



FEDERACIÓN DE ASOCIACIONES DE ANTIGUOS FUNCIONARIOS INTERNACIONALES

FÉDÉRATION DES ASSOCIATIONS DES ANCIENS FONCTIONNAIRES INTERNATIONAUX

FEDERACIÓN DE ASOCIACIONES DE EX-FUNCIONARIOS INTERNACIONALES

Palais des Nations, Ginebra, Suiza; president@fafics.org; secretary@fafics.org ; www.fafics.org

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

AFICS NY, c/o United Nations, 405 E. 42nd St, Room U-400, New York, NY 10017

28 September 2026

Final Minutes of the FAFICS Bureau Meeting of 17 September 2026

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

Absent: Peter Wichmand (Treasurer)

Decisions/ Actions to be taken

President

- Will meet with Catherine Pollard, Under Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance.
- Will meet with Robert van der Zee, Representative of the Secretary-General for the investment of the assets of the UNJSPF.
- Will meet with the FAFICS Pension Board delegation after the Pension Board Report has been finalized to prepare for the February meeting.
- Will announce the membership of the working group of Associations preparing the 57th Council to all Associations.

Vice-Presidents

- Maria Machicado

- Will finalize the draft of the Strategic Priorities document and work plan template and circulate them to Bureau members. Keep it simple.
- Will include outcomes in the work plan template in the future.
- Will meet with Standing Committees to discuss outcomes and include them if possible.
- Will propose a five-year strategic planning process based on the experience gained in this work planning cycle.

- Clemens Adams

- Will finalize the Concept Note for the 57th Council following the discussion in the Bureau meeting.

- Will send a follow up message to Associations reminding them of the 25 September deadline for feedback and seeking more volunteers for the working group of Associations he will lead to prepare the 57th Council.

Bureau members

- Will provide their inputs to the work plan template by 15 October.
- Will send suggested edits on the “What is FAFICS” flyer.

Secretary

- Will prepare a summary of key FAFICS documents and resources for new Associations. Debbie and Maria will support.
- Will circulate dates of Bureau meetings.

Rapporteur

- Will work with the Chair of the Standing Committee on ASHIL on terminology regarding the role of FAFICS on health insurance issues, to ensure consistency across all FAFICS documents/communications.

Standing Committee on Pensions

- Will prepare a short working paper for the October Bureau meeting on pros and cons regarding voting representation for FAFICS in the Pension Board.
- Will work with the Rapporteur on terminology regarding the role of FAFICS on pension issues, to ensure consistency across all FAFICS documents/communications.

Standing Committee on ASHIL

- Will work with the Rapporteur on terminology regarding the role of FAFICS on health insurance issues, to ensure consistency across all FAFICS documents/communications.
- -Will share the agreement utilized for the health insurance survey with the Standing Committee on Succession Planning, to ensure consistency.

Standing Committee on Communications

- Will update the “What is FAFICS” flyer.
- Will prepare a brief key functions description for members of the Editorial Group.

Agenda item 1: Adoption of the Agenda

1.The agenda was adopted.

Agenda item 2: Outstanding Issues from key decisions of the last two Bureau meetings

2.The Secretary advised that nineteen of the twenty-seven action points from the last two Bureau meetings have been completed. Those pending relate to ongoing work or are on today’s agenda, including follow up to the Pension Board meeting involving meetings with senior UN officials and a note to all Associations on the outcome of the Board meeting, a decision on who will lead the evaluation of the Administrative Election Procedures, the item on financial sustainability, the summary of key FAFICS documents and resources for new Associations, and updates for the website including the FAFICS brochure.

Agenda item 3: Key Points-Pension Board Report

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

4. The President indicated that the Pension Board Report has not yet been issued. He had met with Martha Helena Lopez, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources, UN Secretariat, the spokesperson on the Pension Board for the Agencies, Funds and Programmes, to discuss the outcome of the Pension Board meeting and the meeting in February. It was a productive exchange with an agreement for more collaboration going forward. A meeting scheduled with Catherine Polard, Under Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, has not taken place and will be rescheduled. A meeting with Robert van der Zee, Representative of the Secretary-General for the investment of the assets of the UNJSPF, was scheduled for later in the day of 17 September. The President will be meeting with the FAFICS delegation to the Pension Board to discuss the preparation for the February meeting of the Pension Board. He also indicated that more communication to Associations on pension issues is needed.

5. The Chair of the Standing Committee shared that at the Pension Board meeting FAFICS leadership and knowledge were well recognized and that the current President should always be present. There was one issue, namely the budget, around which there had been a lot of discussion due to the proposal for the possible relocation of pension functions. The motion to relocate was not agreed by the Pension Board. There was an issue as to who should conduct any further study on relocation. She stressed the importance of aligning positions with active participants. In the discussion, a recommendation was made for the Bureau to discuss the possibility of FAFICS having a vote on the Pension Board. Historically the Pension Board has been tripartite, and the number of seats available has already been decided on by the General Assembly. Therefore, if FAFICS were to have a vote, it would mean the representation of other entities would be affected. The Standing Committee on Pension Issues will prepare a short document outlining the pros and cons for such an option for discussion at the next Bureau meeting.

Agenda item 4: Report of the Vice-President leading on FAFICS Strategic Priorities and the FAFICS Work Plan

6. Vice-President, Maria Machicado, presented the proposed FAFICS Strategic Priorities and the FAFICS work plan template developed by a Bureau working group under her leadership. The working group members are Adriana, Delia and Peter.

7. There would be two main substantive areas of focus for the work namely pension rights and benefits and equitable access to high quality, affordable health care and six strategic priority areas. A work plan template had been developed. The President and Standing Committee Chairs were consulted. The idea was to keep the work template simple and get away from working in silos.

The six FAFICS Strategic Priority areas presented were:

- 1. Protection of the acquired and accrued pension rights and benefits of all UN retirees:**
Safeguard the acquired and accrued pension rights and benefits

2. **Equitable access to high-quality, affordable healthcare:** *Advocate for sustainable health insurance schemes that preserve the quality, accessibility and affordability of healthcare benefits for retirees and beneficiaries*
3. **Strengthen and expand the membership of the Federation, and Associations:** *Expand and diversify FAFICS membership, strengthen Associations and ensure broad, equitable and effective representation across regions*
4. **Strengthen evidence-based advocacy and leadership:** *Enhance the capacity and collective voice of the President, Vice-Presidents and Chairs of Standing Committees to anticipate emerging issues, engage effectively with decisionmakers and influence policies affecting retirees and beneficiaries*
5. **Strengthen good governance across the Federation:** *Ensure full implementation of the spirit and letter of the FAFICS Rules of Procedure and Council decisions*
 - Strategic planning: *Building a common vision and mission statement; identifying priorities; establishing workplans and monitoring instruments. Support a 5-year strategic planning process*
 - Succession planning: *Enable both leadership continuity and renewal and preserve institutional memory with new skills and modalities for working together*
 - Establishment of an Accountability Framework: *Ensure that roles, responsibilities, decision-making and reporting are clearly defined and carried out in accordance with the FAFICS Statute and Rules of Procedure with practical mechanisms to monitor implementation of Council and Bureau decisions and report on progress and results*
 - Engagement with the Council: *Improve the relevance of the annual Council meeting and increase the participation of Council Members in deliberations throughout the year and decision-making processes, including the electoral process in 2027 by ensuring annual Council meeting responds to Association issues*
 - Ensure the Federation's financial and operational sustainability: *Support the Federation's long-term mission, ensuring financial sustainability, organizational and operational systems while preserving FAFICS as a voluntary Federation*
6. **Strengthen communication, information, collaboration and engagement:** *Ensure timely, accessible and effective communication and information-sharing among FAFICS, its Associations and retirees, using appropriate languages, channels and technologies to strengthen engagement and participation, addressing needs for multilingualism and access to information*

Proposed FAFICS Work Plan template:

The template consists of a results statement for each strategic priority, where the work on one strategic priority has an impact on the achievement of other strategic priorities, key areas of work, outputs/deliverables, responsible person(s), tasks in 2026-27 and 2027-28 and budget sources. Each Standing Committee will continue to have its own more detailed work plan.

8. In the discussion there was broad agreement on the strategic priorities and the work plan template, especially the need to get away from working in silos. There was debate on how to characterize the work of FAFICS on pension and health insurance, particularly regarding the use of “protect” versus

“promote”. Suzanne will provide terminology on pension issues and Jay and Debbie on health insurance. The issue of long-term care needs to be included. Clarity is needed about what is meant by leadership renewal, and of the terms “broad” and “equitable” in the context of membership. Regarding the credibility of the organization and its governance, we are strengthening and enhancing what we already do rather than starting from scratch. The FAFICS Statutes need to be referred to. Once all the terminology is finalized, it will be used consistently across FAFICS communications.

9. The following was agreed: a) Maria will circulate the final Strategic Priorities and work plan template taking into account the comments provided by the Bureau and circulate it to Bureau members for completion b) **all** Bureau members will provide their inputs to the work plan template by 15 October. Outcomes will be included where possible c) the Bureau working group will meet with Standing Committees to discuss outcomes d) the Bureau working group will include outcomes in the work plan template in the future d) the working group will propose a five-year strategic planning process based on the experience gained through this work planning cycle e) a decision will be made regarding what is shared with Associations and external stakeholders.

Agenda item 5. Report of the Vice-President leading on the preparation of the 57th FAFICS Council

10. Vice-President Clemens Adams presented a draft Concept Paper on the preparation of the 57th Council.

11. It was confirmed the Council will be held in Geneva from 19-23 July 2027. The ILO will host the meeting. A letter has gone out from the President soliciting input from Associations on how to improve the next Council, enhance interaction and engagement. The deadline for Association responses is 25 September. A working group of Associations is being formed to work under the leadership of Clemens to prepare the Council.

12. Maria and Abdou will propose members for the working group from Latin America and Africa. For Africa it would be excellent to have both an anglophone and francophone representative. Members of the working group should not be from the Bureau to ensure broader engagement of Associations. AFUS-Paris and AFICS-Philippines have already nominated individuals for the working group. Once the working group is established, the President will announce its membership to all Associations. The working group will seek feedback from Standing Committees as this is also a way of engaging more Associations. The Standing Committees indicated that having a day focused on their issues before the Council and then again in plenary sessions was redundant. One idea was that breakout sessions and small sessions of 6-8 Associations be considered both before and during the Council to enhance participation, in particular of remote participants. It was suggested that once the working group has completed its data gathering and analysis and prepared a draft Council agenda, that it sends an interim report to Associations to seek a final round of input before the draft Council agenda is finalized. Norms and guidelines should be established for presentations with greater use made of graphs and PowerPoints. Emphasis in the presentations should be on what actions are being taken rather than on process. It was agreed a follow up message will be sent to Associations regarding the deadline for feedback and seeking more members for the working group.

Agenda item 6: Report of the Standing Committees

Standing Committee on Communications

13. The Chair, Juan Casas Zamora, provided the update.

14. The Chair introduced two papers regarding the establishment of an Editorial Group and FAFICS Voices. The Standing Committee will meet next week to further refine the proposals.

a) Editorial Group

Broadly it would do the following:

- develop a balanced and forward-looking programme of written, visual and audiovisual content for the benefit of Member Associations and the wider FAFICS constituency;
- build and maintain a community of listeners and readers by encouraging dialogue, participation and continued engagement;
- ensure that published material is accurate, relevant, clear, ethical, accessible and consistent with FAFICS's values and strategic direction;
- give greater visibility to Member Associations, including their achievements, challenges, lessons learned, initiatives and good practices;
- strengthen FAFICS's visibility and voice within the United Nations community, particularly on pensions and after-service health insurance;
- showcase people, programmes, initiatives and innovations that can inform and inspire the audience; and
- coordinate editorial research, planning and production and recommending improvements to the Bureau.

Audience would be:

- FAFICS Member Associations and their members worldwide;
- United Nations system retirees, pension beneficiaries and dependents generally; serving United Nations system staff approaching retirement; the wider United Nations community; and
- civil society organizations, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, and others working in fields connected with the United Nations.

b) FAFICS Voices

Broadly it would be a multilingual podcast of recorded conversations, stories and explanations to:

- build and sustain a community of listeners across FAFICS Member Associations by encouraging dialogue, participation and continued engagement;
- make issues affecting retirees and beneficiaries easier to understand, particularly pensions and after-service health insurance;
- enhance and strengthen the visibility and voice of FAFICS and its contribution to the wider United Nations community, especially in relation to pensions and health insurance;

- give greater visibility to Member Associations and their work, highlighting successes and achievements as well as challenges and lessons learned;
- showcase people, programmes, initiatives and innovations that can inform and inspire listeners;
- share good practices by examining what worked, why it worked and what may be replicated or adapted elsewhere; and
- preserve institutional memory and share experience across associations, regions and generations of international civil servants.

Audience would be:

- FAFICS members globally, other United Nations system retirees and beneficiaries, and serving staff approaching retirement;
- -civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations working in development, humanitarian assistance, human rights, social protection, peacebuilding, gender equality and other areas connected with the United Nations agenda.

15. In the discussion it was emphasized the Editorial Group should focus on providing guidance and policy advice but not the production of products. We need to make sure there is clear distinction as to who the owners of the information being produced are, especially if documents are posted on our website. Regarding podcasts, one podcast will be piloted before the end of the year, likely featuring the President of FAFICS. Podcasts provide transparency on who we are and what we do, confer legitimacy and attract members. There should be a call for action at the end of each podcast. On content, while there could be a focus on current affairs, when appropriate, we are promoting volunteerism and how we build a better world from our standpoint. Also, there is the UN Advocacy Community, which many retirees have joined, which is producing content on development and other substantive UN related issues. Regarding the audience, it was felt we must focus on our members and potential members, retirees, active and former staff. As to the considerable workload involved, Quattro Medios Digitales will be supporting the work as this kind of work falls within their existing terms of reference. The Standing Committee on Succession Planning will search the Expertise Pool for potential members of the Editorial Group. To support the search, the Standing Committee on Communications will put together a brief description of key functions.

16. Regarding the “What is FAFICS” flyer, the substance and language needs to be updated. Bureau members will send suggested edits on the text.

Standing Committee on Membership

17. The Chair, Abdou Khadre Diakhate, provided the update.

18. The Standing Committee is finalizing its work plan.

19. The Standing Committee has been enlarged with the Secretary and Treasurer of FAFICS serving as permanent members. Vice-President Aye Win will be supporting the work of the Standing Committee with respect to communications and would like clarity from the President on any other

support to be provided. Vice-President Maria Machicado offered consulting support with Associations in Latin America. The Chair will be making a proposal to the President for the position of Vice-Chair. Each member of the Committee will have a portfolio of several countries. Quarterly progress reports will be prepared.

Members of the Standing Committee:

Abdou Khadre Diakhate-President-ASAFI-Senegal
Souleymane Diabate-President-AIAFI-SNU-Abidjan
Maurice Critchley-President-AAFICS-Australia
Manijeh Torabi-Treasurer-ARICSA-Austria
Abu Khaled Masood-President Emeritus-AFUNSOB-Bangladesh
Claude Menezes-President-AAFIB-Brazil
Murali Balasubramaniam-Member Board of Directors-CAFICS-ACAFI-Montreal
John Kakonge-President-AFICS-Kenya
Patrick Gallaud-President-AFUS-Paris
Delia Barcelona- Secretary-FAFCS
Peter Wichmand-Treasurer-FAFICS

Countries being worked on, to be supported or contacted:

Africa: Cameroon, Gambia, Guinea, Malawi, Morocco, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe
Asia: Cambodia, East Timor, Iran, Japan, Vietnam
Europe: Ireland, Georgia, Serbia
Latin America: Dominican Republic, Guatemala and El Salvador

Standing Committee on Succession Planning

20. The Interim Chair, Nancy Hurtz-Soyka, provided the update.

21. The Standing Committee has completed and submitted its work plan.

22. With regard to the Expertise Pool, the Standing Committee on Succession Planning has been working with Mr. Chand Kausil, UNICT, who designed the new Expertise Pool application and identified a free-of-charge temporary hosting site on which the Expertise Pool is currently located. Going forward, it has been determined the FAFICS website will not be able to host the Expertise Pool. Other options were reviewed and the recommendation is for a company, MilesWeb, which can host the application and database, provide FAFICS with administrative control of the server, 24-hour hosting support, backup, security, technical assistance and the system can be expanded over time. We would select the domain name. The cost would be approximately \$100 for 36 months.

23. The discussion emphasized the need to carefully examine what is in the company's standard agreement. The agreement needs to include confidentiality clauses that meet FAFICS requirements. The issue of how much the system will cost after the initial three-year period needs to be ascertained and a clause that protects us on cost included. Jay Pozenel will be asked to review the agreement. Jay Karia will share the agreement utilized for the health insurance survey.

24. Regarding vacancies, the Committee has provided the President with the list of FAFICS leadership and Pension Board delegation and subsidiary body vacancies from now until July 2027. A key functions description was prepared for the upcoming vacancy on the Pension Board Audit Committee, shared with the President who made some edits. The Expertise Pool is now being searched for possible candidates based on the requirements in the key functions description.

25. On handover arrangements, exit interviews are being conducted with former Vice-President Marashetty Seenappa and former Treasurer Romesh Muttukumar to gather information and reflections pertaining to those functions.

26. The Standing Committee is working on learning and capacity building and will be engaging with other Standing Committees to support their efforts in this regard.

Standing Committee on ASHIL

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

28. The Committee is finalizing its workplan.

29. A second meeting was held with UNISERV and attended by Suzanne Bishopric, Jay Pozenel and Jay Karia. It was agreed there should be more regular meetings to discuss issues of common concern. The importance of collaboration and aligning of positions was emphasized. Pension and health insurance issues were reviewed. Details on the reasons for the premium increases were provided and how decisions were made. UNISERV was not aware that the staff union representative on the HLIC is a voting member and that retirees are observers. Support for retirees to be voting members was sought. It was explained that while decisions are normally made on a consensus basis, having voting rights is nonetheless very important as votes can take place.

Agenda item 7: AOB

30. The Secretary advised:

- the FAFICS 56th Council Report has been issued. Bureau members were thanked for all their support in preparing the final draft. Former President Jerry Barton and the Presiding Officer of the 56th Council, Jacques Rao, had provided substantial inputs.
- that last month four letters from the President had been sent out and some Associations provided feedback that this represented an overload of information. The Secretary suggested pace the communications more strategically, perhaps through a monthly President's letter that highlights relevant issues during that month and key Bureau decisions. The President advised he had received expressions of appreciation from Associations for the communications. This will be discussed further.
- dates on future Bureau meetings will be sent.

Agenda item 8: Next Bureau meeting

31. The next meeting will be on 15 October.