

Final Minutes of the meeting of the FAFICS Bureau

19 February 2026

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

Decisions/Actions taken

The President

- Will draft letter to Catherine Pollard, Chair of the HLCCM, to be sent in March, and shared with Bureau members for any inputs they may have.
- Will write to all Associations regarding the candidate he selected to replace Gerhard Schramek on the FAFICS delegation to the Pension Board, outlining the process that had been followed.
- Will select and announce the FAFICS representatives to be on the new Plan Review Group.
- Will consider creating a technical support team within the Standing Committee on Pension Issues to support the FAFICS representatives on the Plan Review Group, to possibly include those serving in key Pension Board subsidiary bodies such as the FSALM Committee, the candidates who had applied for Gerhard's position who were not selected, and colleagues from Associations with knowledge on pension issues.
- Will ask Associations if they have members with actuarial and other pension-related expertise.
- Will inform all Associations about the voting administrative procedures.
- Will establish the Election Monitoring Group.
- Will send a communication in March to all Associations about the elections and positions up for election.
- Will attend the opening session of the FICSA Council meeting on 23 February.
- Will attend the AAFI-AFICS-Geneva Executive Committee Meeting in Geneva on 17 March.
- Will attend the BAFUNCS Executive Committee Meeting in London at IMO on 19 March.
- Will attend the AAFU-AFUS-Paris Meeting of Officers in Paris on 20 March.
- Will send a video message to the Chile Annual Meeting on 19 March if he is unable to attend virtually
- Will send out the invitation letter to Associations for the 56th Council, to be held from 20-24 July 2026, in March.

The Secretary

- Will update the document listing the FAFICS delegates on the Pension Board, FAFICS representatives to the various Pension Board subsidiary bodies, Committees and Working Groups as well as members of FAFICS Standing Committees and Focal Points.
- Will begin preparing the provisional Agenda for the Council meeting to be sent out in late April.
 - Will create and update an electronic folder with Council documents and translations, as they are issued, with the final folder containing all documents and translations made available just prior to the Council meeting.
 - Will send out the documents for the Council meeting if possible six weeks before the Council meeting. Documents will be sent out as they become available.
- Will liaise with the key person handling UNOV's INDIGO registration of conference delegates, as was done last year.
- Will look into the possibility of digital interpretation support, through UNOV, perhaps using Microsoft Translator, and continue discussions with Deepl. about securing a one-off increase in the number of translations for the Council meeting.

The Treasurer

- Will prepare the draft letter from the President to UNFCU requesting the annual donation to FAFICS.
- Will send the 2025 Financials to the President for his review before forwarding them to the Auditors.
- Will share the final Financial Report and Audit Opinion with the Bureau.

The Council Working Group on Succession Planning

-Will forward to the President the letter the Group has drafted regarding the candidate selected to replace Gerhard Schramek on the Pension Board delegation.

Standing Committees

Standing Committee on Pension Issues

- The Chair of the Standing Committee may be able to visit Belgrade mid-April and could meet with retirees interested in forming an Association in Serbia.
- The Chair of the Standing Committee may be in Panama in mid-March and could possibly attend the meeting of the Panama Association Annual Meeting, which will include a discussion of the General Assembly resolution on pension issues.

Standing Committee on Membership Issues

- The Co-Chair of the Membership Committee may be able to visit Casablanca to meet with retirees with whom he has been working to establish an Association in Morocco.

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

- The Chair of the Standing Committee on ASHIL will prepare a paper regarding the survey the Committee sent out including lessons learned from the use of the Google Form, including regarding its cost.

Standing Committee on Communications

- The Chair will be issuing the final social media survey report, along with the announcement about convening a meeting of communications focal points towards the end of March.

Bureau Members

- Will submit any documents they are preparing for the Council by mid-May, except for documents related to pension issues, which come later.

Agenda item 1: Adoption of the Agenda

1. The draft Minutes of the Bureau meeting held on 8 January had been adopted. An email circulating them had been sent on 13 January and no comments had been received by the deadline of 20 January.
2. The decisions of the 8 January meeting are attached in the annex. The President indicated he would not go into these in detail.
3. The President indicated he had added an annex A to the agenda which include information on the President's travel plans, video messages, and President's letters.

Agenda item 2: Financial topics

4. The Treasurer is finalizing the 2025 Financials. He will send a report to the President for his review, after which it will be sent to the Auditors. The Final Report and Audit Opinion will be shared with the Bureau.
5. The Treasurer will prepare a draft letter for the President to send to the UNFCU requesting the annual donation to FAFICS to be shared with Clemens who is a member of the Board of Directors of UNFCU. The form utilized for UNFCU donation requests requires an accounting of how the resources received by UNFCU in the preceding year have been utilized.

6. The Bureau was advised that there will be more outreach from UNFCU with the retiree community in the future.

Agenda item 3: Time-critical issues

UN80 Reform agenda

7. A letter had been received from AAFU-AFUS-Paris regarding what measures FAFICS might take to combat the denigration of the UN. AAFU-AFUS talked about the possibility of lobbying the US Congress. It was also mentioned that Panama is currently a member of the Security Council and some key messages could be channeled through the Panama representatives.

8. In the discussion that followed, it was said there is a much broader global discussion going on currently, including on the whole issue of multilateralism that goes way beyond the UN80 initiative.

9. With regard to approaching countries, it was said that great caution needs to be taken. We would need to know with whom we are talking and what the messages are. Any advocacy must focus on the mission of the UN system and not on retiree benefits. In the context of this discussion, we were reminded that our mission statement indicates our primary focus is to share information with our members. It was agreed we would not act on the request of AAFU-AFUS-Paris.

10. It was said that retirees can be again advised to participate in entities like the recently created UN Advocacy Community and other such entities where former international civil servants can speak about the value of the work of the UN.

11. It was pointed out that the main concern internally is about what is going to happen to pension and health insurance benefits. Juan will be making a presentation to the next Annual Meeting of the Panama Association on 14 March. He said members need accurate, up-to-date, and objective information so people can prepare for different scenarios. He said he knows of an individual about to retire who will be taking out 100 % of the pension due to uncertainty around the future of pensions, so panic is setting in. Suzanne might be in Panama at that time and could be available for the meeting. The President could also be available virtually.

12. There will be a meeting of the Latin America Associations on 19 March, and it would be excellent to have the FAFICS President participate virtually.

13. It was also said that there is a need to continue engagement with staff unions and the upcoming FICSA Council meeting in Brindisi, which the President will attend on 23 February, will be an important opportunity for continued engagement, although not all staff unions are present in FICSA Council meetings.

14. The President advised that there will be information available after the next meeting of the Pension Board about the pension review process to be adopted over the next three years. Another communication could be sent from the President after the Pension Board meeting, especially considering how much his message of 26 January had been appreciated.

15. It was also said that there are many departures of staff in New York and Geneva, and this presents an opportunity for FAFICS to express empathy, support the next career moves of affected staff, and make known the value of membership in retiree Associations.

Letter to the Chair of the HLCM

16. The question was what the letter to the Chair of the HLCM might say on the issue of UN80. It was said the letter could remind the Chair of the role of FAFICS and the benefit to those affected by downsizing to joining local Associations. It was also said that we could share the impact downsizing is having on those leaving and the concerns of retirees as to how a reduced workforce could impact benefits. The letter can also indicate the usefulness of retirees sharing their experience and expertise in terms of the issues with which the HLCM is dealing as well as the impact their decisions may have on retirees. It is also important that we ensure our rights are protected and that retirees are not negatively impacted. The time to write is now. The President will work on a draft and then pass it by the Bureau for input.

General Assembly Resolution on a holistic review of the Pension Fund

17. The President asked if there had been any further comment on his letter to Associations of 26 January. Expressions of great appreciation for the information had been received.

18. The President advised that with respect to the review of the Pension Fund, the process is expected to take place over a three-year period, and control of the process should be managed within the Pension Board. There will be no hiring of an independent consulting entity which had not been helpful the last time such a review was carried out due to the difficulty for external entities to fully appreciate the complexities of the Pension Fund.

19. The Secretary of the Pension Board has recommended the establishment of a new Plan Review Group involving all the key players. The President will propose the two FAFICS representatives to participate in the Group. Gerhard Schramek will be available to participate. It was felt Jay Pozenel would be a good second person. One of the advantages of his participation, over and above his knowledge on pension issues, is that he is in New York with access to members of the General Assembly and ongoing discussions. Alternates may also need to be appointed. One idea raised was to create a support team to the FAFICS representatives on the Plan Review Group made up of those FAFICS representatives serving in key Pension Board subsidiary bodies such as the FSLAM Committee, the candidates who had applied for Gerhard's position who were not selected, and colleagues from Associations with knowledge on pension issues. It was also said this could then be a sub-group of the Standing Committee on Pension

Issues. This would also be a good way to build knowledge and capacity. The President will reach out to Associations for people who may have knowledge on other pension issues.

20. A budget for the Plan Review will need to be determined and presented to the Pension Board in July so it can go to the ACABQ later in 2026 for approval. There will be expenses involved including for the services of the consulting actuaries. Other experts may be brought in, under the leadership of the Pension Board.

21. The Terms of Reference for the review will need to be ready to be approved by the April meeting of the Pension Board. The Terms of Reference will include the nature of the review, what will be covered and expected options and scenarios to emanate from it which have already been broadly delineated by the General Assembly. This review will go further than previous reviews to include a review of the pension adjustment and two-track systems.

22. It was also suggested the document listing all FAFICS representatives on the Pension Board, its subsidiary bodies, Committees and Working Groups and on FAFICS Standing Committees and focal points be updated and shared with Associations.

Preparations for the 56th Council

23. INDICO will be used again for registration. It worked reasonably well for the last Council meeting because of the back-up provided by Delia and a support person within UNOV. It may be simpler this time because many people will already be in the system. We will check with UNOV on the focal point who can again provide support.

24. The President advised that he has an option for administrative support for the Council, which will involve a small amount of resources. Veronique Whalen is returning to Vienna and could help with logistics, registration, and the election process. The President had already discussed this option with Delia. It was agreed he would approach Veronique about the possibility and ascertain her willingness to serve and availability.

25. The possibility of getting digital interpretation support, through UNOV, perhaps using Microsoft Translator, will be looked into. An arrangement with Deepl for a one-off increase in the number of translations in the context of the Council meeting is being looked at. Delia has already explored this additional one-month subscription with Deepl.

26. Critical timelines for Council preparations have been established and is being followed. The invitation letter to Associations will go out in March. The provisional agenda will be developed in April. Documents will need to be submitted no later than mid-May, except for pension documents, which come later. As soon as documents are received and translated, they will be sent to the Associations, as people need time to read and digest the documents. An electronic folder will be created and updated as documents and translations are issued, with the final folder containing all documents and translations made available just prior to the Council meeting.

Council Succession Planning Working Group on Succession Planning-Interim Report

27. The President commended the Working Group for the work it has accomplished since its formation. It was mentioned that the work of the Group is bringing transparency and order to how succession planning is being handled in the organization. It was also suggested that it would be good if the Group could indicate if any of the proposals made in the Interim Report require a change to the Rules of Procedure and recommendations as to what any amendments might be. Two responses from Associations, BAFUNCS and AFICS/NY, on the Interim Report of the Working Group on Succession Planning, had been received. Those two Associations requested that their responses be shared with other Associations and it was said this kind of sharing of views across Associations was a good idea. The Secretary will take care of this. The two responses so far received had been supportive regarding the key elements of the Interim Report including the establishment and distribution of job descriptions for the positions becoming vacant in 2026, candidate reviews for technical positions, support for the creation of an ongoing succession planning entity which could be a Standing Committee, proper knowledge transfer and handover processes and the idea of having support capacity for the Secretary and Treasurer. Responses and views from other Associations are awaited.

Tenures of Officers

28. The issue of the terms of office of Officers was raised. A proposal was made to amend the terms of office of the President, and possibly the Vice-Presidents, to allow for three two-year terms, for a total of six years, with elections every two years.

29. In the discussion that followed, it was said first and foremost that the current President had done an excellent job, made many important changes and that his respect for and implementation of the Rules of Procedure had been very much appreciated by Associations. It was also said that at least for the current President, it had taken him a couple of years to get up to speed. One issue he had faced was the challenge of taking over the leadership role of the FAFICS Pension Board delegation immediately after being elected.

Noting that the tenure issue had been discussed extensively by the Council Working Group on the Rules of Procedure, Bureau members mentioned some subsequent significant changes:

- there is now a much more collegial way of working, greater transparency in the way the organization is being run, adherence to the Rules of Procedure and far greater communication with Associations all of which had restored and built trust which had previously been eroded.
- there is a lot more involvement in the work of the Pension Board with the President now part of the Spokesperson group in the Board. FAFICS is much more visible. There is longer-term engagement with colleagues from the other groups on the Pension Board. While members of the Governing Bodies group tend to change somewhat frequently, those representatives from the Organizations group tend to remain longer.
- the upcoming Plan Review in the Pension Board is a multi-year process that would benefit from continuity of delegations.

30. One model mentioned for terms of office of Presidents was the Lions Club in Panama in which Governors are elected first as Vice-Governors, a year before they assume the post of Governor. They then serve one year as Governor and subsequently remain as former Governors for one year following their one-year term.

31. It was said that regarding the FAFICS delegation to the Pension Board, the Rules of Procedure provide that the technical expertise and continuity reside in the technical members of the FAFICS delegation who can serve up to six years. Similarly, the Chair of the Standing Committee on Pension Issues, who serves as an ex-officio member of the delegation, is not term limited as Standing Committee Chairs are not term limited. The President, who also serves as an ex officio member of the delegation, is term-limited because of the broader functions of the Presidency and the need for turnover and renewal in that position.

32. The Succession Planning Working Group had recommended more robust handover processes as well as a 1 September effective date for the assumption of duties by incoming officers to support transition from one President and Vice-President to another. This would allow an outgoing President to attend the Pension Board meeting immediately following the Council, approve the Council Report and conduct handover briefings. Outgoing officers also remain an ongoing resource for incoming officers. The outgoing President could also be appointed as one of the FAFICS Pension Board delegates or to the Standing Committee on Pension Issues.

33. It was also said that instituting a longer term of office for the President would be a lost opportunity for new talent and might even deter those wanting to serve. It was said that in many organizations, the higher the position and concentration of authority, the stricter the term limits. It was also indicated that there could be considerable reputational risk if it was perceived that the terms of office of officers were being changed to enable incumbents to remain in office. It was also noted that some dissatisfaction with FAFICS had arisen a while ago, partly due to concerns about transparency in selection of individuals for positions. It was suggested that FAFICS had, to some extent, contributed to this perception through the way these processes were conducted. One would not want governance issues within FAFICS to become an issue, especially at this time when the whole pension system is under review. Bureau members also recalled the issue of the conduct of elections in 2025, and the concerns that had been raised regarding the integrity of the process, cautioning that changing the Rules of Procedure now could raise similar concerns. In order not to appear self-serving, any such proposal for changes to tenures would need to apply to future officers, not current officers. The issue of universality was also raised with the need for officers to come from different parts of the world.

34. A further concern was that it would be very difficult for the organization to remove a President who was not performing. It was said that four years is long enough to ensure meaningful change and short enough to avoid entrenchment. Presidential term limits are a

fundamental safeguard, protect the institution and the confidence of Associations in the institution.

35. With regard to Vice-Presidents, it was generally felt the current term of office for Vice-Presidents of two two-year terms for a total of four years should remain.

36. The President expressed appreciation for the discussion, kind words about himself, and indicated that the matter was closed. The elections will go forward as normally planned and according to the Rules of Procedure. The letter on elections and which positions are to be filled to go out to Associations is being prepared and will go out in March.

37. In that connection, it was said that the Election Monitoring Group (EMG) foreseen in the Election Administrative Voting Procedures needs to be set up, and Associations need to be informed about the voting procedures. The President indicated that, while perhaps administratively heavy, the new election administrative procedures, including the Election Monitoring Group, are important for building trust.

Standing Committee Updates

Standing Committee on Membership

38. The Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Membership, Marashetty Seenappa and Abdou Khadre Diakhate, provided the update.

39. A meeting of retirees interested in forming an Association in Morocco had taken place. Co-Chair Abdou Khadre Diakhate had shared all the necessary documentation with Mr. Ayat, his contact in Morocco. The plan is for Morocco to complete its preparations and be able to join the Council in July. Abdou will try to visit Morocco on his return to Senegal from the US. He is still working on Egypt and Tunisia. Forming an Association in Gambia will be pursued at a later time. Suzanne is talking to an interested group in Belgrade. She may be able to be in Belgrade in April. On the revitalization of Associations, there is action underway in Pakistan. A former WFP staff member, now a member of FFOA-Rome, is in contact with Delia and Marashetty.

Standing Committee on Pension Issues

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

41. The Chair indicated the Standing Committee is being expanded.

42. The Chair also advised that there had been meetings with the Participants group.

43. She also mentioned that about fifteen countries have issues regarding their national pension schemes and are making changes to them. There is therefore a lot of backing for the pension system review. Having a strong Plan Review team is therefore vital to moving discussions forward in the right direction.

Standing Committee on Communications

44. The Chair of the Standing Committee on Communications, Juan Casas Zamora, provided the update.

45. The Chair reported that the Committee had met with the participation of the internet service provider, Hubert. Issues that had come up had been favorably resolved. The setting up of a YouTube channel had been suggested. It would be cost-free. On this channel, one could put news items and links to YouTube as a way of facilitating communication with and among Associations. The Chair reported there are now about 2000 users monthly, accessing some 4,500 pages. Visitors are primarily from China, US, India and Europe.

46. The Committee reviewed the survey that had been conducted. There was widespread support for the creation of a network of focal points. As to the use of social media, it is currently mostly limited to WhatsApp and Viber so there is not much need for now for a strong social media presence. So there will be no need for an investment of resources at this time. Emails, the website, perhaps YouTube and WhatsApp will remain the main vehicles for communications. A letter to issue the final report of the social media survey has been drafted to send to Associations. A communications focal point meeting is being organized towards the end of March.

47. It was also said we now have a much better idea of who the focal points are for the FAFICS pillars across about 35-40 Associations. Through our virtual networks we have been able to involve more people and our outreach has been greatly expanded.

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

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

49. A meeting of focal points was held on 5 February. There were a good number of participants and they interacted well, raised good questions which were all answered. The Chair had cautioned focal points that this is not the time to suggest improvements in benefits due to the current financial constraints faced by most organizations. The focus should be on maintaining acquired rights.

50. The survey had gone out to Associations just before the meeting. There was a glitch when the survey went out, which was fixed. Draft letters accompanying the survey were prepared for Associations to send out to their members. Geneva, New York and Rome have sent out their letters. This is good because these Associations have many members.

51. The Chair reported that medical inflation continues to go up, and organization reserves are going down and there is a need to bring organization reserves back up to four to six months. There are likely to be premium increases.

52. The Chair is preparing a brief paper on the experience gained using Google Forms for the survey. This will provide useful information and lessons learned regarding the use of this methodology and will hopefully show that the cost involved was an investment well made.

Agenda item 4: Next Bureau Meetings.

53. The schedule for the next three meetings is as follows:

26 March

16 April

21 May

Agenda item 5: AOB

54. There was no other business. The President thanked the Bureau for a very productive session and a good discussion.

Annex A: Decisions/Actions taken at the 8 January Bureau meeting

Decisions/Actions taken

The President

-Will write to Catherine Pollard regarding FAFICS participation in future HLCM meetings on issues of concern to it and the possibility of making a statement at HLCM meetings as does FICSA. Suggestions for the content of the letter from Bureau members would be welcome.

-Will inform the candidate who was selected to replace Gerhard Schramek as well as the Pension Board Secretariat.

-Will attend the opening session of the FICSA Council meeting on 23 February. The meeting is being held in Brindisi from 23-27 February.

-Will attend the BAFUNCS Annual General Meeting on 14 March and visit the office in Geneva on a date to be determined.

-Will inform Associations of the dates for the 56th Council, to be held from the 20-24 July 2026, in his next Newsletter, with formal invitations to follow in March.

The Secretary

-Will look into the dates CCISUA and UNISERV meet and the possibility of the President addressing these gatherings.

- Will work with the Chair of the Standing Committee on ASHIL to issue the surveys prepared by the Standing Committee to Association Presidents, Secretaries and ASHIL focal points.

-Will post on the website the President's video statement to the Annual General Meeting of the Association in Bangladesh on 17 January after their meeting has been held.

-Will share with the Chair of the Standing Committee on ASHIL the list of those in the Expertise Pool with health insurance experience as the Standing Committee is looking for additional members.

Working Group on Election Administrative Voting Procedures

-The Bureau approved the Administrative Voting Procedures and their utilization in the 2026 elections and that any feedback received from Associations will be subsequently incorporated after which they will be formally promulgated and annexed to the Rules of Procedure.

-The Working Group will prepare a letter for the President to send to Associations regarding the Administrative Voting Procedures and will develop a plan for next steps for their implementation.

The Council Working Group on Succession Planning

-The Interim Report of the Council Working Group was endorsed as well as the recommendation that it be sent to Associations in January, to include the job descriptions.

-The Working Group will prepare the letter for the President forwarding the Council Working Group's Interim Report to Associations.

-The Working Group will prepare a letter from the President to those nominees not selected for the position on the FAFICS delegation to the Pension Board.

Standing Committees

-Standing Committee Chairs will prepare their job descriptions.

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

-The Chair of the Standing Committee on ASHIL will work with the Secretary to issue the surveys prepared by the Standing Committee to Association Presidents, Secretaries and ASHIL focal points.

Standing Committee on Communications

- Will ensure the translation of the FAFICS@50 book into French and Spanish and that an e-version is available in French and Spanish in time for the Council meeting in July.

Bureau Members

- Adriana suggested a review of the current Rules of Procedure with regard to tenures. This issue will be taken up at the Bureau meeting on 19 February.

