



AFICS NEWSLETER

ASSOCIATION OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS (AFICS ADDIS ABABA)

Volume 23 Issue No.23



Eshetu Eguale, Konjit H/Selassie, Menbere Zena
Thank you for serving AFICS with dedication

AFICS

Volume 23 Issue No.23

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i. **Appreciation Message from former 1st Vice President**



Woz. Konjit H/Selassie

I hereby would like to send a small note as a gesture of thanks to the respected AFICS Board members and the staff in connection to the interesting and enjoyable luncheon ceremony, gift and certificate presented to us honoring our services as Board Members, of which I treasure most.

This kind of recognition is quite motivating and it surely creates a sense of belongingness for the membership.

Therefore, allow me to thank the whole AFICS Board personnel for your commitment and job well – done

Respectfully yours.



The chairperson of the Social Committee, departing members and the President of AFICS

ii. Appreciation Message from former 2nd Vice President



Ato Eshetu Eguale

Thank you very much for the wonderful luncheon and the thoughtful gift — both were sincerely appreciated. I would also like to extend my warm gratitude to the Social Committee and the Secretariat of AFICS for their efforts in planning, coordinating, and executing such an enjoyable and well-organized event. Your teamwork and dedication made the occasion truly memorable.

As a community of retired international civil servants, AFICS continues to bring us together through shared values, lasting friendships, and a spirit of service that remains alive long after our professional duties have ended. During my two years on the Board, especially in my role as Vice President, I was honored to witness the commitment, professionalism, and unity that sustain this special association.



A remarkable gathering of UN Retirees at the Eyubelyu National Palace.

It is truly a privilege to walk this journey with friends who continuous to carry the spirit of service in their hearts.

With warm regards and gratitude

Editorial

Seble Demeke
Editor-in-Chief

To our readers, we are delighted to present to you two Newsletters Volume 23 Issue 23 and Volume No.22, Issue 22. Volume No. 22 covers mainly the Seminar on Knowledge Transfer: preparing for retirement in the UN System. The Seminar, which took place in May 6, 2025 and was prepared in collaboration with the UNECA, Knowledge Management Service Section (KMSS).

Newsletter No.23, includes new activities undertaken by the Management and its Board since the last GA in 2024. It includes the outcome from the 55th Council Session of the Federation of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS), which was held in Vienna, Austria as well as a message from the President of AFICS addressed during the UN 80th Anniversary. The first time for the President of AFICS to have such an opportunity in the history of the Association, which contributed to put AFICS on the lime light of the UN system operations. Furthermore, a well-deserved farewell lunch was organized by the Social Committee for former AFICS members who have served the Association with commitment and dedication. A brief explanation on a Handbook for UN Pensioners on health insurance matters and the outcome of the monthly meeting with the Chief of Staff compounded by a brief explanation of the historical visit to the Eyobeluy (National) Palace are part of the Newsletter. In addition, two interviews with Woz. Zertihune Belay, the Chair Person of the Social Committee, and the Eyobeluy Place Tour Guide Mr. Benyam Belay are also included in Newsletter No.23.

We hope that the 2 different Newsletters are helpful to AFICS members to know what has been accomplished by the New Management and Board members, who took the responsibility during the 2024 General Assembly meeting. The management and the Board urges members to be active and give your feedbacks and most of all promote the Association and bring in new members.

Why Join AFICS?

By Seble Demeke

Communication and Publication Focal Person

I am honored to share with you why I believe we need to invite new members, whether retired or not, to join AFICS. While all we do requires resources to achieve our objectives, it is equally essential to understand and be convinced about why we should be part of a group which contributes its time, money and knowledge voluntarily.

In our modern world, the prevalence of greed and selfishness, which prioritize individual well-being, has overshadowed such fundamental human values as caring, sharing, loving, and supporting one another. Hence, in this challenging time, the necessity to advocate for those who cannot speak for themselves, due to several reasons, has become more critical than it has ever been.

The reality of today's world is that the global aging population is rapidly increasing in many parts of the world, while in other parts, the youth demographic is growing fast and has gone beyond the ability of nations to effectively manage this untapped reservoir of human resources. As we are witnessing, this situation results in the movement of people in millions to search for a more promising future. Their difficult situations are exacerbated by conflicts both among and within nations, leading to an escalation of warfare between countries, as they form geographic alliances in a race to emerge victorious. These migrations aimed at sharing increasingly scarce resources is happening via road, air and sea with the attendant risk of the loss of thousands of invaluable human lives. Government policies are ineffective in halting the surge of migrations. The Police forces of various countries, hazardous electric fences, and policy resolutions being made at international gatherings concerning the environment, climate change, and market proposals remain mere rhetoric and fail to stem the overwhelming human influx that is sweeping across national borders.

Advanced technologies are being introduced nearly every day. Some of these inventions are poised to replace human roles. They are referred to as digital transformation with the most recent being Artificial Intelligence (AI). These advancements are leaving behind three-quarters of the global human population, most of them seniors who are grappling with the effects of Climate change including both natural and manmade disasters leading to catastrophic floods, wildfires, soil erosions and hurricanes. On top of the natural disasters caused by humans, these senior citizens are struggling to survive conflicts and wars, lack of justice and basic violation of their human rights. In a specific case regarding small pensioners of AFICS, retirees are unable to be refunded for the medical bills they pay regularly for themselves and dependent spouses from their nominal retirement income. Most of the time, lack of basic needs for survival is becoming the norm for these groups. The current situation is the proof that the gap between those who have and those who have not is expanding more than ever before. Sad to say that our UN retirees with small pensions fall within the latest group.

In this competitive, digitalized and fast changing world, UN retirees, members of AFICS, and other Aging Societies around the world are being left behind without their knowledge and understanding of what goes on around the world which affects them directly. **These, and the many other facts mentioned above makes the existence of AFICSs indispensable. The Association is giving support in the areas of issuing ID Cards, Car Passes, handling the issuance of Certificates of Entitlement without which pensioners cannot be paid on time their pensions and health insurance benefits.**

AFICS has also started new initiatives in collaboration with UNECA and the UN Resident Coordinator's office. Some of these initiatives include organizing seminars, the first one being on Knowledge Transfer.

The seminar successfully brought together Heads of different organizations, prospective retirees and invited high officials. Substantive coverage about the programme was posted by the UNECA Communication office on its Intranet website. AFICS has designed a work programme to continue such collaboration in other fields of UN activities to benefit current and future retirees. It has also agendas which require follow-up action, such as the issue of small pensioners mentioned above, recruited during the prevailing cost of living era and are currently faced with challenges of coping with the increasing cost of living. Having a representative of UNJSPF office here in Addis Ababa to facilitate the implementation of policies and procedures which are changing frequently as well as having a Cigna representative office to facilitate the complicated policies of the CIGNA insurance company and other self-health insurance providers for UN retirees, are AFICS's priorities. All these recurring issues initiated by AFICS Addis Ababa are presented to the UN General Assembly at different times through its representative, the Federation of the Association of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS), but still awaiting results.

Considering all the above, the AFICS Board would like to encourage retirees who are not yet members as well as current staff members approaching retirement to join the Association. By collaborating and joining hands, we can positively impact the lives of numerous individuals who have dedicated their productive years to serving humanity under the United Nations.

Prepared by:

Seble Demeke
Communication and Publication Focal Person
AFICS Newsletter

Members of the Executive Board



President Emeritus - Tedla Teshome

Executive Members

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Molla Sharew, WFP | President |
| 2. Almaz Kassa, UNHCR | 1 st Vice President |
| 3. Ebenezer First-Quao, UNECA | 2 nd Vice President |
| 4. Dr. Afework Ayele, UNICEF | Advisor to the President |
| 5. Azeb Tadesse, UNECA | Board Secretary |

Other Board Members

Asrat Tilhahun, **UNDP**
Aytenew Birhanu, **WFP**
Feleketch Worku, **UNHCR**
Mattewos Adaye, **WFP**
Workneh Degefu, **WMO**
Yilma W/Emmanuel, **UNECA**
Zerthune Belay, **UNECA**

FOCAL PERSONS

Mattewos Adaye	Pension
Seble Demeke	Communication & Publication
Tiruneh Sinnshaw	Health/Insurance

Initiatives undertaken by the Management and the Board during 2025

Initiative 1. Efforts in obtaining list of future retirees for 2025 were made with different UN Agencies through the UN Resident Coordinator's Offices (UNRCOs). The purpose of the initiative was to enhance collaboration between AFICS and HR offices of UN Agencies.

Outcome: This new initiative was accepted by the RC's office and the first meeting to further discuss the issue was held during the month of November 2025. At that meeting it was agreed that the issues which include requesting of documentation for Pension, Health Insurance and related matters, as well as registration and benefits of joining AFICS, be discussed in a seminar to be organized by AFICS.

Accordingly, a very successful seminar was conducted on the 3rd week of December 2025, where among others, Mr. Rajiv Nair, Chair Person of HR working group of UNECA was present.

Initiative 2. The AFICS Board also discussed thoroughly on how to organize a Fund Raising to cover its increasing cost for new activities and, most of all, to cover the participation of AFICS members at the FAFICS yearly Session.

Outcome: A Fund Raising Committee which included 5 members has been set up.

Initiative 3. The Board continued to work on the need to inform members, especially those who are able to pay their contributions in USD. Such a contribution is needed to cover some especial circumstances that require payments in USD, such as the participation of AFICS at the FAFICS Council Sessions held every year.

Outcome: The account has been opened and some members have started to pay their dues in USD.

Initiative 4. Former UN Civil Servants Association (AFICS) has never been involved during the preparation of the UN Day Celebration nor was it invited as one of its guest speakers. This year's celebration, the 80th Anniversary of the UN was a very important event for AFICS, since most of today's retirees have served the UN during the past 80 years.

Outcome: For the first time in the history of the Association, its President made a presentation for the UN Day Celebration of 2025.

Initiative 5. Another first time historical achievement of AFICS is a Handbook for ***UN Pensioners on Health and Insurance has been issued to be distributed at GA of 2026.***

Acknowledgement by the President of AFICS



—Molla Sharew, President, AFICS Addis Ababa

It is with great pleasure and a profound sense of honor that I extend my heartfelt appreciation to our dedicated Board Members and committee focal points for their exceptional contributions to the achievements of our collective goals.

I also wish to sincerely thank UN/ECA, whose generous support since the establishment of AFICS in February 1999 has been invaluable. Their continued provision of office space, equipment, stationery, and the free printing of our newsletters has greatly enabled our work. We are equally grateful to UN/WFP for covering the travel costs that allowed the AFICS President to participate in the FAFICS 55th Session and 50th Anniversary in Vienna, Austria. The support received from the UN RC/HC Office has also been instrumental, and we deeply appreciate their collaboration.

While we celebrate our accomplishments, we remain mindful of the challenges facing many retirees. The high cost of medicines and medical consultations, compounded by the absence of Cigna in Addis Ababa, places a heavy burden on retirees, particularly those living below the poverty line, whose pensions are increasingly insufficient to meet basic needs.

Despite these challenges, our commitment to serving the retiree community remains unwavering. We continue to liaise with the UNJSPF and organize events that bring members together, such as the recent visit to the National Palace, which was a source of joy for all participants.

Looking ahead, the General Assembly will review the renaming of our Association from AFICS Addis Ababa to AFICS Ethiopia to better reflect our national scope. Members also attend funeral services whenever an AFICS member passes away, demonstrating solidarity and support for bereaved families.

We will continue to attract prospective retirees and ensure that all members enjoy the support and benefits they deserve. We are also preparing an Occupational Group List to enable members to contribute their professional expertise.

Since the last General Assembly, we have achieved remarkable milestones: a successful seminar in May 2025, the publication of two newsletters, and the preparation of a comprehensive Health and Insurance Handbook by the Health and Health Insurance Committee. AFICS also marked the UN 80th Anniversary and initiated collaborative relations with AFICS Kenya to address shared concerns.

Looking forward, I am inspired by the opportunities before us. Strengthening our community, expanding member engagement, and enhancing our collective impact remain our priorities. I

encourage all members to participate actively in upcoming events and the seminar for future retirees planned for December 2025. Leadership in AFICS is a privilege that requires voluntary dedication, and I am confident that, together, we can continue to serve with commitment and purpose.

Thank you once again for this opportunity. I remain committed to working with all of you to build an even more vibrant, inclusive, and supportive AFICS.

With best regards,

Molla Sharew
President, AFICS Addis Ababa



Source: Google website

I. Farewell organized for former Board Members.

The AFICS Board meeting which took place on the 8th of October 2025, decided that the Association should start a new culture of acknowledging those who have served their former colleagues by giving their time, money and knowledge.



AFICS Board Members and staff present at the farewell luncheon

Accordingly, a farewell lunch programme was organized by the Social Committee, for recognizing and appreciating their hard work. The three AFICS members, who had completed their service mandate were, Ms. Menbere Zena, Mr. Eshetu Eguale and Ms. Konjit Haileselassie. All three had served the Association with commitment and dedication. Among them, however, Woz. Menbere Zena was the pioneer who had served AFICS for over 10 years.

All were presented with Certificates of long service, awards with framed photos for their outstanding contribution and exemplary team work. The luncheon was graced by various speakers making speeches of appreciation.

Thank you messages by a departing Board member.

From: Eshetu Eguale: To our friends and colleagues, AFICS Board members

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for the luncheon organized on behalf of myself and my two colleagues, who decided to end the service we provided to AFICS retirees for several years.

My contribution to the Association was with commitment, devotion and most of all with great pleasure in doing so.

The lunch was delightful and most of all the company was exceptional, just how it should be among families and friends.

I wish the best of luck to AFICS Addis Ababa and thank you again for the memorable get-together

II. Address by Molla Sharew, President of AFICS Addis Ababa, On the occasion of the United Nations 80th Anniversary Celebration, October 24, 2025



Molla Sharew, President of AFICS

Your Excellency, Executive Secretary of the UNECA, Representative of the African Union, Representative of the Government of Ethiopia,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As President of the Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS), it is a great honour and privilege for me to speak on this special occasion.

This 80th anniversary of the United Nations is both a celebration and a moment of reflection, an opportunity to honour a lifetime of service, to recognize the UN's remarkable achievements, and to reaffirm our shared commitment to peace, human rights, and development.

For many of us, this anniversary is deeply personal. It is a time to remember our colleagues, to reflect on shared experiences, and to rekindle the hope we invested in the UN's ideals. It is a moment to honour the legacy of our collective service. We, the retirees, remain; and will always remain; an integral part of the UN family.

Serving under the UN system was both a privilege and a responsibility. It afforded us fair pensions, comprehensive health coverage, opportunities for professional growth, and, above all, the honour of serving humanity with dignity and purpose. For this, we remain profoundly grateful.



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AFICS officials present at the UN 80 Anniversary

Our years of service taught us invaluable lessons, about the world, about diversity and culture, and about the inseparable link between peace and development. Indeed, without peace, there can be no development.

As we celebrate this milestone, we retirees wish to emphasize the importance of the next generation, those who will continue the noble work of building a better world through this great Organization. Despite the global pressures and conflicts we face today, we urge them to remain steadfast in their dedication to the ideals of the United Nations and to inspire them to carry forward the UN's mission with unity, purpose, and courage, to set aside differences and work together for the common good.

AFICS Addis Ababa holds a special place in this journey. It was the first AFICS office established in Africa, and today it serves the largest number of UN retirees; about one thousand, on the continent. Our mandate is to support former UN civil servants and their families by ensuring that their rights and privileges are protected and upheld in accordance with UN rules and procedures. We also assist prospective retirees in navigating the often-challenging transition from active service to retirement.

AFICS also provides vital support to UN organizations by assisting retirees in matters like pension documentation, insurance and related administrative issues; saving the agencies considerable time and resources.



In the center of the photo is the Executive Secretary of the UNECA, Mr. Claver Gatete, H.E. Amba. Birhanu Tsegaye, MOFA, Chairperson of the AUC H.E. Mohamoud Ali Youssouf and President of AFICS Mr. Molla Sharew,

As we look ahead, let us continue to uphold the principles and values that have guided the United Nations for 80 years; peace, justice, and human dignity for all.

LONG LIVE THE UNITED NATIONS

Thank you

III. AFICS's Handbook for UN Pensioners on Health and Insurance



UN PENSIONERS,
their Spouses & Eligible Children in Ethiopia

Adapted from AFUNPI's handbook of March 2025



Reviewed and Presented by Ato. Tiruneh Sinnshaw, AFICS Focal Person for Health and Insurance

The Handbook for UN Pensioners and their families is the first of its kind to be produced by AFICS. It is timely, describing as it does, how UN retirees should go about securing the right information and services from their insurance providers as well as UN Health officials. The Handbook also describes the rights and responsibilities of UN Retirees and their service providers, how specific UN rules help retirees to receive timely responses in the area of reimbursement, transparent management and emergency services in the event of medical evacuation. Until now, Insurance companies and various UN Health Committees have been unable to come up with an acceptable formula for processing requests by all members, active staff and UN retirees.

One of the many challenges facing AFICS Addis Ababa has to do with the lack of adequate management regarding the handling of health issues by designated UN Officials. This is compounded with a lack of timely responses by Cigna Insurance company with regard to approvals for urgent medical treatment within and outside of duty stations. Another major complaint is getting refunds for the payments made by retirees. There is always a reason given for not paying the refund to UN retirees. AFICS has been continuously requesting to be part of the UN Health Committee which deals with health matters of active staff and former UN Civil Servants but with no success even though a large number of the Insurance holders are UN retirees.

Additional issues which must be collectively addressed by the GA regarding the Health and Health Insurance matters of AFICS members, UN retirees, will require a coordinated response by all those concerned.

IV.

AFICS Seminar for future retirees held on December 23, 2025
Interview with Mr. Molla Sharew, President of AFICS



Mr. Sajiv Nair, Chairperson of HR Working Group, UNECA Mr. Molla Sharew, President AFICS)



The Organizing Committee of the Seminar and the Chief of HR Working Group, UNECA

AN: Good morning and thank you Mr. President for accepting to be interviewed by AFICS Newsletter. My questions are as follows:

1. What was the main purpose of organizing such a Seminar related to the UN System HR Offices?

MS: Thank you for this question. I prefer to start our discussion by thanking Mr. Sajiv Nair, Chairperson of HR working group UNECA, for taking his valuable time to participate in our seminar. Sharing his knowledge about the rules and regulations of the UN System regarding retirement has enriched the knowledge of participants. His presence also attracted many former and current HR Officers and retirees to attend the seminar. Thank you again Mr. Nair for your valuable contribution.

Another staff member who I would like to extend my sincere gratitude is Mr. Getachew Sahle, Common Operation Analyst, Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Ethiopia, who gave his full support by contacting all UNCT HR Officers, not only to attend the seminar, but also to provide us with all the necessary information that we need to organize the Seminar. Thank you Mr. Getachew your assistance is highly appreciated by AFICS and in particular by its Board. In addition, the seminar has attracted many participants including some from UNHCC, active HR Officers, retirees and future retirees. Thank you all for having made our seminar a success. Let's keep on working together and making AFICS Addis Ababa the best service provider.



Enthusiastic participants during the seminar





I would like to begin by clarifying that, AFICS is not just a social club but a support and knowledge organization. The seminar keeps AFICS useful and visible to retirees. Useful seminars encourage new retirees to join AFICS and existing members to stay active. Higher participation strengthens AFICS legitimacy when dealing with UN bodies or partners.

AFICS is an institution which has been managed by UN retirees on a voluntary basis, for the last 26 years. The main objective of the Association is to support UN retirees, including those who come back to their country of origin after serving the UN in different capacities around the world. AFICS is a self-financing Association created with commitment, devotion and a clear vision. This seminar for future retirees comes as the second of its kind with the main purpose of facilitating knowledge sharing, networking with all the UN HR Offices functioning in Ethiopia and encouraging the active participation of new retirees.

AFICS is organizing this seminar to engage future retirees and to showcase our expertise and knowledge on how to follow correct procedures immediately after or even before the retirement date. The requirements to be met and forms to be filled are cumbersome and require a systematic and professional approach using the experience of current and former UN international civil servants. The idea behind such seminars is also to pass on to new retirees, information about lifestyles after retirement from the UN. The seminar also encourages new retirees to become members and active participants of the Association. It will create a platform to capture experiences and transfer knowledge. Therefore, I believe that the seminar is very useful to all concerned. Specifically, the Association believes in articulating the voice of its members on many issues they are faced with in terms of tackling the complex and complicated problems of pension and health insurance benefits. New and/or future retirees can also benefit by learning through the seminars being organized by AFICS the immediate needs of where to start regarding issuance of ID cards for them and their eligible family members, car passes and health insurance certificates and visits to UNHCC. All these and other relevant issues will be clarified and facilitated by AFICS, created to support and defend the rights of UN retirees. Therefore, I would like again to take this opportunity to advise both UN HR Offices and future retirees to participate when such a seminar is organized by AFICS which is done in collaboration with its stakeholders, the UN System Organizations.

2. What does this seminar contribute to the overall goals of the Association?

The Seminar creates a sense of community whereby retirees connect with former colleagues, especially those who are living alone. Retirees feel more secure and informed, reduced anxiety about finances, health, and aging and better decision-making. As mentioned in question No.1, the main goal of the Association is to provide support to UN Retirees in several areas but primarily in the areas of pensions and health insurance. This job cannot be done by AFICS alone. It needs the contributions of experienced volunteers who are willing to share their expertise on behalf of all retirees.

3. How do you assess the outcome of the first Seminar on Knowledge Transfer? What did the Association learn from it?

MS: Thank you for this question Woz. Seble. As you know very well the support and services of AFICS being provided to UN retirees were not always fully understood by all its beneficiaries including the UN organizations which are the main stakeholders. The fact of the matter is that if AFICS was not in place, all the UN retirees would have been by their doors asking for their help. At this point I would like to take this opportunity to thank you the former Deputy Executive Secretary of the UNECA, Mr. Antonio Pedro, who advised us to organize such a seminar, which will benefit everyone current and in particular future retirees on how to manage the transition from professional life into retirement. I would also like to stress that, after the first Seminar on Knowledge Transfer, members as well as future retirees are more aware about the services being provided by AFICS. The justification for that situation is during 2025 and mostly after the Seminar on Knowledge transfer, our new members list has grown from 29 in 2024 to 52 in 2025, which is over 40 percent. In addition, the participation of higher officials including the UN Resident Coordinator, the Chief of Staff of the Executive Secretary of UNECA, Chief of the UNECA Library, Chief of Security and Safety Service, Chief Medical Officer, UNHCC, a Human Resources Officer from UNECA as well as the promotion made by the UNECA Communication team on their website has benefited significantly to bring light to the services of AFICS Addis Ababa to its current and future members. I would like to conclude by saying that the first seminar was an eye opener to make AFICS's service visible to its stakeholders.

4. If there is one possible success for AFICS by conducting this seminar, what do you think it would be?

MS: I would say networking with the appropriate stakeholders.

5. As the President of AFICS what interests you most as its leader?

I believe that we have to help UN retirees. Despite my other personal engagements of all my other activities, I am willing and interested to give back by supporting those who have served the UN throughout their professional life. Supporting others who are in need has been my professional life before and continues to be my preference after retirement.

6. What are the biggest challenges that you anticipate for this position?

I believe that when people volunteer to serve AFICS, they should know that they have to give, their time, knowledge and at times resources. There shouldn't be reasons to prevent them from doing or carrying out their commitments. Those who are elected to help retirees should do so. That is the

current challenge that I am facing as the President of AFICS. Everyone one, elected has to contribute to help UN retirees as promised during the election time at the GA meeting.

Thank you Mr. President for your valuable perspective.

V. Information obtained from the 55th Council Session of the Federation of the Association of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS)

The 55th Council Session of the Federation of the Association of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) was held in Vienna on July 14-17, 2025. AFICS Addis Ababa was represented by the President and the Chair of the Health Insurance Committee.



Representatives of AFICS at the 55th session of the council of the Federation of the Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) which took place 14-17 July 2025 at Vienna, Austria

As you may have known, FAFICS is the world-wide umbrella organization uniting 64 associations of former UN Civil Servants. Its purpose is to represent, defend and protect the interests of UN retirees around the world. The federation focuses, among others, on matters of pensions, health insurance, and issues which could affect the everyday livelihood of its members. The Federation meets every year to discuss matters of interest to its members.



Representatives of AFICS Addis Ababa with the Secretary of FAFICS at the 55th Council Session

AFICS Addis Ababa has been a member of FAFICS since 1999 and attending its Session since the beginning, taking advantage of the Forum to bring out its challenges and share with other AFICSs. The two main points raised by AFICS Addis Ababa representatives at the 55th Council Session included the overdue request of having a United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) office established in Addis Ababa which has a membership exceeding 1000 retirees supported by the Addis Ababa office. The second request had to do with an urgent need to open a representative office of Cigna HEALTH Insurance in the UNECA compound. AFICS Addis Ababa believes that its retirees are not getting the deserved attention from CIGNA. Third was a request to organize the 56th Session of the Council in Addis Ababa, which would have been the first of its kind to be held in Africa was also put forward and unfortunately rejected by the Council in favor of Vienna, Austria, for the 2nd time in a row.

Relevant decisions made at the Session included, among others, Decision 55/8, to include the issue of UN IDs for retirees in its work plan. Decision 55/9 deals with, that the Bureau will take up the sending of a follow-up communication to United Nations Development Coordination Office(UNDCO) regarding collaboration with FAFICS Member Associations at country level. At Decision 55/14, the Council approved the Seven recommendations, as presented by the Standing Committee on After-service Health Insurance and Long-Term care (ASHIL). In regard to Health Insurance, the President of FAFICS further stated that “Receiving health insurance that we have paid into over our active years is not a burden, but an acquired right of eligible retirees and current staff”. In addition, the President informed the Council that he “hopes to visit one or two Associations next year” meaning in 2026. Let’s hope AFICS Addis Ababa will be considered as one of the Associations to be visited.

VI. The outcome of the Monthly meeting with the Chief of Staff, Mr. Aboubaker Diaw



Mr. Aboubaker Diaw focal person of the ES for AFICS

Meeting with the Chief of Staff on monthly basis is one of the many new initiatives that AFICS has started since the last GA. The primary purpose of the meeting is to maintain and improve the good relationship that the Association has since its beginning in 1999. Secondly, such a meeting will also help to maintain the access we had with the office of the Executive Secretary through Mr. Antonio Pedro, former Deputy Executive Secretary of UNECA and a supporter of AFICS Addis Ababa. Lastly, the meeting will also contribute to discuss matters related to UN

retirees, such as health insurance, usage of UNECA conference rooms, issuance of ID cards for families of UN retirees. In addition, it is important to note and acknowledge, that the new focal person, Mr. Aboubaker Diaw, has honored AFICS by his presence during the Seminar on Knowledge Transfer conducted in collaboration with the UNECA Library, Management Service Section (KMSS).

During our first meeting with the Chief of Staff, the points discussed were related to the increase of payments by UN retirees for services they receive from UNHCC, and request for AFICS to be present at the UN Health Committee which meets regularly. The Chief of Staff informed the meeting that the outcome of the discussions he had with the Staff Committee of the United Nations Health Care Center (UNHCC), is that the increase in payment to UN Retirees medical bill is not due to the dollar as explained, but rather due to the devaluation of the local currency. Hence, the cost of visiting UNHCC doctors has not changed in USD. However, he mentioned that the Committee, although they don't have control over the issue, have promised they will try to look at other options where they can make a limited reduction. They stressed that whatever change is going to be introduced, the result may not be very significant. The historical background and facts of the issue was further explained by AFICS's representative for Health and Insurance.

In response to the request that AFICS put forward regarding having AFICS's representation in UNHCC Committee, the response was that, a written request needs to be sent to the Chair of the Committee since such decisions are made by the Committee. There are three committees. Technical, operational and the Heads of Agencies Committee which meet once a year. AFICS had requested to be represented at least at the technical committee but with no effect. Regarding the UNHCC in general, there is a Steering Committee which manages the clinic and they are the one who allows who should join the committee. The heads of agencies committee meets once a year.

The Chief of Staff further explained that the use of digital tools, according to UNHCC, are introduced to make life easy for many members. But for those who cannot use digital connections, UNHCC said they will keep the old system.

The Cigna Insurance issue was also raised by Chief of Staff. The information received was that, currently, they are in the process of reviewing their structure as an institution and the issue of UN retirees will be reviewed in the process. The request of having a Cigna office here in Addis Ababa was also raised with them, which they say will be considered along with the other institutional reforms taking place.

AFICS Communication raised the fact that the representative of Former UN Civil Servants Association (AFICS) has never been involved during the preparation of the UN Day Celebration nor was it invited as one of its guest speakers. This year's celebration, the 80th Anniversary of the UN is a very important event for AFICS, since most of today's retirees have served the UN during the past 80 years. The Association members have the experience, knowledge, education

and are committed to the UN Charter. Therefore, with your kind support and intervention the Association would like its President to be given a few minutes to speak at the ceremony acknowledging the contribution of the world organization to peace, human rights and development to mention just a few.

The response by the Chief of Staff was, I fully agree, and I will try to bring the issue to the appropriate committee. This request has been carried out and the President of AFICS for the first time since its establishment presented his statement on behalf of AFICS.

VII. Visit organized by the Social Committee to the Eyubelyu (National) Palace



Visitors of UN retirees at the main entrance of the Palace

The primary purpose of AFICS's Social Committee is to bring together UN retirees by organizing social activities such as the historical visit of the Eyubelyu National Palace which took place on the 9th of November 2025. Activities such as visits of other historical places, promote community engagement, strengthen relationships and improve communication among members are plans currently in the pipe line. Depending on the determination of its leadership, available time and resources, the newly structured Social Committee could promote culture, history, and create opportunity for networking, especially with current and future UN retirees.



One of the historical corridors inside the Palace



Members of UN Retirees present during the Palace visit

The visit to the historical Palace

The visit to the historical Eyubelyu (National) Palace could be defined as a moment of revisiting a glorious period in the history of Ethiopia. The visit created awareness, it was educational, and

most of all installed a sense of pride, belongingness and ownership of history to the visitors. Most of it (if not all), was reliving the history of a great nation and a remarkably unique country.

The arrangement in the interior of the Palace included looking at souvenirs, paintings, old vintage cars and many more artefacts which are beyond explanation and expectation. Everything was beautifully arranged and displayed professionally with the sequence of time, history accompanied with photos of heads of State from around the world who came invited by Emperor Haile Selassie and others on their own to visit this country which continuously, up to the present day, overcomes its challenges and keeps on making yet remarkable history. The Tour Guide assigned by the Palace, Ato. Benyam Belay, a 21-year-old young man was exceptionally dignified, patient, focused and just right for the occasion. He delivered a remarkable history of a nation, all of which took place long before he was born.

A. Interview with the Chairperson of the Social Committee – Woz. Zertihune Belay.



Woz. Zertihune Belay

AN: Woz. Zertihune, thank you for sparing your time to be interviewed by AFICS Newsletter.

Q1. As the Chair Person of the Social Committee, how do you feel about the visit we had at the Eyubelyue (National) Palace?

ZB. Thank you very much Woz. Seble. I can say that everyone present was happy and I was also very happy about the whole preparation, the visit, the lunch everything went well as planned. We thank God for that success.

Q2. What is the next agenda of the Social Committee?

ZB. The Social Committee has numerous activities lined up. But we have to consult our members and get a feedback from them. After that we proceed and organize our next

programme based on the wishes and interests of our members. Since the holiday seasons are beginning soon, our next activities will be planned for next year, 2026.

Q3. Do you have other programmes different than visits? If so what could that be?



Group photos of AFICS members at one of the sights at the Eyubelyu Palace

ZB. That is a good question. I really don't have anything in mind now. But we can always organize some activities such as a meeting led by our retirees having a wealth of experience on different issues.

Q4. Do you have a plan to invite intellectuals outside of the UN System, such as University Professors, Medical Doctors, Nurses and other Social Workers?

ZB. Yes. If they can spare their time and will be willing to share their experiences, the Committee is ready to support such initiatives. We have so many professionals in our country, from different government offices, NGOs, who can get involved and be part of our programme. We will discuss the issue primarily with our Board and then with our members during the next General Assembly which will be in February 2026.



Historical cars used by Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia for receiving foreign dignitaries including Queen Elizabeth the 2nd of UK; President Richard Nixon of USA, President Charles de Gaulle of France; President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and President Tito of former Yugoslavia. These are among many other heads of states and dignitaries who visited Ethiopia.

AN. This is a very good move which will inspire others to get involved and be part of the Intellectual Community of the UN System retirees, an opportunity to share their knowledge and learn from each other. The Social Committee of AFICS will also prove that UN retirees do not stop their commitment to the UN Charter, after being active members. They are willing to share what they know and open to learn new ideas which will benefit humanity.

Q5. Any message to AFICS members and/or to anyone who works for the UN System Organizations whether they are retirees or not?

ZB. Certainly, my advice to all UN Staff including retirees is to keep on being active, strong, look forward, have focus on your goals and don't give up in anything you want to do. It will be done with God's will.

AN: Thank you Woz. Zertihune for your input to AFICS Newsletter No.23 and for organizing the visit to the Eyubelyu Palace.

B. Interview with Mr. Benyam Belay, Eyubelyu (National) Palace Tour Guide



Mr. Benyam Belay

AN: Mr. Benyam welcome to the Office of the United Nations Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS Addis Ababa). We are very happy and thank you for your gracious and respectful hospitality during our visit to the Eyubelyu Palace.

BB: I am also very glad for your visit to the Eyubelyu Palace.

AN: The reason I wanted to interview you is because, yesterday when you narrated the history of the Palace, your explanations as well as descriptions were supported with facts and deep knowledge of the Palace's history. These happenings took place before you were borne. We were all impressed with your dignity, accuracy and respectfulness.

My first question is who is Ato. Benyam, where did you go to school and what is the level of your education?

BB: My name is Benyam Belay. I am born and raised in the city of Addis Ababa, Meskel Square area. I graduated from the Tourism Training Institute (TTI) in 2025 with a two-year Diploma. I started working as a Tour Guide 2 months before my graduation which gave me a 7months of work experience.

AN: It shows that you have full knowledge of the history of the Palace which is actually the history of Ethiopia and capable of passing it to your visitors. How do you feel about your job?

BB: I am proud of what I am doing. I am very happy to be able to pass on the history of my country to the visitors of the Palace. I am also happy for the recognition I get from such groups like the UN Retirees.



AN: True, we are also proud of you.

AN: You are a young man of 22 years old, what is your future plan? Are you going to continue doing what you are now doing or do you have other plans?

BB: My future plan is to work harder and make myself a professional Tour Guide which is what I am doing now.

AN: It seems you like your job.

BB: Yes, I do. I like what I am doing now.

AN: Excellent, when you like and respect your job, the result will be rewarding. What kind of a message would like to pass to UN Civil Servants who are at similar age like yours?

BB: My advice to them is to work hard and have patience in what they do. Hard work pays no matter where you are working. Never give up until you get what you have wished and or dreamed.

AN: How about a Tour Guide profession don't you want to recommend it to them?

BB: I highly recommend a Tour Guide profession to whoever has an interest in the profession. It is a very respectful job and they will be unofficial Ambassadors to their country. In the process they will also be aware of their country's history.

AN: Any other comment?

BB: Yes. I am grateful for the opportunity given to me to explain what I am doing. I am also delighted for being present, for the first time in the UN Compound. I extend my appreciation to you personally for giving me this opportunity.

AN: It was a pleasure talking to you and I wish you good luck in your future endeavor.



Mr. Costa Vernicos signing the Palace's Visitors Book on behalf of UN Retirees



The end of the historical visit to the Eyubelue National Pala

VIII. New Members Who Joined AFICS since January 2025

No	Name	Agencies	No	Name	Agencies
1	Roman Fesseha	UNECA	33	Kelemua Woldetsadik	UNECA
2	Zerihoun Tecele	UNESCO	34	Tsegaye Gudeta	UNHCR
3	Asfaw G/Giorgis	UNECA	35	Mohamed Ali	IOM
4	Meseret Wondmageghehu	UNECA	36	Tesfaye Asebot	UNHCR
5	Kassaye Hadgu	UNDP	37	Hailemariam Legesse	UNICEF
6	Guenet Francols	UNICEF	38	Abebe Hailu	UNECA
7	Yilma Mengistu	WHO	39	Genet Gezahegn	UNICEF
8	Belay Tesfaw	UNECA	40	Sinedu Bisrat	WFP
9	Wubeshet Abera	WFP	41	Hailemichael Gebre	UNECA
10	Shimels Asfaw	UNECA	42	Berhanu G/Medhin	IOM
11	Mesfin Mekuria	WFP	43	Tesfaye Tilahun	WHO
12	Belyou Shambu	UNECA	44	Dejene Lule	ILO
13	Nega Andarge	MINURSO	45	Teshome Mersha	UNICEF
15	Mesrak Mersha (SS)	UNECA	46	Girma Desta	UNECA
15	Mengistab Woldaregay	WHO	47	Alemu Mekonnen	WFP
16	Shimeles Asfaw	UNECA	48	Biskut Getahun	UNHCR
17	Bethlehem Teshager	UNECA	49	Debab Asrat	UNDP
18	Meaza Molla	UNECA	50	Eskender Bahta	UNAMID
19	Mesfin Assefa	UNFPA	51	Mulatu Darkera	UNMISS

20	Addisu Kebede	UNDSS			
21	Zeritu Miessa	UNHCR			
22	Wossen Beyene	UNHCR			
23	Fanaye Bekele	UNHCR			
24	Amanuel Endale	IOM			
25	Meskerem Melaku	UNECA			
26	Fantaye Gebre	UNHCR			
27	Tamrat Guangul(ss)	UNECA			
28	Chanyallew Erkissa	UNHCR			
29	Yitayish Mekonnen	UNECA			
30	Daniel Bernardo	UNECA			
31	Mekonnen Tesfagiorgis	WHO			
32	Simachew Mengesha	UNHCR			

Deceased members

XI. We extend our deepest sympathy to the families and friends of the following members who passed away since January 2025.

1. Abaynesh Mengesa----- UNECA
2. Mekonnen Belayneh ----- UNECA
3. Mequanint Ejigu -----UNICEF
4. Aderra Geberyesus ----- UNECA
5. Berhanu H/ Mikael ----- UNECA
6. Lakew Awoke ----- UNECA
7. Pascal Woldemariam ----- WFP
8. Worknesh Alemayehu (ss)----- UNECA
9. Yimer Bezabeh -----UNECA
10. Zenebech Woldekiros ----- UNECA

X. Collaboration between AFICS Addis Ababa and the Federation of UN Staff Associations (FUNSA).

The mandates of both Associations, Federation of United Nations Staff Association and Association of Former International Civil Servants is to protect member's rights. As mentioned by Mr. Joseph Baricacko, President of FUNSA, and ECA Staff Union, in his presentation for AFICS's Jubilee Celebration in 2024 ".... we need to promote collegiality among the active staff members and the retired ones which benefits members of both associations. Above all, we are

all international civil servants in different times. I look forward to reviving our working relationships at the highest level possible.”

AFICS welcomes this statement and looking forward towards a cordial working relationship. The need to work together harmoniously towards a common goal is needed more than ever before. Furthermore AFICS is also in the process of revitalizing its services, by undertaking new initiatives, such as organizing joint seminars with its stakeholders, UN organizations, intensifying its social activities, preparing Newsletter, handbooks with current and useful information in the area of health care and health insurances, actively participating at the Council Session of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS), which is the official representative of United Nations retirees and beneficiaries. AFICS Addis Ababa since its establishment has been playing its role as the representative of UN retirees in the international arena. AFICS Addis Ababa is therefore, committed and willing to fully cooperate with all Staff representatives in Addis Ababa and beyond to ensure and protect the rights and privileges of Former UN Staff Members.



Mr. Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary of UNECA, present at the UN Family Day accompanied by Mr. Joseph Barickako, President of FUNSA, Mr. Napolion Bogale, Vice President-ECA Staff Union; Gelila Euigy, Volunteer IOM; Omer Al-Shareai, Volunteer, OHCHR; Sosina Nigussie, Volunteer IOM; Tibebe Mulugeta, ECA GYM; and other staff members who gave their time to make the event successful.



Special Aerobics setting example by the leaders, from left to right, Napoleon Bogale, Vice President-ECA Staff Union and FUNCA EC Member; Joseph Baricack, President-FUNCA and ECA Staff Union; Mai-Ellen Russ, Oic Division of Administration, ECA; Ergin Ozbadem, Chief-Facilities Section, ECA; Dr. Sunita Panta, Chief-United Nations Health Care Centre, ECA.



AFICS representatives, President of FUNSA and Volunteers present at the family day event.