

## **Final Minutes of the meeting of the FAFICS Bureau, 16 October 2025 (approved by the Bureau at its 20 Nov 2025 meeting)**

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

Absent: Clemens Adams, Abdou Khadre Diakhate

### **Decisions at the 16 October Meeting**

#### **President**

- Will write to Catherine Pollard regarding FAFICS participation in future HLCM meetings and the letter he had written to the Secretary-General on health insurance issues
- Will provide more information on how the work of FAFICS is impacting retirees in future President's Newsletters
- Will attend the BAFUNCS Annual General Meeting in March 2026
- Will share the relevant Pension Board Annexes regarding Pension Board delegate responsibilities and ethics requirements with the Working Group on Succession Planning

#### **Secretary**

- Will integrate all Committee/Working Group inputs into a draft Bureau Work Plan to be reviewed by the Bureau at its next meeting.
- Will upload the final approved version of the Bureau Organigram on the website
- Will upload the final approved version of the Onboarding PowerPoint on the website
- Will prepare a set of talking points that anyone participating in a pre-retirement seminar can use. To this end, the President will share with the Secretary the PowerPoint slides he used for the ARICSA pre-retirement seminar and Marashetty will share the PowerPoint slides he used for the FAFICS/AFUNPI pre-retirement seminar

#### **Treasurer**

- Will follow up to obtain any outstanding invoices related to the Council meeting and once these have been paid assess the overall financial situation of FAFICS
- Will identify any outstanding dues owed by Associations and will get this information to the Co-Chairs of the Membership Committee

#### **Standing Committees/Bureau Working Group**

- The Standing Committee on Communications will set up a dedicated page on pre-retirement seminars on the website
- The Standing Committee on Communications will look at ascertaining what information Associations want to receive, how to improve the content of communications from the President to Associations, from Associations to the President and among Associations
- The Standing Committee on Communications will look into why some emails to the President were not received by him
- The Committee on Communications will put together a complete proposal by January to include the costs for website investment and maintenance, content management, and brochure updates
- The Bureau Working Group on Election Procedures and the Council Working Group on Succession Planning will provide inputs to the Work Plan on any work that needs to be done by the Bureau in connection with their work

### **Individual follow up**

- Marashetty will send a news story on the FAFICS/AFUNPI pre-retirement seminar to be posted on the website

### **Agenda item 1: Adoption of the Agenda**

1. The agenda was adopted with an amendment to the order of the agenda allowing the update from the Standing Committee on Pension Issues to be the first substantive item on the agenda. The report of the Standing Committee is summarized under the item Updates from Standing Committees.
2. The draft Minutes were adopted by email circulated on 24 September.

### **Agenda item 2: Decisions/Actions from the 18 September meeting**

3. The President indicated he would not go through the decisions/actions adopted in the 18 September Bureau meeting. He did indicate the President has not yet been able to act on the actions he was to have undertaken. Bureau members can review the list attached in Annex A for any further actions needed on their part.

### **Agenda item 3: President's time**

(a) Status of Bureau Work Plan

4. The Work Plans of the Standing Committees on Pension Issues and Communications have been submitted. The Work Plans of the Standing Committees on ASHIL and Membership are being finalized. Inputs on any work that needs to be done by the Bureau in connection with the work of

the Working Group on Election Procedures or the Council Working Group on Succession Planning need to be provided. These inputs will then be integrated into a draft Bureau Work Plan for review at the next meeting of the Bureau.

(b) Bureau Organigram

5. The final version of the Bureau Organigram was approved and will be uploaded on the website.

(c) Onboarding PowerPoint for new Bureau Officers

6. The final version of the Onboarding PowerPoint for new Bureau members was approved and will be uploaded on the website.

(d) Expertise Pool

7. The latest version of the Expertise Pool was shared. There have been no new submissions since the last meeting of the Bureau. The Council Working Group on Succession Planning is reviewing the Expertise Pool form and how to best categorize and organize the information in the Pool.

(e) Letter from BAFUNCS

8. The President summarized the letter he had received from BAFUNCS, and their request for more information about how the work of FAFICS impacts retirees to be included in the President's Newsletters. The President has taken this suggestion on board and will endeavor to ensure his future Newsletters cover how the work of FAFICS is impacting retirees. He will also attend the BAFUNCS Annual General Meeting in March 2026. The Standing Committee on Communications is looking at how we might ascertain what information Associations want to receive, how to improve the content of communications from the President to Associations, from Associations to the President and among Associations.

(f) FICSA and other pre-retirement seminars

9. The President advised that he had met the President and General Secretary of FICSA to finalize the virtual pre-retirement seminar FICSA is planning and running on 6 November. The President, Marashetty Seenapaa and Denise Gustin-Gardella, Head of Client Services, Pension Administration, Geneva, will attend. This is a good FICSA/FAFICS collaboration.

10. The President also indicated ARICSA had hosted a pre-retirement seminar in Vienna from 2-3 October with 135 people in attendance. He has a PDF file of the slides that were used. The recording cannot be used outside the VIC. Marashetty Seenappa shared that the planned joint FAFICS-AFUNPI pre-retirement seminar had been held. It was hosted by UNICEF, opened by the Resident Coordinator with 45 participants from across UN Agencies. One of the recommendations was that special sessions be held for those being separated now as a result of the ongoing downsizing across the system. Marashetty will send a news story on the pre-retirement

seminar to be posted on the website. The AFICS/NY leadership has been invited to participate in a UN Staff Union seminar being organized in New York from 4-6 November. The Secretary advised that a dedicated page on pre-retirement seminars should be set up on the website. A set of talking points will be prepared so that anyone participating in such seminars will be able to use them. Marashetty will share his PowerPoint slides for the FAFICS/AFUNPI pre-retirement seminar for this purpose.

(g)President's travel to Geneva

11. The President had participated in the AAFI/AFICS Geneva General Meeting with 50 or so people in attendance. His presence was much appreciated. AAFI/AFICS contributed to the costs of this visit. There is no change in the leadership of AAFI/AFICS. While there, he visited the FAFICS Office in the half basement of the La Bocage building. The archives are at the same level of the building, which is a problem as the space is humid. The President of AAFI/AFICS is trying to address this issue. The President may return in May 2026 with Delia to sort through the FAFICS materials.

(h)Financial Issues

12.The Treasurer asked how we are dealing with supporting staff affected by the reductions. The President advised the Pension Fund has held several townhall as well as dedicated meetings for those affected by the cuts to inform staff of the choices they have to make. Associations also need to reach out to people who are affected by the downsizing. A discussion ensued as to how to reach out to existing retirees as well as future retirees about the benefits of joining an Association and the critical role played by FAFICS.

13.The Treasurer is working on the FAFICS accounts as of the end of September. He will follow up to obtain any outstanding invoices related to the Council meeting. He will also identify any outstanding dues owed by Associations and will get this information to the Co-Chairs of the Membership Committee.

**Agenda item 4. Updates from Standing Committees**

**Standing Committee on Pension Issues**

14. The Chair of the Standing Committee on Pension Issues, Suzanne Bishopric, provided the update.

15.The balance of the Pension Fund assets is at an all-time high, \$105.6 billion. The Fund is still underweighted in equities. Money has not been taken off the table yet. The stock market continues to perform exceedingly well. The price of gold continues to rise. Strong deregulation pressures from Washington are stimulating the US market, opening up opportunities for small companies to be acquired by others and for Bank mergers. There are fears of inflation as well as the potential

risk to the dollar. In this connection, a question was raised as to whether it might be prudent to invest Pension Fund cash holdings in gold. It was thought it might be too late for that option as the price of gold is likely to pull back.

16. The Chair said she had been in touch with the former Acting RSG Toro Shindo and current Acting RSG, Robert Van der Zee. The Acting RSG indicated he will be able to continue in the post until the new RSG is recruited. The recruitment process for the new RSG is underway. She had received queries from very competent individuals who might apply for the RSG post. FAFICS is not involved in the selection process.

17. Regarding the Standing Committee on Pension Issues, the Chair continues to look for new members to strengthen the Committee. She would like to achieve more diversity in the Committee, people with different perspectives.

18. Regarding the FSALMC, she advised that the new FAFICS representative on the FSALMC is doing well. FAFICS continues its strong and respected role in the FSALMC. Preparations by the FSALMC for the next Pension Board meeting are underway with the advice of an external consultant. The consultant's report will point out the importance of the ALM review process. It is important to ensure the actuarial process is fair and working with correct economic assumptions. The FSALMC will now be involved in the review. It is very important to obtain a clear picture of the impact of the ongoing severances on the Pension Fund's liabilities. Painful headcount reductions are ongoing.

19. The President advised that the new process for Member Services authentication is in effect. The President has sent out a note on "FAFICS Global" on steps retirees need to take to complete the authentication process. He also advised that the Certificate of Entitlement will be sent out by the Fund to those who have not yet submitted one. He further advised that Alan Blythe, Chief of Client Services and Outreach, is now retiring and there will be some changes to the client services side of the Fund.

20. With regard to the Pension Fund budget, it was said that so far there has been support in ACABQ for the cost of travel for four FAFICS representatives to participate in Pension Board meetings.

21. The AFICS/NY Pension Committee will meet with the Pension Fund management towards the end of January with the FAFICS President in attendance.

### **Standing Committee on After-Service Health Insurance and Long-Term Care (ASHIL)**

22. The Chair of the Standing Committee, Jay Karia, provided the update.

23. The Committee Work Plan is almost complete and will be submitted. Richard Dictus has resigned from the Committee. He is interested in getting involved in pension issues. The Committee is reviewing the Expert Pool to identify a replacement.

24. The Committee is working on updating ASHIL content on the website.

25. Three members of the Committee are working on the survey Council agreed to conduct.

26. The Committee will hold a mid-year health insurance focal point meeting, share the draft survey with focal points so that all issues facing Associations can be included in the final version of the survey. Issues pertaining to long-term care will be covered in the survey.

27. Medical costs continue to rise. There has been a recommendation to increase the premium for the Worldwide Plan by 27 % based on experience. The amount of the increase was reduced to 18% by using some of the reserves but this is not a long-term solution. Serving staff and retirees need to use the plans wisely-by using in network doctors, generic drugs, and judicious use of emergency rooms. As premiums rise there is a risk of benefits being curtailed. It is important not to be asking for any additional benefits but to maintain current benefits.

28. The President advised that for the IAEA, budget pressure had resulted in reduced benefits for new recruits. Thanks to the intervention of ARICSA the reduction in benefits would not apply to retirees.

29. The President advised he had met with the President of FICSA before her attendance at the HLCM. He asked her to mention the importance of having FAFICS attend the HLCM, in particular on health insurance issues. The President will write to Catherine Pollard regarding this matter and the letter he had written to the Secretary-General. Perhaps a meeting with Catherine Pollard could then be organized.

### **Standing Committee on Communications**

30. The Chair of the Standing Committee, Juan Casas, provided the update.

31. The Committee has issued the survey Council agreed to conduct regarding the experience of Associations with social media and the establishment of a network of communications focal points. In light of the small number of responses so far, the deadline has been extended until the end of the month. A French and Spanish version will be sent out. The plan is also to have an internal process of consultation to see what preference individual members of Associations have for social media. Traditional methods for surveys are employed using email. Once the network of focal points is established the plan is to have a meeting of them to review the results of the survey and update the FAFICS Communications Strategy.

32. Regarding the website, there have been improvements but there are still issues to be resolved. The Chair indicated that after one year in operation, the structure of the website will be reviewed to make improvements. The Committee wants to have alerts sent out when new content items are available. The transfer of responsibilities from Douglas to Tony has now been completed. Tony is now the Technical Administrator of the website.

33. With regard to content management, there will likely be a need for a part-time content manager who would be the focal point for updating information on the website, helping the Committees produce material and managing our social media presence. The Chair advised that the brochure needs to be updated with new information and the original provider in the Philippines is being contacted to determine costs.

34. The Committee will put together a complete proposal by January including the costs for website investment and maintenance, content management, and brochure updates.

35. Regarding the possibility of asking the Former and Current UN Staff (FCUNS) to share FAFICS information material, it was decided not to make a request at this time.

36. The Chair recalled that Pierre Sayour needs to be replaced on the Communications Committee. He has written to Jacques Daoust of CAFICS and AFICS/Addis Ababa has nominated a candidate in the Expertise Pool. The President indicated it would be excellent to have the person from AFICS/Addis Ababa on the Committee.

37. The Chair will check on technical issues related to the President not receiving emails.

### **Standing Committee on Membership**

38. The Chair, Marashetty Seenappa, provided the update.

39. The last meeting had to be cancelled as only two members were in attendance. The next meeting of the Standing Committee will be in November, and it will finalize its Work Plan. Manijeh Torabi, from ARICSA, had been in touch with a retiree in Poland regarding the setting up of an Association there. Werner Blenk from ARICSA will be in Australia and will be in touch with his contact there regarding the setting up of a regional South Pacific Association to be based in Fiji. Marashetty will be following up with retirees in Laos during his upcoming visit regarding the creation of an Association there. The Association in Indonesia has now paid its dues and therefore is categorized as an active Association.

### **Council Working Group on Succession Planning**

40. The Chair, Nancy Hurtz-Soyka, provided the update.

41. The Working Group is meeting weekly. The team is very dedicated to the task.

42. The Working Group has prepared a draft Succession Planning Strategy. The strategy has seven components: assessment of leadership needs, identification of candidates, transparent processes for selection, leadership development, knowledge transfer, transition management and monitoring and evaluation. The Working Group has prepared job descriptions for positions within FAFICS and has also prepared a job description for FAFICS Pension Board delegates in connection with the vacancy to be created by the departure of Gerhard Schramek. The President will ensure the Working Group has the relevant Pension Board Annexes regarding delegate responsibilities and ethics requirements of Board delegates to be attached to this job description. The President is looking at candidates for this position.

43. The Working Group has also reviewed the Expertise Pool submission form and the way in which the Expertise Pool is categorized and organized.

### **Bureau Working Group on Election Voting Procedures**

44. The Convenor, Nancy Hurtz-Soyka, provided the update.

45. The Group is meeting every two weeks and plans to finish its work in November to enable the Bureau to review the recommendations at its December meeting. It is making good progress reviewing the initial draft discussion paper. The Group will be recommending the establishment of an independent five-person Election Monitoring Committee to oversee nomination and voting procedures which would report election results directly to the Council.

### **Agenda item 5: Bureau Meetings for the rest of the Year**

46. The dates are as follows:

20 November

18 December

### **Agenda item 6: Any Other Business**

47. The video on the history and work of the United Nations produced by Jay Pozenel will be screened on UN Day in New York.

48. A UNFCU seminar on fraud prevention will be held on 20 or 21 October. A UNFCU flyer will be issued. They have slots for 1,000 participants. The President of FAFICS will make an introduction.

49. It was mentioned joint UNFCU-FAFICS-Association pre-retirement seminars in East Africa could be organized.

### **Annex A: Decisions taken at the 18 September Bureau Meeting**

## **President**

- Will provide inputs to the Work Plan
- Will invite Associations to submit 5-10 candidates for the Expertise Pool across the range of expertise needed by the Federation to conduct its work
- Will be approaching the Chair of the HLCM about FAFICS participation in future HLCM meetings
- Will send a letter to the Presidents of Associations expressing appreciation for the work of their members serving on FAFICS Standing Committees/Bureau or Council Working Groups or as FAFICS representatives to the Pension Board and its subsidiary bodies
- Will send a letter to both the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Representative in Morocco regarding the setting up of an Association in Morocco

## **Secretary**

- **Work Plan**-Will integrate inputs into a draft Bureau Work Plan to be reviewed by the Bureau at its next meeting
- **Bureau Organigram**-Will prepare a couple of new options for the Bureau organigram, including one which is accountability-based without lines and showing all Vice-Presidents equally, for review by the Bureau at its next meeting
- **Onboarding Guide**-Will prepare a revised Onboarding Guide, reflecting suggestions made by the Bureau, for review at the next meeting and prepare a power point presentation.
- **Expertise Pool**-Will remove the grade level of individuals, cluster Expertise Pool members by thematic expertise and place those already serving on Standing Committees, Council Working Group(s), the Pension Board and its subsidiary bodies in the Expertise Pool (if not already included) through an expedited process not requiring submission by an Association
- **Letter to Associations:** Will prepare a revised template of a letter inviting retirees in a country to form/revitalize a Member Association for use by the Standing Committee on Membership (to be sent via the Pension Fund)
- For the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of George Saddler, prepare a Certificate of Appreciation for his services to FAFICS to be sent to him under cover of a note from the President of FAFICS
- Will correct the Association to which Mr. Srinivasan belongs (AFUNPI) in the Council Report and Bureau minutes regarding his nomination to the ASHIL Standing Committee
- Will follow up with UNOV on the invoice for the use of the conference facilities for the 55<sup>th</sup> Council

## **Treasurer**

- Will assess the overall financial situation once all invoices from the Council have been received and paid

## **Standing Committees/Bureau Working Group**

- The Standing Committee on Communications will be submitting a revised Work Plan with additional activities. The Standing Committees on ASHIL and Membership and the Working Group on Election Procedures will be submitting their Work Plans. Any work to be done by the Bureau on succession planning will also be submitted
- Standing Committees will update their segments of the website-the template to be used will be shared with them
- The Standing Committee on Communications will place a recording of the ARICSA pre-retirement seminar on the website.
- The Standing Committee on Communications will be issuing a survey on establishing a communications network of focal points and ascertaining the experience of Associations with social media as had been decided by the Council

### **Council Working Group on Succession Planning**

- The Council Working Group on Succession Planning will review the Expertise Pool application form as part of its work