle to creating an Association as there had been an insistence that members would have to be citizens of that country. This was problematic as Association membership should be open to retirees regardless of nationality. This issue in those countries would need to be revisited. It was said having a champion or focal point in countries was essential.

185. A few Associations, and individuals within them, indicated they could be of help. FFOA-Rome, with over 2,000 members, about 500 of whom are living in other countries, including in Germany, Belgium and Eastern Europe, could be helpful in setting up Associations in those countries. AAFIB-Brazil offered to support efforts in Portuguese speaking countries in Africa. ARICSA-Vienna offered to support efforts in Europe and the South Pacific. In the South Pacific, there are two major issues, one is distance, with 25 microstates spread over a huge area. Also, some governments may be reluctant regarding NGOs. These are small communities, and action is not process oriented but based on trust being built through personal contacts. The work of the late Ms. Mary Johnson was particularly recognized. She had been working on the idea of an AFICS-South Pacific before she passed away. AAFNU-Niger also offered to support the work. AFICS-Philippines offered to support the work in Southeast Asia. AFICS-Addis Ababa indicated that the former Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, who had appointed his Chief of Staff as the focal point for the Association, could be helpful in his home country of Mozambique. AFICS/NY indicated it could of help in Kenya.

186. The Chair thanked Associations for the excellent suggestions. The Pension Fund can be extremely helpful in identifying how many retirees are in country and helping Associations to contact them. He mentioned that many Associations had helped the Pension Fund locate retirees who had not sent in their Certificates of Entitlement. The list sent by the Fund provides the names of retirees and the agencies in which they served. This provides an opportunity to talk to retirees about joining an Association. He also said that in India, the spouse of a retiree who passes away becomes a member automatically and at no cost. He also advised in India, there is no recurring membership fee but rather voluntary contributions. This had led to an increase in membership. The Co-Chair advised

that he had provided the Pension Fund with a flyer to send to retirees in a number of countries to galvanize new members.

- **Decision 55/16: The Council took note of the Report of the Standing Committee on Membership and the priorities established for the coming reporting period**

Agenda 11: Election results

187. The Secretary announced the results of the election. 40 Associations had registered for the 55th Council. All those Associations had designated a Head of Delegation who was provided voting authority. The results were as follows:

Total votes:

-Ms. Adriana Gomez Saguez: 21

-Mr. Clemens Adams: 18

-Mr. Abdou Khadre Diakhate: 16

-Mr. Venkatasubramanian Srinivasan: 2

188. The new Vice-Presidents were congratulated on their election and Mr. Abdou Khadre Diakhate was thanked for his tremendous contribution during his time as Vice-President. Mr. Abdou Khadre Diakhate congratulated his colleagues on their election, thanked all the delegations that had voted for him and that he could be counted on to continue to contribute to the work of FAFICS.

189. The Polling Officer was thanked for all her hard work.

190. The new Bureau would be meeting on the morning of 18 July to review the work plan for the next reporting period following on all the decisions and recommendations of the Council meeting. The meeting will be hybrid.

Agenda item 12: Association Matters

191. AFIJUB-Spain raised the issue of national taxation of pension benefits. According to the delegate, UN pensions had been tax exempt in Spain for more than 30 years. The tax authorities took the matter to the Supreme Court, and this exemption was taken away. This reversal has caused distress to retirees, in part because it was retroactive for several years. It was also seen as unfair because exemption was granted to retirees of UN Tourism, an agency that has its Headquarters in Madrid, as a result of its specific headquarters agreement. Spain had also signed several headquarters agreements with some agencies which have provisions for tax exemption of pensions in part or in full. In

the case of the European Union, pensions are tax exempt. AFIJUB-Spain, together with its sister organization of active staff, are approaching the Spanish authorities to find an adequate solution. The Association had written to the Secretary-General and the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) but had received no reply to date. The Association asked about the experience of other countries.

192. The situation in the Netherlands was shared. The pension had been tax exempt. However, after a ruling by the Supreme Court, 2/3 is now subject to income tax and 1/3 is taxable under a wealth tax. Italy is increasingly taxing retirees' pensions. In Australia, there is deduction for a portion of the pension. In India the issue went to the Supreme Court and pensions are exempt from taxation.

193. Mr. Jay Pozenel, former Director of the General Legal Division in the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, said the Convention on Privileges and Immunities is the key determining treaty instrument as to which portion of the periodic pension benefits could be taxed and which portions were tax exempt. He said Associations should contact OLA for interventions when these issues arise in countries. He also said contacting Departments of Foreign Affairs could be helpful. He himself will be a material witness on a taxation issue in Denmark later this year and will advise on developments in that case.

Agenda item 13: Any Other Business

194. Mr. Jay Pozenel was preparing a video on the contributions of former staff members to the work of the United Nations. A sign-up sheet for a meeting with him was available.

195. The PowerPoints of presentations made during the week will be uploaded to electronic folder. The List of Participants will also be updated in the link and will also include photos. The Council Report will be produced in six weeks in three languages. The presentation made by Ms. Nisreen Mirza, Manager, United Nations Federal Credit Union, Vienna Representative, will be included in the Annex.

196. As it was his last Council meeting, Mr. Gerhard Schramek took the floor. He had not expected to work for 20 years for the Federation. He said it had been a great privilege to serve. He had worked with six FAFICS Presidents. He felt much had been achieved. FAFICS was now on an equal footing with other members of the Pension Board, very much respected for its substantive contributions and leadership. FAFICS now has equal status in the spokesperson group. FAFICS had put forward a number of initiatives that had improved the lives of retirees and beneficiaries. In his capacity as Chair of the Standing Committee on Pension Issues for many years, he had always sought to share knowledge and involve and build the capacity of Associations on the many substantive issues before the Pension Board each year. He recognized colleagues with whom he had worked particularly closely: Ms. Odette Foudral, Mr. Mohammed Sebti, Ms. Adriana Gomez, Mr. Marashetty Seenappa, Ms. Suzanne Bishopric and Mr. Jay Pozenel. He

made special mention of Mr. Warren Sach and recognized his tremendous service over many years and the vital role he had played during the difficult period when FAFICS leadership as the sole representative of retirees was in question.

Agenda item 14: Date and Place of the 56th Council

197. The President indicated that a suggestion had been made for the Pension Board to be held in Beirut, Lebanon next year following an invitation from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA). It was thought this might not be the ideal venue for various reasons. Another option might be that the Pension Board will be held virtually. The President will wait to see if the meeting is to be held in ESCWA. He will then send out a communication to see if Associations are willing and able to attend to determine if there would be a quorum. AFICS-Chile and AFICS-Addis Ababa also suggested the Council could be held at ECLAC or ECA. The President took note and will keep Council informed of developments.

Agenda item 15: Words of Appreciation

198. The President expressed his profound thanks to the FAFICS Secretary, ARICSA-Vienna and UNOV teams for their support, to the Presiding Officer and Rapporteur for their work, and to Bureau members and Standing Committee Chairs and Vice/Co-Chairs, for their enthusiasm, commitment and dedication throughout the year.

199. The President closed by summarizing some key takeaways from the Council. He indicated communication will be key, being present, having more information on the website, exploring if we move into social media and, if so, how. Options to ensure we can operate in different languages will continue to be explored. He said growing our membership will be vital, looking at different ways for retirees to affiliate, finding champions to drive membership in each location and developing tool kits. He emphasized that FAFICS will need to support those who will be retiring unexpectedly early. Regarding health insurance, he said implementing the seven recommendations will be the priority, especially access to higher level bodies and, on pensions, FAFICS will need to continue to follow developments and reassure its members. A priority will be to grow our finances. Finally, and most importantly, he said FAFICS will need to plan much more effectively for succession, finding more people to take the organization forward now and in the years to come.

Agenda item 16: Closing /Adjournment

200. The Council session ended on 17 July 2025 to allow for a commemoration event on 18 July marking the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and the 50th anniversary of the founding of FAFICS.