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43 C

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Item 9.2 of the revised provisional agenda

STAFF SALARIES, ALLOWANCES AND BENEFITS

ADDENDUM

COMMENTS BY THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU)

OUTLINE

In accordance with Item 9.2.7 of the UNESCO Human Resources Manual, the International Staff Association of UNESCO (ISAU) submits its comments on staff salaries, allowances and benefits (document 43 C/43).



Job: 2501148E

Introduction

1. First of all, ISAU would like to express its concern regarding the excessively late submission of HR documents for the 43rd session of the General Conference, including document 43 C/43. While we appreciate that an advance copy was shared with us by HRM on 24 October, prior to its publication online, we would nevertheless like to have an explanation as to what could have justified such delay. The submission of documents a few days before the opening of the General Conference not only contravenes the provisions of Article 11, paragraph 1, of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, which stipulate that “All documentation required for consideration of the various items on the provisional agenda shall be placed in the possession of Member States and Associate Members, so far as possible, at least twenty-five days before the opening of the session.”, but seriously hinders the preparatory work of Member States as well as staff associations.

Parental leave

2. We note in paragraph 4 that an Administrative Circular promulgating the policy will be published **following** the adoption of the 43 C/5 Draft Programme and Budget. We would have appreciated a clearer indication of the expected timeline. We recall that the Parental policy was announced to be issued more than a year and a half ago.

3. From an institutional standpoint, the delay and failure in promulgating a new parental framework already adopted by the General Assembly in December 2022 and implemented in transitional form since January 2023 raises serious concerns. The absence of clear timelines and accountability mechanisms for policy implementation must be addressed to uphold the principles of good governance and institutional integrity.

4. Moreover, we fail to understand the rationale for promulgating the new Parental leave policy only after the adoption of document 43 C/5, given that the transitional measures granting these rights are already in effect.

5. During the last session of the General Conference, the issue of ensuring adequate funding to cover staff replacements under the new Parental leave policy was raised in document [42 C/45](#). Since the Administration’s document this time makes no reference of the matter, are we to understand and be assured that the Administration has duly addressed the issue and that provisions have been made to cover the cost of temporary replacements?

6. Indeed, it is important that parental leave, which constitutes a fundamental right of staff members, does not result in an increased workload for remaining colleagues, who are most often already under considerable pressure. It is therefore crucial to ensure sufficient funds to enable the recruitment or assignment of temporary replacements, thereby guaranteeing continuity of activities and fairness within teams.

Local salary survey for General Service staff at Headquarters

ICSC recommendations

7. ISAU welcomes the recommendation of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) to introduce higher dependency allowances. We also welcome the decision of the Executive Board “to engage in dialogue with the relevant stakeholders in order to discuss the possibilities and modalities of the retroactive application from 1 October 2024, as suggested by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), and to present the results of these discussions at the 224th session of the Executive Board”. ISAU calls on the Director-General to ensure the meaningful inclusion of staff associations in these consultations, in the spirit of transparency and social dialogue. We look forward to participating in this exercise and to contributing constructively to discussions aimed at ensuring a fair and equitable implementation of this measure.

8. However, we wish to express our disappointment regarding the decision to freeze the salaries of General Service staff at Headquarters as well as the language allowance. Such measures can understandably be discouraging for our colleagues, who continue to work tirelessly every day to ensure the effective functioning of the Organization, despite an ever-increasing workload and mounting cost-of-living pressures. While alignment with local market conditions is a legitimate objective, freezing salaries without a defined convergence strategy may be interpreted as a message of disregard for staff welfare.

Transfer of authority (draft resolution item 2)

9. While we do concur that it is desirable for salary survey results to be implemented as soon as possible after their completion, we believe there is **no need to transfer the authority to the Director-General to decide upon ICSC recommendations relating to future salary surveys** for staff members in Paris in the General Service and related categories.

10. The arguments brought forward in paragraph 28, including the claim that the scheduling of Paris surveys is restricted by the timing of biannual sessions of the Executive Board, are not convincing. The fact that implementation is delayed by one month as opposed to the date applicable does not constitute a sufficient reason to warrant a change in authority, since adjustments are systematically made in the following month.

11. Moreover, the proposed draft resolution item 2 does not reflect the suggestions and the explanations provided by the Administration. In fact, as outlined in paragraphs 28 and 29, the authority delegated to the Director General is limited to the “implementation arrangements of salary surveys” (emphasis added), whereas the draft resolution as proposed gives authority to the Director-General to “decide upon ICSC recommendations” (emphasis added) themselves. The distinction may appear subtle but it is nonetheless fundamental.

12. ISAU therefore requests that the authority to decide upon ICSC recommendations relating to future surveys for staff in Paris be retained by the Executive Board and consequently proposes the **deletion of the draft resolution item 2**.

13. The proposal to transfer decision-making authority from the Executive Board to the Director-General on matters of salary surveys represents a significant shift in decision making. Considering the recent delays and ambiguities, such a transfer risks to further weaken oversight and accountability. The Executive Board’s supervisory role is essential to ensure that staff-related decisions reflect the will of Member States and uphold the principles of transparency, responsiveness, and institutional checks and balances. Any delegation of authority must be carefully framed, limited in scope, and subject to clear reporting obligations.

Conclusion

14. ISAU reiterates its commitment to constructive dialogue and institutional integrity. We urge Member States to consider the broader governance implications of the measures proposed in document 43 C/43 and to ensure that staff policies are implemented with transparency and fairness.



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STAFF SALARIES, ALLOWANCES AND BENEFITS

OUTLINE

Source: [42 C/Resolution 62](#).

Background: 42 C/Resolution 62 authorizes the Director-General to continue to apply to the staff of UNESCO measures of this kind that might be adopted either by the United Nations General Assembly or, by virtue of the authority conferred upon it, the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC).

Purpose: This document informs the General Conference of decisions taken by the Director-General since its 42nd session, to apply to the UNESCO staff members concerned, any measures as adopted by the United Nations General Assembly or ICSC.

Decision required: Paragraph 32.



Job: 2501131E

INTRODUCTION

1. At each of its sessions, the Director-General informs the General Conference of recent measures that she has authorized concerning the salaries and allowances of UNESCO staff. This authority derives from [42 C/Resolution 62](#).

2. In between sessions of the General Conference, the Director-General reports to the Executive Board on the annual reports of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and on measures on salaries, allowances and other benefits which she has applied following resolutions adopted by the General Assembly relating to the United Nations common system, or by the ICSC itself.

MEASURES IMPLEMENTED OVER THE 2024-2025 PERIOD AND ICSC-RELATED MATTERS

Conditions of service applicable to both categories of staff

New parental leave framework

3. At its July 2022 session, ICSC approved a new parental leave framework, replacing the current maternity leave, paternity leave and adoption leave provisions ([A/77/30](#)), which was welcomed by the General Assembly in December 2022 ([A/RES/77/256](#)). As in other United Nations Common System organizations, pending the promulgation of a new policy, UNESCO implemented transitional measures of enhanced parental leave entitlements for staff members who became parents on or after 1 January 2023.

4. The Director-General has approved the new parental leave policy (including amendments to relevant Staff Rules). An Administrative Circular promulgating the policy will be published following the adoption of the 43 C/5 Draft Programme and Budget.

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF STAFF IN THE PROFESSIONAL AND HIGHER CATEGORY

Comprehensive review of the compensation package

5. Responding to a request from the General Assembly in resolution [A/RES/77/256-B](#), the ICSC, at its 96th session (in July 2023), agreed on the outline of a comprehensive review of the common system compensation package. This review focuses on Professional and higher category staff, given that the salary survey methodologies for locally recruited staff had just been revised. The review has three strands: (1) an overview of the structure of the current compensation package; (2) family/dependency-related elements, including the education grant and (3) allowances and benefits related to service in the field.

6. In welcoming progress to date, the General Assembly, in resolution [A/RES/79/252](#), underlined the importance of considering all elements holistically within the review – especially the overall cost containment and sustainability criteria – alongside overarching objectives such as effective mandate delivery, flexibility, attractiveness, coherence, transparency, stability, and predictability.

Changes in salaries and allowances

7. The salaries and other conditions of service of Professional and higher category staff are set in accordance with the Noblemaire principle, by comparison with employment conditions in the highest paid national civil service (the USA federal civil service is used as the reference). In accordance with recommendations and decisions of the General Assembly and ICSC, the Director-General applied the following to the Professional and higher category staff.

Net/base salary

8. The net base/floor unified salary scale for staff members in the Professional and higher categories, as approved by the General Assembly, increased on 1 January 2025 by 9.50%, in order

to maintain the UN salaries in line with the comparator federal civil service. This increase reflected the cumulative effect of the 2023 and 2024 salary increases granted by the comparator, and tax changes in the USA in 2023 and 2024, the General Assembly having decided, at its 78th session, to take no action on the recommendation in ICSC's annual report for 2023 for an increase in the net base/floor salary scale with effect from 1 January 2024.

9. This increase was introduced on a no loss, no gain basis, whereby the increase in net base/floor salary is offset by a reduction in post adjustment, so leaving net take-home pay unchanged. As net base salaries are used to calculate the repatriation and death grants and termination indemnity payments, these increased as a result.

10. The revised unified net/base salary scale effective 1 January 2025 is available [here](#).

Pensionable remuneration

11. Pensionable remuneration is the amount used to determine the contributions from staff members and UNESCO to the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. The pensionable remuneration amounts are also used for the determination of pension benefits of staff members upon retirement.

12. ICSC recalculated the scale of pensionable remuneration in accordance with the established methodology and in line with the review cycle of the rates of the common scale of staff assessment. As a result, revised pensionable remuneration amounts for the DDG (USG) and ADG were implemented effective 1 January 2024. However, these amounts were effective only for January 2024, being superseded in February 2024 by the outcome of the regular annual review of the pensionable remuneration scale.

13. The post adjustment classification for New York revised on 1 February 2024 resulted in an increase of the net remuneration of Professional and higher categories staff in New York by 4.4%. The post adjustment classification was further revised on 1 February 2025, which resulted in a further increase in net remuneration of 1.975%. In line with the authority granted to her under [42 C/Resolution 62](#), the Director-General decided to apply the same percentage increases to the pensionable remuneration of the affected staff, effective from the same dates. As a result, the pension contributions of both the Organization and the staff affected also increased accordingly.

14. The revised pensionable remuneration scale effective 1 February 2025 is available [here](#).

Hardship allowance

15. The General Assembly decided to implement ICSC's recommendation to increase the hardship allowance by 3.1% effective 1 January 2024. The revised amounts are shown [here](#).

Mobility incentive

16. The General Assembly also decided to implement ICSC's recommendation to increase the lower limit of the mobility incentive from US \$6,700 to \$6,900 per year and apply the resulting matrix, effective 1 January 2024. The revised amounts are shown [here](#).

Danger pay

17. ICSC decided to increase the level of danger pay for internationally recruited staff from \$1,645 to \$1,698 per month effective 1 January 2024.

Pilot project – lump sum payment in lieu of settling-in grant at category D and E duty stations not designated as non-family

18. The General Assembly decided to continue, until ICSC's comprehensive review of the compensation package had been completed, the pilot project of granting an annual lump sum amount for staff members who opt not to install any eligible dependents in category D and E duty stations not designated as non-family. As of 1st January 2025, only UNESCO's office in Beirut falls under the pilot provisions of the pilot: and no UNESCO staff have opted for the lump sum payment.

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF STAFF IN THE GENERAL SERVICE AND RELATED CATEGORIES AT HEADQUARTERS

Adjustment to the salary scales

19. In line with the ICSC approved methodology, the Director-General decided to adjust the salary scales of General Service (GS) and related categories at Headquarters by 4.2%, from 1 September 2023. The net, gross and pensionable scales were revised accordingly; and are available [here](#).

20. Increases in the salaries and allowances of General Service staff serving in field duty stations were applied in accordance with local United Nations practice.

Local salary survey for General Service staff at Headquarters

21. In line with ICSC's approved methodology, the annual review of the salary scale normally carried out for 1 September 2024 was postponed pending the completion of a salary survey for the GS and related categories at Headquarters. This began in October 2024 and was completed early 2025; and the results were discussed by ICSC in July 2025. In August 2025, the ICSC Chair submitted their recommendations to the Director-General who, as Executive Head of the lead UN agency in Paris, is responsible for decisions relating to the implementation of GS salary survey results in Paris, upon consultation with the other UN agencies based in Paris.

22. The survey found that the salaries of GS staff in Paris, in force since 1 September 2023, were 3.5% higher than salaries in comparable jobs in the Paris labour market, as surveyed in October 2024. In line with the ICSC's established methodology, therefore, the existing GS salary scales in Paris remain frozen until this "gap" between the internal and external salary levels has been closed through application of future annual salary reviews. The ICSC recommendations also included increases in the level of dependency allowances.

23. By [30 C/Resolution 71](#), the General Conference delegated to the Executive Board the authority to decide upon the recommendations of ICSC on future salary surveys for Paris staff in the GS and related categories. The Director-General therefore submitted to the Executive Board specific proposals for implementing the ICSC recommendations on the 2024 Paris survey ([222 EX/4.IV.A.INF.2](#)).

24. The Executive Board, in 222 EX/Decision 4.IV.A decided to authorize the Director-General to introduce higher dependency allowances as follows:

- €6,198 for a dependent spouse;
- €4,518 for a dependent child (twice this amount for a child with disabilities);
- €9,012 for the first dependent child of staff members without a spouse; and
- €390 for a secondary dependent (but only for those staff members in receipt of this allowance prior to 1 January 1990).

25. The Executive Board also noted that the language allowances, which are calculated as a percentage of the salary of a G-5 Step 1 in Paris, would be frozen at their current levels until this 3.5% gap between internal and external salaries had been eliminated.

26. The higher dependency allowances are payable with effect from 1 October 2025.

27. The Executive Board also invited the Director-General to engage in dialogue with the relevant stakeholders in order to discuss the possibilities and modalities of the retrospective application of the higher dependency allowances from October 2024 and to present the results of these discussions at the 224th session of the Executive Board.

28. The General Conference may wish to note that while, at UNESCO, decisions in respect of GS salary survey results currently are taken by the Organization's governing body, this is not the case in some other UN agencies. Since it is desirable for survey results to be implemented as soon as possible after its completion, the scheduling of Paris surveys is restricted by the timing of biannual sessions of the ICSC, where its recommendations are discussed and agreed, and biannual sessions of UNESCO's Executive Board, where decisions relating to implementation of survey findings can be taken only after conclusion of consultations with the other UN agencies based in Paris. The flexibility for scheduling GS surveys is restricted further by ICSC's own operational rules, whereby results must be implemented either on the survey reference date (i.e. October 2024 for the latest survey in Paris) or at 12 monthly intervals thereafter. Survey results could be implemented more efficiently if the Director-General was authorized to decide upon the implementation arrangements as soon as ICSC had submitted its recommendations, further to local consultations with other UN agencies based in Paris.

29. In view of the above, the General Conference may wish to authorize the Director-General to apply directly measures relating to the outcome of future GS salary surveys in Paris, as recommended by ICSC and upon consultation with the staff associations and the other UN agencies based in Paris. Such authority is already vested in the Director-General for all other decisions and recommendations relating to the salaries and allowances of UNESCO staff that may be made by the ICSC or the United Nations General Assembly.

Danger pay

30. ICSC also approved increases effective 1 January 2024 in the monthly amount of danger pay for locally recruited staff members, by updating the reference year of the local net salary scales on which the calculations are based, from 2019 to 2022, as well as by applying 30% to the net midpoint of the most recent General Service salary scales in effect in 2022, divided by 12.

Impact on UNESCO

31. The increase in overall staff costs for 2024-2025 resulting from changes to salaries, allowances and benefits are accommodated within the 42 C/5 approved budget and will be used to update the standard staff costs under the 43 C/5 Draft Programme and Budget for 2026-2027.

Proposed draft resolution

32. As decisions taken by the General Assembly or ICSC affecting the salaries, allowances and benefits of staff members often come into effect when the General Conference is not in session, the General Conference is invited to consider adopting the following resolution:

The General Conference,

Having examined document 43 C/43,

Taking note of the recommendations and decisions of the United Nations General Assembly and the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) covering the salaries, allowances

and other benefits of staff that participate in the United Nations common system of salaries, allowances and conditions of service,

Noting the possibility that the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) may, on its own initiative and by virtue of the authority conferred upon it by Articles 10 and 11 of its Statute, adopt, decide on or recommend to the United Nations General Assembly measures affecting staff salaries, allowances and benefits,

1. *Takes note* of the measures already taken by the Director-General pursuant to the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly and the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), as set out in document 43 C/43;
2. *Authorizes* the Director-General to decide upon International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) recommendations relating to future salary surveys for staff members in Paris in the General Service and related categories;
3. *Invites* the Director-General to report to the Executive Board on measures taken of this kind; and, if there are budgetary difficulties in applying these, to submit proposals to the Board for approval.