



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"

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FAFICS@50 Commemorative Event
18 July 2025, 2-5 p.m.
Vienna International Centre, Austria

FINAL REPORT



**Celebrating 50 years
of Representing
Retirees and their
Families in 2025**

A. Background

1. The 54th Council Session (20-24 July 2024, Bangkok) decided to celebrate FAFICS@50 in 2025 in the context of the 55th FAFICS Council to be held in Vienna, and to set up an Anniversary Committee. Following this decision, the first FAFICS Bureau that year designated Jacques Daoust (CAFICS-Montreal) and Aye Win (AFICS Myanmar) to be co-chairs for the commemoration event.
2. The co-chairs started work in September 2024, based on the Terms of Reference and Committee composition drafted for this task. Committee members and Advisers were nominated from across the Federation. The Committee and sub-committees including an Advisory Group (consisting of former FAFICS past Presidents and former senior Officials), were formed. Seventeen members (including the co-chairs) plus 5 Advisers were mobilized for the work of the FAFICS@50 Committee dealing with various tasks relating to the anniversary programme, publicity, logistics and finance. Dedicated task groups for the ePublication and the video production were also set up. (See Annex B, FAFICS@50 Committee/Advisers).
3. Regular planning and coordination meetings (via emails, WhatsApp, Messenger and calls) were held, and the Co-chairs were invited to the FAFICS Bureau monthly meetings to provide updates and seek guidance. Separate meetings were held with the Advisory Group to get their overall feedback. Meetings were also scheduled with the FAFICS Standing Committee on Communication, mainly regarding ePublication, the video production and the planned souvenir items.
4. Consultations were also held with UNIS/UNOV and DGC on collaboration between the local AFICs and the UN Information Centers at country level where AFICS exist.

5. Continuous follow-ups were made with Member Associations for inputs to the celebration, following the President's letter sent on 4 April calling for contributions, both technical and financial, to the anniversary.

B. Development and production of materials and souvenir items

6. A special commemorative logo (FAFICS@50) was also designed by Jacques Daoust that appeared on all the materials produced.
7. A 90-page e-Publication was produced that highlights FAFICS history and achievements and included several feature stories, led mainly by Jacques Daoust (CAFICS) with his expertise in graphics design, supported by an editorial team composed of Delia Barcelona (FAFICS Secretary), Ana Lucia Guimaraes Pedreira (AAFIB Brazil) and Aye Win (AFICS Myanmar). Following an outline developed by the Committee, the ePublication included messages from the FAFICS President, the Under Secretary-General Catherine Pollard, Pension Board Chair Gerald Anderson, and FICSA President Wadzanai Garwe, as well as from almost all Member Associations of FAFICS. There were also messages from FAFICS past Presidents, feature stories on key officials of FAFICS, a graphic on admission of Member Associations into the Federation, and collage of photos about the various activities of Associations (from meetings of governing boards/executive committees, community outreach work, advocacy and partnership building, to social events. There were feature stories also on significant contributors to FAFICS, such as George Saddler, Lydia Ontal, Robert Kaminker, and other articles contributed by Member Associations from Kenya, India, Brazil and the Netherlands. Progress on the development of the ePublication were presented for review by the FAFICS@50 Committee, the FAFICS Standing Committee on Communication, the Advisers, and the FAFICS Bureau. The ePublication was launched by the FAFICS President as part of his Report to the 55th Council Session on 15 July; Simultaneously, it was uploaded on the FAFICS website. Limited printed copies (only 28) of the ePublication were printed pro bono through CAFICS and ICAO Printing Services and distributed at the FAFIC@50 event, for the Bureau and Committee members/Advisers, and some key guest officials.
8. A 5-minute video of FAFICS in Action around the World was produced with the help of a pro-bono film maker Kaung Sint Tha, identified by Aye Win. The video was a key feature of the commemorative programme on 18 July. Through a mix and collage of images (stock photos, submissions from Associations, archival photos), based on a storyboard prepared by the core team, the video, with music and voice narration and some subtitles, was able to capture FAFICS history and achievements. The video also included brief messages from the FAFICS President Jerry Barton, former FAFICS Vice-President Deborah Landey, some staff from Associations, and from the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. Like the ePublication, versions of the video were presented for review by the various Committees and the Bureau for feedback, and final approval. The video narration was done by no less than Juan Antonio Casas Zamora, Chair of the FAFICS Standing Committee on Communications.
9. A 3-minute video message from the former Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon was also solicited and shown during the event itself. Highlights of his message are provided in the next section.
10. Several giveaways (eco-bags, passport holder, pens, cardboard bookmarks, hand-lacquered bookmarks) were procured and made available to all Member Associations, nicely wrapped in a golden pouch, during the commemorative event itself. Significant efforts have been made by the core team to obtain these souvenir items at the lowest possible cost and transported in the luggage of the core-team members. A total of 150 hand-lacquered bookmarks, 125 passport holders, 125 pens, 100 Eco bags, and 500 cardboard bookmarks were made available to all Member Associations, Bureau and guests.

c. The PROGRAMME for the Commemorative event

11. After several Committee meetings and consultations with the Bureau and the Advisers, the 3-hour programme for the event on 18 July 2025 was finalized. (See Annex B). The programme was emceed by Aye Win (FAFICS@50 co-chair).

Welcome Remarks by Jacques Daoust, Co-Chair of FAFICS@50

12. Jacques Daoust, Co-Chair and Liaison Officer of the Canadian Association of Former International Civil Servants (CAFICS) opened the event by thanking Committee members, sub-committees, and collaborators. He recalled FAFICS' beginnings in 1975 with four or five associations, which had since grown to 65 representing about 22,000 retirees worldwide. He described FAFICS as the unwavering voice of UN retirees, advocating for rights, well-being, and engagement. He emphasized that the Federation embodied principles of solidarity, service, and lifelong commitment to UN ideals, stressing that its progress had been possible only because individuals within FAFICS were willing to engage voluntarily in both local associations and the Federation.

Remarks from the Deputy Director-General of the UN Office in Vienna and Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Ms. Chhaya Kapilashrami

13. Ms. Kapilashrami congratulated FAFICS on its milestone year and briefly talked about the lauded efforts of FAFICS in helping bring coherence across the UN system, acknowledging the work it does that helps shape the development of best practices that continue to benefit so many staff and retirees. She also talked about how UNOV and UNODC are proud to service and support a vibrant community of over 1,100 retirees and surviving spouses, adding that retirees' "*dedication, expertise and years of service have laid the foundation for so much of the progress we continue to build on today*". She thanked the FAFICS President Jerry Barton, for his longstanding contribution in providing pre-retirement seminars. She concluded by saying that the work of FAFICS is "*essential, and your voice, in championing the needs and rights of retirees remain indispensable; and as FAFICS mark this important anniversary, we reaffirm our commitment to continued collaboration.*" She extended her greetings on behalf of the Director-General of UNOV/UNODC, Ms. Fathi Wally, and congratulated the Federation on 50 years of dedicated service and looked forward to many more years of meaningful partnership.

Video Message by Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Former UN Secretary-General

14. Mr. Ban Ki-moon expressed gratitude to former international civil servants for their service to the UN and humanity. He reflected on his own role as a retiree, sharing that he remained engaged in global initiatives through the Ban Ki-moon Centre, The Elders, and the International Olympic Committee's Ethics Commission, promoting the Sustainable Development Goals, gender equality, and climate action. He explained that these endeavors reminded him daily of the profound impact of international civil

servants—whether at UN Headquarters or in field assignments—whose dedication formed the bedrock of the UN’s work.

15. He recalled witnessing the extraordinary contributions of UN staff during his tenure as Secretary-General, including progress on the Paris Agreement and responses to humanitarian crises. He emphasized that these achievements were possible because of the steadfast support of staff across the UN system. His message to retirees was that retirement did not end service but created new opportunities to share wisdom, mentor, and shape a better world. He encouraged retirees to use their talents to make a positive difference, thanked FAFICS for its decades of service, and wished the community continued health, purpose, and unity in their shared commitment to peace and sustainability.
16. Mr. Ban Ki-moon expressed heartfelt gratitude to all former international civil servants, especially those present at the occasion, for their unwavering commitment and distinguished service to the UN and humanity which have left an indelible mark on “our shared journey towards peace, sustainable development, and human rights”. He shared some personal reflections as a retiree himself and mentioned some activities that make him a proud member of this (retiree) community. He remains engaged in various global initiatives, striving to uphold the ideals of the United Nations. Through his work with the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens, The Elders, and the International Olympic Committee’s Ethics Commission, he has sought to promote the Sustainable Development Goals, gender equality, and climate action. These endeavors have reminded him daily of the profound impact of international civil servants - whether at the Secretariat in New York or in the most challenging field assignments, whose dedication has been the bedrock of the UN’s work.
17. He reiterated that during his tenure as Secretary-General, he was privileged to witness first-hand the extraordinary contributions of UN staff around the world. “Together, we tackled some of the most pressing challenges of our time, from advancing the Paris Agreement on Climate Change to responding to devastating humanitarian crises.” He stressed that these achievements would not have been possible without the steadfast support of civil servants across the UN system, including those working in agencies, funds, and programs, with their expertise, resilience, and teamwork, so indispensable to every success the UN has achieved. His message to retirees, “*as we celebrate FAFICS’s golden jubilee, we also honor the vital role of retirees in continuing to uphold the values of the UN Charter. Retirement does not mark the end of service; rather, it opens new opportunities to share wisdom, mentor future generations, and remain active in shaping a better world.*” He also reminded the audience of the International Day of Older Persons which signals the importance of embracing healthy and fulfilling lives as we age.
18. He encouraged everyone to continue using their incredible talents to make a positive difference, whether in their local communities or on the global stage. He then thanked FAFICS for its dedication to representing and supporting former international civil servants over the past five decades, asked them to continue their advocacy, and wished everyone good health, happiness, and continued purpose, and to remain united in “*our shared commitment to a just, peaceful, and sustainable future.*”

**Video: FAFICS in Action Around the World
(50 Years of Advocacy and Service: The Legacy of FAFICS)
Produced by Kaung Sint Tha, Film maker**

19. The short but very informative and inspiring 5-min video started with the founding vision of the UN, followed by a global map animating the chronological admission of the 65 Member Associations into the Federation; then used a series of visuals to showcase and celebrate FAFICS major activities and milestones. It captured formal and informal moments, meetings on partnerships, advocacy, community engagements and social activities of Member Associations. snippets and quotes from FAFICS former and current officials and some retirees, including from George Saddler, the first (and oldest surviving past President), the FAFICS President Jerry Barton, and the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, added voices of confidence, courage, and commitment to the UN mission. Through the images and quotations used, with music, narration and sub-titles, the short video was able to create a very powerful story of what FAFICS is all about. It concluded with the line *“As FAFICS marks its golden anniversary, we honor the past, celebrate the present, and look to the future. Together, we carry forward a legacy of service.”*

**The Keynote address by FAFICS President Jerry Barton
“Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future”**

20. President Jerry Barton delivered the keynote “Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future.” He stated that it was an honor and privilege to address retirees on the occasion of FAFICS’ 50th anniversary, which symbolized fifty years of commitment, advocacy, and solidarity. He saluted the founders who gave life to the vision in 1975, the past Presidents whose leadership shaped the path, and the countless members whose dedication sustained the Federation. In reflecting on the UN, he shared memories of his father’s WWII service in Burma, which reinforced the lesson that global communities must unite to prevent conflict. He emphasized that the UN was envisioned not only as an institution but as a promise of peace and shared prosperity. He observed that the UN had consistently worked for stability, citing examples such as peace negotiations, humanitarian aid, and human rights advocacy. He noted that his own home organization, the IAEA, had reduced nuclear risks and advanced cancer care and agriculture.
21. He acknowledged, however, that the UN’s principles faced strains from nationalism, inequality, conflict, and climate crisis, and that multilateralism was often dismissed despite growing global challenges. He stressed that those who served in the UN knew both its limits and its enduring value. He posed the question of how FAFICS, associations, and individuals could continue supporting the UN, quoting Dag Hammarskjöld’s words: “The UN was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell.” He explained that FAFICS was created when retired international civil servants sought a community that upheld shared values and purpose. From its modest beginnings, it had grown into a global federation representing 65 associations and about 20,000 retirees and dependents. He underscored FAFICS’ mission to defend retirees’ rights and dignity, ensure promises were kept, and contribute to UN ideals. He highlighted FAFICS’ advocacy in pensions

and health insurance, its voice in the UN Joint Staff Pension Board, and its role in fostering a connected retiree community.

22. He paid tribute to George Saddler, the only surviving President from FAFICS' founding, who would turn 100 in September. Saddler had said that FAFICS' importance was beyond question and that if it did not exist, it would have to be created. President Barton also acknowledged other past Presidents and officers, expressing gratitude to Peter Lillie for his concise and literary Council reports. He gave a special salute to the pioneers – the founders who gave life to a vision in 1975, the past presidents whose wisdom and leadership have shaped the path, and the countless members whose quiet dedication has sustained the Federation for half a century.
23. He acknowledged that the FAFICS Associations membership is aging, and how building associations has become more complex. With technology reshaping communication, he asked that FAFICS Associations encourage and inspire more young people to join/engage with our community. The future demands renewal and adaptation, and he said, we must strive to attract younger retirees, embrace new forms of engagement, and diversify our representation. He continued to say that the vibrancy of FAFICS depends on inter-generational collaboration, digital inclusion, and continued advocacy to promote transparency and the highest ethical standards, and ensuring that institutional memory is passed down, not forgotten. He made a call to action, not only to celebrate, but to recommit to the values of international public service that brought us to the UN system in the first place, to recommit to supporting each other—not only in retirement, but in sharing expertise and growing, and to recommit to ensuring that FAFICS continues to stand as a source of inspiration for those who dedicated their lives to building a better world—quietly, faithfully, and without applause or pay. He offered this final thought *“that retirement is not the end of service—it is the continuation of contribution, in a different form. For we are not former international civil servants—we are enduring ones. And this Federation is not a relic of the past—it is a promise to the future. So let us raise a toast—to the builders, the believers, and the battlers. To those who came before us, and to those who will carry the torch forward.”*

The Panel Discussion: FAFICS Achievements, Challenges and Opportunities
Moderated by Deborah Landey, Former FAFICS Vice-President/Former President, AFICS/NY

24. A carefully selected set of panelists was put together by the FAFICS@50 Committee in consultation with the FAFICS Bureau, to address that above mentioned theme. The panelists included Rosemarie McClean, Chief Executive of Pension Administration (UNJSPF), Pamela Agnone, President and CEO of the United Nations Federal Credit Union (UNFCU); Ann Van Hulle, Former Director, Administration and Finance (WHO) and Member of the FAFICS Standing Committee on After-Service Health Insurance (ASHIL); Michael Atchia, President of AFICS/ Mauritius; and, Wadzanai Garwe, President, International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA). Member Associations were asked to contribute to the discussion by submitting questions for any of the panelists to address. Twenty-seven Associations responded (See Annex D for a compilation of these questions). Many of the questions were shared with the panelists to serve as springboards for their presentations. Debbie Landey (former Vice-President/FAFICS Bureau and former President/AFICS New York) served as moderator of the panel, while Maria Machicado (President/AFICS Bolivia) moderated

the Open Forum that followed the panel discussion. Following are the highlights from each of the panelist's presentations.

Rosemarie McClean, Chief Executive for Pension Administration, UNJSPF (Panelist)

25. Rosemarie McClean said that many of the issues about pension she had already addressed during the Council Session so she will not dwell on those anymore. In her remarks, Rosemarie Mclean stated the importance of pension as we age, but also said that one of the challenges worldwide is that a significant portion of the population do not have a pension, and even those who do it is not a defined benefit scheme like we enjoy; rather it is a defined contribution scheme that is very dependent on investment results. She encouraged FAFICS members to spread the word and encourage those who are in active service to better understand their plan and to appreciate it and know that they can come to the Pension Fund if they have questions about it or anything is not clear.
26. She also used the opportunity to thank FAFICS for all the support it provides to UNJSPF throughout the year whether it's in the DCE realm or helping us find individuals who have not submitted their certificate of entitlement. Recently, we saw a 72% reduction in the number of people whose pension was stopped, and this is due to FAFICS' support and intervention. I think we've got a great partnership between FAFICS and the Fund and concluded by expressing appreciation for this relationship.

Pamela Agnone, President and CEO, UNFCU (Panelist)

27. In her remarks, Pamela Agnone, President and CEO of UNFCU emphasized that the Credit Union has always been one of FAFICS staunchest supporters, appreciating the dedication and commitment to providing services to generation of retirees around the world. Further to the strategy of steady and measured growth, underpinned by good governance, she emphasized that the Bank has delivered earnings of 90 million US dollars last year and exceeded 9.7 billion US dollars in total assets. She thanked FAFICS members for being a part of this success. She added that deposits last year increased at a rate of about 8.17% - more than double of its peers – and is a testament to member confidence in the safety and security of UNFCU products and services.
28. As a major financial institution serving FAFICS retirees, she said that UNFCU was able to return 9.3 million dollars to members last year, in the form of Member loyalty rebates and dividends, and 2.3 million US dollars alone went to retirees, who are members. Regarding recent events, UNFCU is closely monitoring the funding situation across the UN system and the global economy, making sure that UNFCU remains resilient, responsive and ready to adapt to its members' changing needs. Today, she cited that the Credit Union serves over 255,000 members, which includes 20,000 retirees. In a recent survey, she mentioned that 88% of retiree members were satisfied with UNFCU, and about 92% agreed that UNFCU provides members with financial peace of mind. She mentioned that two members of the UNFCU Board are from FAFICS and present in this forum - Theresa Panuccio and Clemens Adams, Chair and Vice-chair, respectively.

29. She mentioned that the Fund has made strides to reduce the average call wait time and its contact centers have recently introduced a technology platform that has increased the Fund's efficiency to respond to needs. Contact centers are expected to answer calls within 38 seconds and emails in just over 12 hours. Aside from opening a contact center in Kenya, it has also hired Spanish speaking representatives to expand their capacity to deal with clients.
30. True to the bank's cooperative principles, and especially in response to current challenging times, she stated that UNFCU has really made its members' financial well-being a priority. It has also created several tailored seminars to help members fight fraud and have also tried to provide education around how to get the most out of the bank's digital banking platform. UNFCU's officers have also visited many AFICS chapters around the globe, including most recently, missions to Panama and Chile. She encouraged members to keep informed about UNFCU by logging into its website and looking at its resources under financial wellness. She then thanked the organizers for the opportunity to be in the panel.

Ann Van Hulle, Former Director, Administration and Finance (WHO) and member of the FAFICS Standing Committee on ASHI (Panelist)

31. Ann Van Hulle started by saying that the two key issues for retirees are pension and health insurance, and that to better understand the issues, there is a need to step back and look at global health insurance, which is changing rapidly due to demographic shifts, technological advances, innovative treatments and rising consumer expectations. She added that medical cost inflation is outpacing general inflation. She mentioned that Europe is faced with an aging population and ever rising health care costs. She cited statistics that in 1980, Europe had about 5 working people supporting each pensioner. Today, that number is 3 to 1 and by 2050, expected to drop to just 2 to 1. All these put pressure on the health care system. Cost containment has been the watchword as organizations and governments search for ways to increase efficiency and prevent costs from spiraling out of control.
32. ASHIL has significantly evolved over 50 years in terms of growth as well as the benefits it offers. The number of insured, active and retired staff has nearly doubled in the past 18 years. The JIU report in 2023 said that the number of insurers going from 84,000 in 2004, to 160,000 by the end of 2022. The ratio of active to retired staff is also shifting, as the number of retirees continues to grow. People are living longer and healthier. As we age, our health care costs also grow. But in many cases, we contribute less. In some organizations, the contribution is based on a percentage of earnings. So, pensions being lower than salaries, we contribute less but cost more. The active staff remained stable, and the retirees grew. Of course, this is going to shift even further now with the current financial crisis of the organizations. Organizations are hiring and will hire fewer staff.
33. This is precisely the reason why, she stressed, FAFICS's advocacy role is so crucial in ensuring that ASHI funding remains a priority. Even during these difficult financial times no discussion on this topic would be complete without mentioning long term care, as discussed earlier during the Council. But just to say, the FAFICS Standing Committee on ASHIL has looked at this issue, and we have concluded that under the

current financial crisis and for other reasons, it is unrealistic to think of asking organizations to expand health insurance or to create a separate health insurance to cover long-term care. In the future the situation may be better, but right now it's unrealistic. And that is why we are focusing more on the individual responsibility to plan about our health care needs.

34. FAFICS has been active in raising awareness, promoting equitable access to health insurance for retirees, and ensuring continued financial support from organizations. The UN system must continue to demonstrate a duty of care towards retirees by subsidizing premiums, based on equity and solidarity. A key challenge today is to ensure that organizations maintain adequate reserves to cover their ASHI liabilities. Many organizations have gone a long way towards financing in some as much as 80% but in others it is as few or as little as 30%. She concluded by saying that FAFICS must continue to focus its advocacy on the long-term viability of the health insurance funds rather than concentrating so narrowly on certain categories of benefits, under some conditions, of course. ASHIL is not just a privilege, it is a contract made to all of us when we joined the organization, under certain conditions, of course. Thus, it is important to protect and strengthen the system through sound financing, strategic planning and honest dialogue between all parties. She has no doubt that FAFICS will continue to assume this task with enthusiasm.

Michael Atchia, President, AFICS Mauritius (Panelist)

35. Michael talked about development issues that continue to affect all of us – like the environment, wars, the need for food security, the need for energy, fighting floods/earthquakes, the need for providing food security, ensuring the habitat, achieving transition to renewable energy and so on. He made a point about the fact that all this expertise resides in the UN, even among the retiree ranks. We (referring to FAFICS) are a source of expertise. Some who have worked in the UN for 20 or 30 years or so, have an enormous amount of invaluable expertise, but which officially is not (or no longer being used), although some quietly do consultancies on the side. But this expertise must not be lost. He cited an example in his home country, when the Prime Minister of Mauritius when the Government asked for some kind of research expertise on, he happened to be able to respond. One day, in his country, there was a big ship that came around, went right onto the reef and started spilling oil. Fortunately, one of our colleagues (in the room, Danny, who is also a Council delegate), had experience in that field and was able to provide ad hoc technical support. In his country, as President of the Academy of Science, he has also been able to put together a kind of directory of specializations in the region.
36. His message to the retirees is this – we must organize and to indicate whether a person is available or not, available part-time, full time, under what circumstances, and so on. Such a directory can be made available to governments, private sector, and other people and people who keep increasingly asking for various experts. He said he would like to see a similar sort of organization to be undertaken by AFICS's around the world, particularly those in developing countries, where there is a lack of budget to secure experts.

Wadzanai Garwe, President, FICSA (Panelist)

37. Ms. Garwe started with a wish that today, with all the social media around us, we must go back to the oral way of learning, of talking, because we have so much information to share, but it seems we have stopped talking, or everyone talks to us, and we get overwhelmed. Sometimes Staff Associations, do not read communications anymore. If a survey is sent out, it would be lucky to get one organization to answer it. So, the biggest problem is apathy, and everyone needs to start talking. In her experience with UNHCR, there has been a funding crisis. When is it not a funding crisis. A lot of people do not know what the UN does. People are despairing, but they need to know that people have lived through world wars. They've lived through earthquakes. She herself has lived through such challenges sharing her life before with Mozambican refugees who left their homes with nothing. And yet here we are. Mozambique is back. When she talks to her now grown-up children, they talk about first world problems, e.g. no Wi-Fi code, and they call it a crisis. So, she sent them back to her village to let them see the reality of some people who do not have anything. Sometimes people forget that three quarters of the world do not even have mobile phones, or some do not even have potable running water. The visit to the village humbled them.
38. The UN Secretariat is very different from Specialized Funds, Agencies and Programmes. Human beings, we are hotwired from negative views. But each one of us must stand up and give hope. One of the things she did before was to attend her first retirement seminar and found it very useful. She said, “Everyone who goes through the UN must attend a retirement seminar. I would like each of you to do a minute’s video that I can share with my children about what the UN meant to you, why you entered and what you did. We know that death is certain. I have lived with HIV AIDS for 33 years, yet here I am. Each one of us is a testament that people survive. We change, we adapt, or we die. The most important thing is to be innovative. We are resilient and we must dare. We have an expression in Shona (a Bantu language spoken in Mozambique and Zimbabwe), which says, “*when an old person dies, we lose the library.*” We have so many human libraries here, you have so much knowledge, so let us use technology to do things that create hope and create interest in what the UN means.” She thanked FAFICS for this moment.

OPEN FORUM

Moderated by Maria Machicado, President/AFICS Bolivia

39. **Question to UNJSPF: Can you tell us what the Fund is doing in the light of what is going on the UN right now, with early retirements, staff and funding cuts, etc.?**

Response from Rosemarie: “With regard to the point that the UN is going through a period of flux, it is important for plan participants to recognize that the Fund is less reliance on current contributions to pay future pensions, and more reliant on investment income. 65% of the people who have stepped this year to apply for a withdrawal have less than 5 years of service, so they are simply entitled to their contribution that they have made into the Fund plus interest. So, it is not about you (FAFICS) who have rendered 30 years of service, for example. It tends to be people who are younger, who haven’t been in the Fund for a long time, so obviously, that has less of a financial impact. This is something our actuaries are monitoring all the time, and it is really one of their key responsibilities to ensure that the funding status will

ensure the viability of the Fund long into perpetuity, 70-100 years and that is why they do an actuarial evaluation every two years and run many scenarios. For example, what if the Fund was to just stop existing tomorrow, would we still be able to pay all obligations to retirees as well as active participants. The answer to that is resounding YES! So, people do not really need to be concerned. Is the Fund able to withstand the shock? Yes, we have been down this road before, and we have survived. The OIM has a portfolio that can ride through these shocks. It is important to recognize that this is monitored very closely by our actuarial committee as well as the Board. So, it is something that gets a lot of oversight. We all want to ensure the future viability of the Fund.”

40. Question to UNJSPF: What is your position on the UN (standard) ID?

Response from Rosemarie: “We do not have a standard ID card. There is an UN ID that is being developed by the UN for its Plan participants, but it is really designed for people who move from one agency to another. In the past, what has happened is that some information does not always travel with the staff. Organizations are considering this like UNICEF, UNESCO, and the Fund, and are already exploring this using DCE technology/facial recognition. But it is not an ID for pensioners but only for Plan participants to make sure that their data moves with them throughout their career in the UN system. We are also inundated with requests right now and our priority has been to pay pensions, pay those with withdrawal settlements in a timely fashion, and make sure that you in this room are paid your pension. So, there is no plan in the work about an ID. I think there is confusion.”

41. Questions to UNJSPF: about small pensions/minimum pensions (Ethiopia); FAFICS voting rights in the Pension Board (Australia); Any change in rules that may affect the viability of the Fund (Cote d’Ivoire)

Response from Rosemarie: “I have spoken about small pensions/minimum pensions during the Council session so I will not respond to those now. No change in rules is anticipated at this time that will affect existing pensioners. If there is any change in the rules, it would affect participants. Just to remind you all about responsibilities. The CEPA role is to administer the rules and regulations. The decision on changes to the Plan rules and regulations goes through the Board, and then the Fifth Committee must approve it. So that is the process, I do not influence the rules and regulations themselves.”

42. Question to UNFCU: On currencies other than the dollar.

Response from Pamela: “UNFCU is a US financial institution so by regulation we can only operate our accounts in US dollars, but we find ways to help move money securely and affordably throughout the world. Today, members can transfer in US dollars around the globe, or in as many as fifty local currencies. We have also established a variety of mobile wallets which can be used in places like in Africa and Asia, Central and Southern America. Now we have 33 mobile wallets that members can use tapping their UNFCU accounts and buying local currency (except for bitcoins). UNFCU does not invest or offer accounts in cryptocurrency.”

43. Question to UNFCU: about credit life protection when applying for a loan, and when retiree reaches 70 years of age.

Response from Pamela: “75 years is the limit that the UN life insurance pay up to 75,000, so UNFCU has this guarantee. UNFCU works with a third-party insurance provider, and their requirements are based on the programme that they offer to us. We can certainly go back to them and ask if we can have an option to increase the age limit. We are also trying to be more

customer-friendly, providing 24/7 Mon-Friday access to all members, including those with hearing or sight impairment, in addition to multilingual customer service representatives that are French and Spanish speakers. In terms of the digital platform, we are constantly working on modernization, exploring ways to make it easier for individuals, regardless of their situation, to have easy access.”

44. Question to UNFCU; Not all staff members know that they can open a UNFCU account, especially local staff. Can there be an agreement between UNFCU and the PF to send a notice to all retirees inviting them to join the UNFCU?

Response from Pamela: “We also work with all staff associations to get this word out. And yes, we can issue a joint communique. If you like, we can also make presentations to groups in your local associations. We would be happy to do that. FICSA added that it would also be good to encourage communication through the Resident Coordinators, so it goes to all staff.

45. Question to UNFCU: on taxes on remittances (under Trump’s Big Beautiful Bill)

Response from Pamela: “What has been proposed as 3.5% excise tax for cross border transfer by non-US citizens does not affect UNFCU. Financial institutions are exempt from this tax, but we monitor developments very closely.

46. Questions to UNFCU: (from Ethiopia). Do not forget that there are still least developed countries where pensioners in those countries are still technology challenged. (cited a case about his Visa card limit on usage when travelling abroad); (from Pakistan), we would appreciate it if UNFCU can engage more local banks for client services in those countries; (Tanzania), amount charged for transactions abroad is very high.

Response from Pamela: “We can open client services contact centers only in places where we have a large concentration of members located in that country. It is administratively challenging to open UNFCU representative offices. In less developed countries, we continue to offer a range of service channels. You may contact UNFCU through the internet, for online support. Regarding transaction costs, we encourage members to explore using mobile wallets or on foreign transfer service, whereby members can move funds from their local banks where they are holding Euros or British pounds, directly into the credit union accounts. On exchange rates, the exchange rates for all currencies fluctuate based on differences in interest rates across countries but also based on different economic conditions. The US is a reserve currency, and no change is expected anytime soon. Members should feel secure in holding their funds in US dollars. Some members take advantage of changes when the dollar weakens, to purchase. So, it is like ebbs and flows. The dollar is very strong and will remain a reserve currency for the world as far as we can see.”

47. Question for UNFCU: Can the US dollar be replaced by another currency or a basket of currencies?

Response from Pamela: “As I mentioned earlier, the US dollar is the reserve currency for US financial institutions.”

48. Questions on ASHIL: How does the Standing Committee on ASHIL work? What are the alternative provisions for medical evacuation service outside the country; how to correct disparities among fragmented coverage for different schemes, agency by agency; what to do when retirees miss the registration period for health insurance?

Response from Ann: “In WHO, there is no distinction between international staff and local staff in terms of benefits the health insurance system provides. Let us say, anyone who needs medical care outside the country, because if he/she can pay for travel, they will be able to avail themselves of the same medical service in that foreign country. But I think in some cases this is not true, as some local staff are confined to the healthcare system in their country. There is a need to review the entire structure of health insurance to allow for coverage of medical evacuation. As we know medical evacuation is covered for active staff both local and non-local, outside of the country in an emergency, but this is not the case for retirees. It would require a complete review of the health insurance system to amend that. In this current financial crisis, which is unlikely to happen. That said, the Standing Committee on ASHIL has agreed to look into this, e.g. advocating for working into reimbursing medical expenses if they are higher than that of the country of residence. The FAFICS President has also written to the Secretary-General, through the Chief Executives Board (CEB) to address issues like participating in Governing bodies, limitation of the MIP insurance plan for local staff, and has urged for review and revision of that plan. But it is up to the individual organizations to take it forward and to determine whether they are prepared to expand the benefits. The ASHIL Standing Committee agreed to also look into that and has proposed a term for an entirely different medical evacuation plan. On fragmented coverage, FAFICS am sure will continue to find ways to address that through its advocacy efforts. On missing the eligibility for enrollment, please note that there are two categories: 1) those who miss the eligibility deadline for requesting ASHI before they leave the organization and are not aware that there is such a deadline. As we know organizations are not flexible with deadlines. Human Resources units can ensure that this is part of the exit strategy or “clearance certificate” that staff must fill out, such as to enroll in health insurance, pay outstanding loans etc., before they are officially let go. 2) For those not entitled to ASHIL, FAFICS can help explore getting alternative insurance schemes such as those offered by CIGNA, or other third-party providers. This will of course depend on requirements and conditions for various categories of staff. For example, an agency like CBTCO has no ASHIL provision.”

49. Question for Michael: What are the possibilities for involving staff and retirees?

Response from Michael: “We need to determine the interest in working with local associations to involve retirees. Put our (FAFICS) expertise into the service of others. Ask questions like how we organize; start with a list of volunteers, list of expertise in so many fields and so on. President Jerry Barton added that the starting point should be the individual local associations who would know better what they need.”

50. Question for FICSA: What are the challenges for the next 50 years considering that we have a net cash deficit of 200 million USD between what the pensioners are receiving, and what active participants are going into

Response from Wadzi: “FAFICS can look into investing more in non-staff resources. Speak to Member States that we need staff to be enough to cover contributions for the longer term. It may be 200 million in 2025, but it is going to be 800 million in 5 years. It is a cashflow issue. So, without investments, the current number of staff cannot cover the pensions going out We must keep staff as the backdrop of pension; if there are no staff, there will be no contributions.

51. A question from Pakistan was left unanswered: Is there a possibility of electing President on a rotation basis from each Continent?

52. Intervention from Suzanne Bishopric, Chair of the FAFICS Standing Committee on Pension Issues. “What we need to do is to ensure that investment goals are achieved; to ensure a balance of pension between growth of assets and growth of liabilities. Hopefully they will

move in parallel. Every 4 years, the Pension Board does a long-term assessment of assets and liabilities, to be sure that we are on that long course. The last study was in 2023, and the next one will be in 2027. In between, the Board does evaluations. For now, everything looks very solid. Your pension is safe.”

Prior to closing

- 53.** At this juncture, two associations gave tokens of appreciation. ASAFI Senegal President, Abdou Khadre Diakhate handed a token to Rosemarie McClean, Chief Executive, UNJSPF; and AFICS Niger President Kadri gave a token of appreciation to President Jerry Barton.
- 54.** The co-chairs of the FAFICS@50 committee also announced that there are extra souvenir items that Member Associations can avail of and reiterated the logistical arrangements for the dinner hosted by the City of Vienna.

Closing remarks

- 55.** FAFICS President Jerry Barton gave brief closing remarks by first thanking everyone who has been involved in the preparations for the celebration, including FAFICS’ very active Bureau. He said he was very pleased with what went on with FAFICS’ first 50 years and let us celebrate the next 50!
- 56.** All participants and guests were then transported to a dinner hosted by the City of Vienna, at a traditional Viennese restaurant.

Annexes

- A. The FAFICS@50 Commemorative event PROGRAMME FOR 18 July 2025**
- B. FAFICS@50 TOR and Committee Composition/Advisers**

A. The Commemorative Event Programme



Celebrating 50 years
of Representing
Retirees and their
Families in 2025

FAFICS@50 Commemorative Programme July 18, 2025, Vienna International Centre

MC: **Aye Win**, AFICS Myanmar and Co-Chair of the FAFICS@50 Anniversary

- 2:00 **Welcome Remarks**
Jacques Daoust, Co-Chair of the FAFICS@50 Anniversary
- 2:10 **Remarks**
Ms. Chhaya Kapilashrami, Deputy Director-General and Director of the Division of Management, UNOV
- 2:30 **Video Message: Former Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon**
- 2:35 **Video: FAFICS in Action around the world**
- 2:40 **Keynote address: Jerry Barton, FAFICS President**
- 3:00 **Panel Discussion: Achievements, Challenges and Opportunities**
Moderator: **Debbie Landey**, former Vice-President, FAFICS
- Rosemarie McClean**, Chief Executive, Pension Administration, UNJSPF
 - Pamela Agnone**, President and CEO, UNFCU
 - Ann Van Hulle**, Member, FAFICS ASHIL Standing Committee
 - Michael Atchia**, President, AFICS Mauritius
 - Wadzanai Garwe**, President FICSA
- 4:00 **Open Forum**
Moderator: **Maria Machicado**, President, AFICS Bolivia
- 4:45 **Closing Remarks by Jerry Barton**
- 6:00 **Dinner offered by the City of Vienna at 10er Marie - a traditional Viennese “Heuriger” restaurant that has existed since 1740.**

NB: a group photo will be taken at the end of the event. Time and gathering place for photo and bus to be announced.

Annex B: FAFICS@50 Committee Chairs, Members and Advisers

Jacques Daoust (Chair)	CAFICS-Montreal
Aye Win (Co-Chair)	AFICS Myanmar
Delia Barcelona	FAFICS Secretary
Deborah Landey	AFICS New York
Maria Machicado	AFICS Bolivia
Michael Atchia	AFICS Mauritius
Jay Sundaresan	AAFI-AFICS Geneva
Souleymane Diabate	AFICS Cote d'Ivoire
Ana Lucia Pedreira	AAFIB-Brazil
Jacques Rao	AFUS-France
Girija Devi	APUNFI India
Adriana Gomez	AFICS Chile
Romesh Muttukumar	FAFICS Treasurer
Nancy Hurtz-Soyka	FAFICS VP
Anneliese Heber	ARICSA
Monireh Damestani	ARICSA

Advisers:

- Andrés Castellanos former President and President Emeritus of FAFICS
- Linda Saputelli Former FAFICS President and Former President of AFICS NY
- Lydia Ontal, FAFICS Honorary Assistant Secretary who served several FAFICS Presidents and Secretaries
- George Kutukdjian Former President of AAFU-AFUS France
- Tedla Teshome, Emeritus President of Addis Ababa