



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

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

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Fifty-sixth Session of the FAFICS Council

20 - 24 July 2026

Vienna

Executive Summary

The 56th Session of the FAFICS Council brought together delegates in Vienna and online to review the Federation's work, elect a new leadership team, and establish priorities for the coming period. The Council's message was clear: protect the interests of former international civil servants, strengthen the Federation's capacity, and improve communication and practical support across the UN beneficiaries community.

At a glance:

- **66 Member Associations** following the admission of AFICS Honduras
- **44 Associations represented** at the Council
- **156 registered delegates:** 61 in person and 95 online
- **New FAFICS leadership elected** for the 2026–2027 term

A. Summary of key decisions and recommendations of the Council

1. **Approved** the results of elections and declared the following winners: Darshak Shah (AFICS NY) as the newly elected President of FAFICS; Nancy Hertz-Soyka (AFICS NY), Maria Machicado (AFICS Bolivia), and Aye Win (AFICS Myanmar) as Vice-Presidents; and Peter Erik Wichmand as the new Treasurer. (Detailed voting results are included in Annex C of the full Council report)

2. **Acclaimed** the appointment of the two nominees for Auditors, namely Ambi Sundaram (AAFI-AFICS Geneva) and Jessie Rose Mabutas (AFICS Philippines).
3. **Admitted AFPNU Honduras** as the 66th Member Association of the Federation, upon recommendation by the FAFICS Secretary, based on completion and compliance with required documentation; the Council welcomed the new Association represented virtually by its newly elected President, Rafael Cuestas.
4. **Noted** the comprehensive report of President Jerry Barton, warmly welcomed his contributions and leadership, and **acclaimed** him as President Emeritus.
5. **Noted** with appreciation the Auditors' report expressing satisfaction that the FAFICS 2025 Accounts were correctly maintained and that the 2025 financial situation as contained in the Balance Sheet and the Income and Expenditure Statement for 2025 does provide a true and fair view of FAFICS operations.
6. **Noted** the auditor's recommendations for FAFICS to explore options/approaches to contain expenditures and increase membership income, based on their observations and concern about the declining membership income, while expenditure has been increasing, especially in the area of travel; and that FAFICS coordinate more outreach and membership promotion at the UN agency level.
7. **Approved** the proposed (preliminary) Interim budget for 2027.
8. **Noted** the reports and recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Pension issues, as follows:
 - Strengthen collaboration between FAFICS and Pension Administration and HR departments, to improve further the handling of surviving spouse benefits
 - Encourage the Pension Administration to continue and increase the frequency of Townhalls, and to include information about FAFICS

- The FAFICS through its local Associations continue to support the UNJSPF in the annual outreach to retirees on pre-suspension lists due to apparent non-submission of Certificates of Entitlement
- That FAFICS remind its members to be sure that the Pension Administration has current documents to prove eligibility for spouse or dependent benefits
- That FAFICS and its Member Associations extend a hand to UN System staff affected by the downsizing, including participation in pre-retirement seminars or offer practical advice.
- That FAFICS should consider the suggestion to use AI technology for translation into local languages for pension administration communications.
- Request the UNJSPF to provide a list of beneficiaries by country to FAFICS associations; and consider appointing a contact person for pension administration.

9. **Adopted** the seven recommendations put forward by the ASHIL Standing Committee to the FAFICS Council as follows:

- FAFICS Standing Committee on ASHIL should continue monitoring meetings on ASHI and LTC in the UN General Assembly and in other legislative bodies of UN system organizations;
- FAFICS (including the Standing Committee on ASHIL) and member associations should continue to sustain and deepen its engagement with staff unions—particularly CCISCUA, FICSA, UNISERV and local Staff Unions—to identify shared priorities and develop joint initiatives on health-insurance issues;
- FAFICS should continue to pursue improvements in the Medical Insurance Plan (MIP) provisions and its administration by TPA;
- ASHI schemes must more effectively address the unique challenges faced by retired staff in African countries—and in any region with comparable constraints;
- Retiree representatives on various organizations' health insurance committees should advocate for continuing improvements in processes such as prior-approval processes, direct-payment arrangements and availability of health facilities which are in the network of health plans;
- Promote awareness of participants to claims submission procedures and time-sensitive multi-level appeal processes of TPAs with involvement of health insurance services of the relevant UN system organization: and
- Long-term Care (LTC) should continue to be a focus area for FAFICS.

10. **Approved** the succession planning framework as presented by the Chair of the Council Working Group, Nancy Hurtz-Soyka, as well as the proposal to establish a Standing Committee on Succession Planning, and for Ms. Soyka to serve as its Interim Chair.
11. **Approved** the Communication Strategy presented by the Chair of the Standing Committee Juan Antonio Casas Zamora and its accompanying strategic actions: to endorse the Focal Points Network as a permanent structure; to request a dedicated communications budget line; to require each Standing Committee to designate a content liaison; to encourage associations to confirm their focal points and allocate resources; and to endorse the YouTube channel and social media pilot.
12. **Noted** priority actions on membership matters highlighted by the Standing Committee on Membership, co-chaired by Marashetty Seenappa and Abdou Khader Diakhate, which identified priority countries for establishment of new associations, among them Serbia, El Salvador, Morocco, Liberia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe; including proposed strategies for reaching out to pre-retirees and dormant Member Associations.
13. **Noted** the specific proposal submitted by AEFNUP Peru to UNJSPF to issue a UN retiree certificate; which was acknowledged by the CEPA for potential future system enhancement.
14. **Approved** the proposals from the FAFICS President Jerry Barton on the appointments of Chairs/Vice-Chairs to Standing Committees, as follows:
 - a. Standing Committee on Pension Issues – Chair Suzanne Bishopric (AFICS-NY) and Vice-Chair Jay Pozenel (AFICS-NY).
 - b. Standing Committee on Health Insurance and Long-Term Care – Chair Jayantilal Karia (AFICS-NY) and Vice-Chair Giovanni Quaglia (AAFIB-Brazil).
 - c. Standing Committee on Membership – Chair Abdou Khader Diakhate; Vice-Chair left vacant at this time.
 - d. Standing Committee on Communications – Chair Juan Casas (AFICS-Panama) and Vice-Chair Aye Win (AFICS-Myanmar)
15. **Approved** detailed proposals for the representatives to the various Pension Board Committees, which have been consulted with the incoming FAFICS

President (refer to full text in the Council report). This includes the decision that both the outgoing and newly elected presidents will attend the PB meeting as per the compromise agreed upon (see annex + mention the resignation of previous FAFICS alternate to facilitate this process) that President Jerry Barton remains an ex officio member and head of the FAFICS delegation to the Pension Board, and that incoming President Darshak Shah serve as alternate until September 2026. In summary, the Council approved the continuation of the following appointments:

- a. Jay Pozenel as Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee on Pension Issues for a further two-year term;
- b. Standing Committee on Health Insurance and Long-Term Care – Chair Jayantilal Karia (AFICS-NY) and Vice-Chair Giovanni Quaglia (AAFIB-Brazil). Abdou Diakhate as Chair of the Standing Committee on Membership for a two-year term;
- c. Juan Casas as Chair, and Aye Win as vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Communications for a further two-year term;
V. Yossipov as an alternate member of the FAFICS delegation to the Pension Board for a further two-year term

16. Adopted the new voting procedures, as prepared by the Working Group established by the President with concurrence from the Bureau for trial implementation in this year's elections for the following open positions in the Bureau: President (2 nominees), 3 Vice-Presidents (8 nominees), Treasurer (2 nominees) and Auditors (2 nominees); and that these voting procedures, agreed on a provisional basis for this session, will be subject to a review based on any feedback from the Council so that they may be taken on board for the next Council.

17. Approved the outgoing President's proposal that, regarding the handover of the Treasurer's functions, it will have to follow banking and technical requirements but will be accomplished as soon as practical; and that the outgoing Treasurer will still need to advise on the Financial Report for 2026.

18. Approved the technical aspects of the handover of the Presidency from the outgoing President to the incoming President to take place as soon as possible, to be completed at the latest by 1 September 2026, it being understood that, upon conclusion of the 56th Council, the newly elected President is fully assuming the functions of the presidency of FAFICS in accordance with Rule 6.5 of the FAFICS Rules of Procedure.

B. Highlights of discussions

Under the new leadership and governance

With the election of new officers to the Bureau, the incoming President assumed the functions of the office at the conclusion of the Council, while the administrative and technical handover was to be completed no later than 1 September 2026.

New voting procedures were used on a trial basis. Electronic voting and an Election Support Group helped ensure a clear and orderly process. Feedback from Member Associations will be reviewed before the next Council.

Increased representation in Standing Committees and working groups, the approval of a succession planning framework, an updated communication strategy and plans for expanded outreach to prospective associations, and dormant Member Associations, are some of the key efforts to ensure a growing and more connected Federation.

Pensions and practical support for beneficiaries

The Council reaffirmed FAFICS advocacy with the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund and participating organizations. It noted the strong performance of the Pension Administration during a period of unusually high separations and benefit processing.

Key priorities include strengthening cooperation between FAFICS, the Pension Administration, and human resources departments to improve the handling of surviving-spouse benefits; continuing local support for beneficiaries whose benefits risk suspension because Certificates of Entitlement have not been received; reminding members to keep documents supporting spouse and dependent eligibility current; supporting UN system staff affected by downsizing through practical advice and pre-retirement seminars.

The Council also noted that beneficiaries now represent a growing share of the Pension Fund community. As the Fund matures, effective representation and outreach by FAFICS and its Member Associations will become increasingly important.

Health insurance and long-term care

The Council adopted seven recommendations from the Standing Committee on After-Service Health Insurance and Long-Term Care.

FAFICS will continue to monitor health-insurance and long-term-care discussions throughout the UN system and deepen cooperation with staff unions on shared priorities. It will also pursue improvements in Medical Insurance Plan provisions and administration, with particular attention to retirees in Africa and other regions where access to providers, direct-payment arrangements, and medical evacuation support may be limited.

A global survey of 2,420 respondents from 48 Member Associations found that satisfaction with claims' turnaround was generally positive. However, many respondents reported difficulty understanding rejected claims or appeal procedures. The Council therefore called for clearer claims guidance, pre-submission checklists, better communication from third-party administrators, and improved awareness of time-sensitive appeals.

Long-term care will remain a continuing priority. Member Associations will be encouraged to distribute and adapt existing guidance to their national settings and to promote advance planning before retirement.

Communications for a wider reach

The Council unanimously approved a new communications strategy for 2026–2027. The strategy endeavors to establish the Communications Focal Points Network as a permanent structure; seek a dedicated communications budget line; strengthen the FAFICS website as the central information hub; increase communication in English, French, and Spanish; and provide training and practical tools for Member Associations, among others.

The Council stressed that information should be timely, accurate, multilingual, and easy to understand. Pension and health insurance updates should receive particular attention. Associations were also encouraged to share newsletters, interviews, and other materials more widely across the Federation.

Strengthening Membership

The Council emphasized that membership growth is closely linked to the visibility and value of FAFICS.

AFPNU Honduras was admitted as the Federation's 66th Member Association and was warmly welcomed into the FAFICS family. The Standing Committee on Membership will continue outreach to prospective associations, pre-retirees, and dormant Member Associations. Priority countries identified for future engagement include Serbia, El Salvador, Morocco, Liberia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Associations were encouraged to communicate more clearly about the benefits of membership, strengthen their links with newly retired colleagues, and collaborate closely with the Communications Standing Committee.

Sound finances and future sustainability

The Auditors reported that the 2025 accounts were correctly maintained and that the financial statements presented a true and fair view of FAFICS operations.

The Council approved the preliminary interim budget for 2027. At the same time, it noted concerns about declining membership income, rising expenditure, particularly travel costs—and outstanding dues from some Member Associations.

The incoming Bureau will continue exploring ways to contain costs, strengthen membership income, improve outreach at the UN agency level, and ensure that resources are directed toward the Federation's highest priorities.

C. Looking ahead

The new Bureau and Standing Committees will now focus on:

- Completing the leadership and financial handovers.
- Putting the succession planning framework into operation.
- Advancing pension, health-insurance, and long-term-care advocacy.
- Strengthening membership outreach and reactivating dormant associations.
- Implementing the new communications strategy.
- Translating financial recommendations into the 2027 work programme.

The Council thanked every delegate, volunteer, Member Association, and partner for contributing to FAFICS' work. The decisions taken in Vienna provide a strong foundation for continued advocacy, practical support, and solidarity across the global UN retiree community.

