FAFICS

FEDERACIÓN DE ASOCIACIONES DE ANTIGUOS FUNCIONARIOS INTERNACIONALES

FÉDÉRATION DES ASSOCIATIONS DES ANCIENS FONCTIONNAIRES INTERNATIONAUX

FEDERACIÓN DE ASOCIACIONES DE EX-FUNCIONARIOS INTERNACIONALES

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25 August 2026

FAFICS BUREAU MEETINGS
(Series of 2026-2027, No. 2)

Final minutes FAFICS Bureau Meeting 14 August 2026

In attendance: Darshak Shah (President), Clemens Adams, Adriana Gomez Saguez, Nancy Hurtz-Soyka, Maria Machicado, Aye Win, Juan Casas Zamora, Jayantilal Karia, Suzanne Bishopric, Delia Barcelona (Secretary), Deborah Landey (Rapporteur), Peter Wichmand (Treasurer)

Absent: Abdou Khadre Diakhate

<u>Decisions/Actions to be taken</u>

President

- Will meet with the FAFICS Pension Board delegation after the Pension Board Report has been finalized to debrief, discuss and map the work ahead.
- Will circulate the note being prepared by the Pension Board on the outcomes of the meeting to Associations under cover of a note on the key outcomes and our value added at the meeting.
- Will speak again with the RSG on the response regarding the outdated communication circulating on pension issues.
- Will send a note to all Associations asking if any Association wants to be engaged in the work on the preparation of the 57th Council and, if so, to contact the lead Vice-President. Lead Vice-President to prepare the draft.
- Will have a further discussion with Aye Win on his vision for how Aye Win can support the the Standing Committee on Memberhsip.
    - Delia will follow-up with Rosemarie McClean on the proposal from Peru on certificates from the Pension Fund raised at the Council meeting.

Vice-Presidents

- **Development of the 2026-28 work plan based on the Strategic Priorities**. **Lead: Maria Machicado,** with support from Delia, Peter, Adriana. Work plan to be presented to the Bureau by mid-October.

- **Design of the 57th 2027 Council**. **Lead: Clemens Adams**, with support from Delia and Associations. Maria and Adriana to support. Will prepare a concept note on the 57th Council to be discussed by the Bureau.
- **Evaluation of the Administrative Election Procedures**. A discussion in the Bureau will be held on lessons learned before an evaluation is set in motion.
- **Strengthening transparency, accountability, and good governance**. **Lead: Nancy Hurtz-Soyka**
- **Enhance cross cutting communication**. **Lead: Juan Casas and Aye Win**. Will pilot communications regarding what FAFICS is doing on various issues, starting with communications on health insurance and choose one other pilot on a subject lead by one of the Vice-Presidents.
- **Strengthening and expanding the Federation**. **Lead: Aye Win.** Will support the Chair of the Standing Committee on Membership, especially from a communications perspective. Maria to join the initial discussion.
- **Ensure the Federation's financial sustainability. Lead**: to be decided
- **All Vice-Presidents that are leading Working Groups should reach out to Associations for members.**

Secretary

- Will prepare a summary of key FAFICS documents and resources for new Associations, like the slides prepared for new Bureau Officers (FAFICS 101). Debbie and Maria will support.
- Will work with ILO Geneva on securing a meeting room for next year's Council meeting. Initial contact has been established both with ILO and AAFI-AFICS Geneva.

Rapporteur

- Will prepare a letter to be sent to each Resident Coordinator, linking him/her to the President of the Association in the countries where there are Associations, as a follow up to the communication from the Deputy Director, UN Development Coordination Office, in 2024, to all Resident Coordinators about FAFICS and local Associations. Aye Win to support.

Standing Committee on Communications

- Will update the FAFICS brochure.
- Will place the note being prepared by the Pension Board on the outcomes of the Pension Board with the covering note from the President on the website.
- Will work with the Standing Committee on ASHIL regarding communications on the concerns raised on health insurance.

Standing Committee on ASHIL

- Will lead on developing communications on the concerns raised on health insurance in collaboration with the Standing Committee on Communications. Debbie to support.

Agenda item 1: Adoption of the Agenda

1.The agenda was adopted.

Agenda item 2: Minutes of the Bureau meeting held on 24 July 2026

2.It was confirmed that the Minutes of the Bureau meeting held on 24 July had gone out in three languages from the President to the Presidents of Associations. The President indicated he had received three or four responses expressing appreciation for the Minutes of Bureau meetings having been shared. The Minutes are also posted on the website.

Agenda item 3: Protocol for Bureau Meetings

3**.** Bureau meetings will be one and a half hours or two hours long, depending on the agenda, with tentative times allocated for each agenda item.

4. The President indicated he would like any background papers to be circulated one week before the Bureau meeting, for all Bureau members to have read them, that presenters will have 3-5 minutes and individual contributors 2-3 minutes, that he will go around the table to be sure everyone who wants to have an opportunity to speak can do so. The President/presenter will summarize the discussion, actions to be taken and parties to be involved. Vice/Co-Chairs of Standing Committees will be invited to Bureau meetings in the event the Chair cannot attend. Chairs that cannot attend should preferably notify the Secretary at least a week in advance.

5. With respect to the issue of building community that had been raised, we need to approach Associations not only as the defenders of their rights but to ensure they that they feel part of the UN retiree community. A question was asked as to what information could be shared, particularly with new Associations. A summary of key FAFICS documents and resources could be prepared and shared as was done for new members of the Bureau. Best practices of Associations can be included. The electronic version of the FAFICS brochure can be updated and shared. We need to be very careful about both summarizing and extracting information about FAFICS especially when shared through social media with the public, as some information is sensitive and can be misinterpreted by AI. This will be further explored and elaborated as part of the work planning exercise.

Agenda item 4: United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board

6.The President, Darshak Shah, and Chair of the Standing Committee on Pension Issues Suzanne Bishopric, provided a briefing.

7.The President indicated the Report of the Pension Board meeting was being finalized. He thanked and commended the FAFICS delegation for their excellent work. He will meet with the FAFICS delegation as soon as the Report is finalized to debrief, discuss and map the work ahead. He said it will be important going forward to ensure a good strategy for our participation in Board meetings.

8.At the Board, he had found the presentations by the UNJSPF and the Committee of Actuaries to be excellent and the discussions to be very good. The financial stability of the Fund was reaffirmed and that the Fund has worked efficiently.

9.There was one issue, namely the budget, around which there was no consensus due to the proposal for the possible relocation of the pension functions to another duty station. More analysis would be needed. Fiduciaries have a duty of care for the Fund and must speak up. The competence of FAFICS representatives on the Pension subsidiary bodies is key. FAFICS representatives must speak from the FAFICS perspective and what is best for our members. There needs to be a clear position on what our interests are. It is also important to work in close collaboration with the Participants Group, as staff will one day be retirees and the Group has a vote in the Pension Board whereas FAFICS does not. A relationship of trust is key. We have a good rapport with FICSA and need to strengthen collaboration with UNISERV and CCISUA. It was recommended there be meetings with them on pension and health insurance issues to ensure we are as aligned as possible on the issues. On the issue of the vote, we need to discuss this further, and it will be taken up in the Pension System Review Group.

10. In relation to the subject of UNJSPF's budget discussion on relocation, it was also pointed out that cost savings can be secured in various ways. For example, the CEPA had done an excellent job handling the large amount of work associated with the downsizing without the need for additional staff due to the success of the ongoing automation of routine work, creation of dedicated teams to service member organizations and anticipation of workload. The downsizing has improved the funded status of the Fund.

11. Regarding the next Assets and Liability Management Study, an RFP has now been issued. The study will present a far greater range of options and different scenarios than in the past and will feed into the ongoing holistic review of the pension system. In the past inflation, assets and growth had been a key focus. Now the focus will also be very much on liabilities, how many staff will be on board, what will the retiree population look like. There may have to be more frequent studies.

12.While there are confidentiality clauses and delicate issues discussed in Pension Board meetings, and while we do not have a vote, we have a voice. We need to provide assurance to our members, that we are working for them and their interests are being represented. This is also an important way we get new members to join FAFICS. Although this was communicated at the Council, which should have reassured Associations, more communication is needed.

13.The President advised that a press release will come out soon from the Pension Board on the outcome of the meeting which can be circulated to all Associations. There could be a short covering note from the President on the key outcomes and our value added at the meeting. The information can be placed on our website.

Agenda item 5: 57th FAFICS Council 2027

14. The 2027 Pension Board meeting will be held in Geneva to be hosted by ILO. FAFICS and AAFI-AFICS Geneva are working together to see if the ILO or the Palais can host the FAFICS Council. The Bureau was reminded renovations of the Palais are ongoing, and several conference rooms are not available. On the issue of the cost effectiveness of having the Council meeting in the same place as the Pension Board meeting, there are clear financial benefits. It also makes it possible

for the leadership of the Pension Fund to address the FAFICS Council in person rather than virtually. It was thought that were the FAFICS Council to be held in another lower cost location that was close, it would help reduce costs. Maria volunteered to do an analysis to determine if there are other venue options that would be more cost effective. The Treasurer indicated that it could be difficult to find more cost-effective solutions without specific additional funding for the Council, given the benefits for travel cost when Council is the same location as the Pension Board. It was indicated this would be included in the work Clemens is going to lead on the 57th Council.

Agenda item 6: FAFICS Strategic Priorities 2026-2028

15. The President had tabled five Strategic Priorities for FAFICS to frame the work plan for 2026-2028.

1. **Protect the acquired and accrued pension rights** of all UN retirees.
2. **Promote access to high-quality, affordable healthcare** for retirees.
3. **Strengthen and expand the Federation** by increasing the number of Member Associations and growing overall membership.
4. **Enhance transparency, accountability, and good governance** across the Federation.
5. **Ensure the Federation's financial and operational sustainability** to support its long-term mission.

Effective communication and collaboration are cross-cutting priorities.

16.It was agreed these are broadly the right priorities, and the work plan should be structured around them. It was suggested that the priorities were overall long term objectives with more specific priorities needed for given periods. The work plan should be for two years, have clear performance indicators, tangible outputs and deliverables, a budget for the deliverables and who is going to do what by when. A resource mobilization plan will need to be developed including proposals on how we might be able to make prudent, but more profitable investments. The transition between the outgoing and incoming Treasurer should be reflected. The legal status of FAFICS will need to be clarified. It was suggested the Bureau review the work plan every couple of months. The importance of communication to build trust and community was emphasized. It was noted that while Strategic Priorities 1 and 2 involve collaboration with our partners, nonetheless we need to fully play our role. For Strategic Priorities 3, 4, and 5, these are more internal and can be delivered by FAFICS alone. Some members indicated that perhaps more detail is required, to be considered by the Working Group led by Maria, but the priorities as presented will be circulated to Associations.

Agenda item 7: Role of the Vice-Presidents

17. The President suggested the following:

-**Strategic Priorities and development of the 2026-28 work plan**. **Lead: Maria Machicado,** with support from Delia, Peter, Adriana. Standing Committees have their own work plans and so one or two members from the Standing Committees should join the group. The group will develop a prototype and work plan for review and comments by the Bureau by mid-October.

-**Design of the 57th 2027 Council**. **Lead: Clemens Adams**, with support from Delia to and Associations. Maria and Adriana to support. The work will include the proposal made by Adriana for a more detailed post-mortem and lessons learned discussion about the 56thCouncil. A concept note for the next Council will be prepared for review by the Bureau.

-Evaluation of the Administrative Election Procedures. **Suggested Lead:** Clemens Adams. Clemens indicated he would not be able to take this on. It was suggested there first be a discussion in the Bureau on lessons learned before the evaluation is set in motion.

-**Strengthening transparency, accountability, and good governance**. **Lead: Nancy Hurtz-Soyka.** This needs to also involve the Treasurer - with strong links to work on ensuring sustainability.

-**Enhance cross cutting communication**. **Lead: Juan Casas and Aye Win**. Pilot communications regarding what FAFICS is doing. ASHIL could be an excellent candidate for such a communication.

-Strengthening and expanding the Federation. **Lead: Aye Win** will support the Chair of the Standing Committee on Membership, especially from a communications perspective. Maria to join the initial discussion

- **Ensure the Federation's financial sustainability. Suggested Lead**: **Adriana Gomez** with support from Peter. This is about broader sustainability - not just financial but also organizational - so links and overlaps with other areas of work. It includes initiative to strengthening IDEAS organizationally and operationally. Clemens could also be helpful. The work would involve the development of a resource mobilization plan. Adriana will revert to the President on this suggestion.

18. The President indicated that those leading on each work area should feel free to reach out to others in the Bureau and to Associations. It was also said that Bureau members should feel free to participate in Standing Committees. Where appropriate concept papers can be prepared and presented to the Bureau for discussion. It was suggested a note could be sent from the President to all Associations asking Associations to volunteer for the group working on the 57th Council meeting. It was pointed out that the list of key officers in Associations as well as Standing Committee focal points is kept updated, although many Associations do not have focal points but rather identify the President or Secretary of the Association as the focal point.

19. It was suggested that UN Resident Coordinators and Country Teams be contacted by the new President of FAFICS to ask them once again for their support of staff getting ready to retire, existing, dormant and new Associations. A letter is to be sent to each Resident Coordinator, linking him/her to the President of the Association in the countries where there are Associations. This is a good follow up to the communication that went out, in 2024, from the Deputy Director, UN Development Coordination Office to all Resident Coordinators about FAFICS and local Associations.

Agenda item 9. Report of the Standing Committees

Standing Committee on ASHIL

20. The Chair, Jay Karia, provided the update. He indicated that the Committee is preparing its work plan which will focus on ongoing activities as well as the seven recommendations approved by the Council. The Standing Committee will be meeting next week.

Standing Committee on Communications

21. The Chair, Juan Casas, provided the update. He indicated the Committee is preparing its work plan. The Standing Committee will be meeting and looking at the work plan and ideas on how to get information out on what FAFICS does to possibly include using YouTube, interviewing retirees, focusing on issues such as health insurance to ensure there is not an information vacuum. It was suggested position papers on issues of concern to Associations could be prepared as well as a list of FAFICS achievements. Other proposals were for there to be a weekly message, using the next President's letter to share information on what FAFICS has done and will be doing regarding health insurance matters. FAFICS needs a presence on social media to provide information on who we are and what we do. It was proposed Aye Win be the spokesperson for the organization.

Standing Committee on Membership

22. The Chair, Abdou Khadre Diakhate, who could not be present had sent in a written update summarized as follows.

23. He congratulated all the newly elected officers and wished them well in their new role. He indicated the Membership Committee is ready to collaborate with all colleagues and welcomes information, advice, guidance and orientation. The goal of the Committee is to raise the number of associations to seventy—if possible—before the next Council session. The Committee is currently finalizing a list of ten individuals with good geographic representation which will make any missions easier and more feasible. Six Associations have already confirmed their participation, while four others will be consulted. A Co-Chair will be proposed to the President.

24.Georgia and Ireland have expressed interest in being supported to create an Association. Contact has been established with Tamar Khomaszaridze (Georgia), and Elizabeth Morrin (Ireland). Documentation for the creation of an Association has already been sent to them on 8 August 2026. Delia has assisted with a letter, which to be sent to the Pension Fund regarding retirees in Georgia and Ireland.

25. It was suggested peer support be provided to Associations that might need mentoring and coaching. Focal points could support neighboring countries. It was also suggested that areas of focus include how small countries with few numbers of retirees can engage as well as how retirees living in countries from which they do not originate can become involved in a local Association.

Standing Committee on Succession Planning

26. The Chair, Nancy Hurtz-Soyka, provided the update. She advised that the new Expertise Pool Form will be hosted on the FAFICS website and thanked Juan for making that happen. Associations

are already using the new Form, and seven Associations have put forward individuals, three from Bolivia, one each from Canada, Italy, Kenya, and the UK. The President had requested the Standing Committee conduct a search for FAFICS representatives to the Pension Board Audit Committee.

Agenda item 10: AOB

AOB-Item 1

27.Communications had been received from Associations and individual retirees on health insurance in which questions were raised as to how retirees are consulted on issues and how are their interests are being represented.

28. The President asked Jay to summarize the roles of UN organizations, organization Health Insurance Committees and retirees on those Committees, individual Associations and FAFICS at the global level, so that the Bureau has a common understanding as the basis for the discussion. He expressed great appreciation for the work undertaken by the Standing Committee on ASHIL and emphasized that the workload is significant and complex.

1.Role of UN Organizations

-Health insurance across the UN system is not in one single UN health insurance plan. **The different UN organizations**—such as the UN Secretariat, WHO, ILO, UNESCO, FAO and others—**have their own health insurance arrangements** for staff and eligible retirees.

-When staff members retire and meet the required eligibility conditions, they can generally continue health insurance through their former organization. This is commonly referred to as **After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI)**. The retiree normally pays part of the cost and the former employing organization pays part. The benefits, premiums and rules differ from one UN organization to another, except where one organization is administering health insurance plans for multiple organizations

2. Role of Health Insurance Committees and retiree representatives in them

-Most Organizations have **Health Insurance Committees**. Their role is to recommend to management of individual organizations to establish and update benefits, adjust premiums and interact with third party administrators (TPAs) where applicable (some organizations do not have TPAs but self-administer the claims processing themselves such as WHO). In many cases, retirees are members of these Health Insurance Committees, in some cases with full voting rights and in others as Observers without voting rights.

-Within Health Insurance Committees, retiree representatives play a key role together with other members -management and staff representatives. They analyze the data provided by the health insurance section of the organization, on how the plans are being utilized based on historic and current claims experience per plan **-** projected medical trends based on organization specific claims experience **-** proposed benefits changes to align with other plans administered by the organization as well as industry practice **-** cost avoidance initiatives, **-** health insurance reserves per plan **-** loss ratios per plan, expressed as proportion of total plan cost to total premium collected over a given period. Retiree representatives advocate for the broadest possible benefits at the most reasonable cost.

-In the case of the UN Secretariat Health and Life Insurance Committee (HLIC), it is composed of UN management and staff representatives, as well as representatives from AFICS/NY, UNDP and UNICEF who are members of the Committee without voting rights.

-All health plans administered by United Nations Headquarters, other than the HIP Health Plan of New York, are **self-insured health benefit plans.** Premiums are determined based on prior year actual claims experience as well as projected claims costs and administrative fees paid to TPAs for the next plan period. The level of plan reserve balances is also considered when determining the requirement for premium increases.

-The UN Medical Insurance Plan (UN-MIP) which is the health insurance plan for locally recruited staff is now also reviewed by the HLIC. The advocacy by the retirees on the HLIC regarding the MIP was also for continued advocating improvements for locally recruited staff and retirees who are covered under the MIP. Including proposals for improved benefit structures and better alignment with the UN Worldwide Plan. However, premiums increased by 40% with some changes to benefit changes such as higher out-of-pocket thresholds a reduction in physical therapy visits from 60 to 30 a year, and other changes to the UN-MIP benefits to better align with benefits under the Worldwide Plan. The main reason for the large premium increase is the result of not having made any changes to MIP premiums for many years while benefits were improved. In the meantime, while salaries and pension benefits have increased, the MIP reserves have been depleted thus necessitating the 40% increase. It should be noted that the beneficiaries of MIP pay 25% and 75% is paid by the Organization.

-In the context of the US based plans as well as for the UN WorldWide Plan, the HLIC had in recent years recommended use of the reserve to mitigate the increase in premiums for some of the plans, so there had been smaller increases in premiums. This was no longer seen to be prudent as the reserves were low, hence the substantial increase in premiums for this period starting on 1 July 2026.

3.Broader advocacy role of retiree representatives

-Retiree members of Health and Life Insurance Committees were consulted by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) Inspectors who conducted the most recent review of health insurance in the UN system in 2023. In the case of the retiree representatives on the HLIC, they strongly advocated for full funding of ASHI by organizations, voting rights for retiree representatives in Health Insurance Committees, both of which were then tabled as top priorities by JIU in their report.

4. Individual Associations-couple of examples

-The leadership of AFICS/NY meets regularly with senior managers across the UN, including the USG, Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance. The points about full funding of ASHI, voting rights for retiree representatives on the organization health committees, the best possible MIP, have been raised repeatedly and for many years with the USG in meetings and formal letters. Members of AFICS/NY sit on the UN HLIC.

-ARICSA, Austria is taking up the matter of the recent decision of the IAEA to no longer provide a contribution to the health insurance of future staff members.

5.The role of FAFICS

-FAFICS advocates for equitable access to health insurance benefits at the most reasonable cost possible. Its role is to represent and protect the interests of UN retirees across the UN system. This is important because **a change in one UN organization can potentially become an issue for retirees elsewhere in the system**, for example the recent decision in the IAEA that there will be no contribution to health insurance by the organization for future staff members. FAFICS therefore provides a system-wide voice that individual retiree associations would find more difficult to provide on their own. It is important to note that these issues can only be escalated by FAFICS after they have been raised and discussed by individual Associations and have wider implications.

-FAFICS advocates with UN senior management regarding the issues of the funding by organizations of ASHI, full representation by retirees in the Health Insurance Committees of organizations, the quality and cost of the MIP. The former President of FAFICS has written both to the USG, Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the UN Secretary-General on several occasions regarding funding of ASHI, full representation by retirees in Health and Life Insurance Committees, and the best possible MIP for locally recruited staff.

-In recent communications from the former President of FAFICS to the UN Secretary-General and USG, Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, a request has been made for the President of FAFICS to be able to address the HLCM on issues of concern to retirees.

-To do its work, FAFICS has a **Standing Committee on After Service Health and Long-Term Care (ASHIL)**, which works throughout the year on health and life insurance issues affecting retirees. Through this Committee and Council sessions, Associations identify issues affecting retirees in their regions and countries. FAFICS has health insurance focal points from across the Associations who participate in the discussions on health insurance issues and how to go about addressing them. So what the Standing Committee focuses on is demand driven. Individual issues on healthcare have to be addressed at the local Association level and if there are wider implications be escalated to ASHIL.

-Recently one issue of great concern to retirees was the issue of long-term care leading to a considerable focus on that issue by the Standing Committee which issued a Guidance Note on planning for long-term care which was shared with all Associations for further dissemination to their members. As a result of last year's 55th Council meeting, and the concerns around TPAs, a survey was conducted to determine the issues which require further actions and how to address them, which will be the focus of the Standing Committee on ASHIL's work plan during the 2026-2027 period.

29. In the discussion that followed, it was emphasized that we need to be clear with our constituents about what our role is, how we work, who is responsible for what, and how decisions are made. We need to ensure that the various processes are transparent and that we are properly represented in them. While we do not establish benefits and costs, we have a voice and state opinions and these need to be known. It is also important everyone understands who to contact on different issues. On

whom is responsible for what we could, for example, map the UN system organization health insurance sections responsible for administering the plans and indicate who is representing retirees on various health insurance committees overseeing these plans. We need to become the source of up-to-date information on issues, particularly regarding pensions and health insurance, including what the issues are and how we are ensuring the interests of retirees are put forward. Sharing information on issues, for example, on how to avoid cost increases in health insurance, would be an important topic as increasing costs are affecting everyone.

30. In conclusion, the President stressed the wonderful job the Committee is doing. He indicated we need to explain our role, how we work and how we are representing retirees. He asked that Jay lead a group from the Standing Committees on ASHIL and Communications, to include Debbie, to meet and come up with communications that can be posted on our website or through other FAFICS platforms. Jay has also communicated with UNHLIS to determine how it may be responding.

AOB-Item 2

31. Regarding the communication on pension issues from 2022 which had resurfaced, the President has spoken to the RSG who will gather all facts together and address it. The President will impress on the RSG of the need to act quickly so this issue does not fester.

AOB-Item 3

32. It was proposed that regular townhalls be held, perhaps on a quarterly basis.

AOB-Item 4

33. Regarding the proposal from Peru on certificates from the Pension Fund raised at the Council meeting, Delia will follow up with Rosemarie McClean.

34. The meeting was closed.

Annex

<u>Decisions taken at 24 July Bureau meeting</u>

The President

- Will prepare and circulate a draft of five Strategic Priorities by 13 August (done)
- Will prepare the first draft President's letter and share with Bureau members to go out as soon as possible (done)

The Secretary

- Will share the current Bureau work plan with Bureau members (done)
- Will update the Google email, What's App, and update and circulate the contact information for Bureau members (done)
- Will circulate the CVs of Bureau members (done for the ones available)

Bureau members

- Will submit CVs to Delia (ongoing)
- Will update the work plan for their area of work to reflect the decisions of the 56th Council and provide to Delia by 13 August (ongoing)