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Mr Larbi Djacta
Chairman, International Service Commission
(ICSC)
ICSC Headquarters
Two United Nations Plaza,
10th Floor
New York, NY 10017

Geneva, 22 July 2019

Dear Mr Djacta,

Subject: Geneva Post Adjustment, Global Staff Survey and ICSC Reform

On behalf of the WHO HQ Staff Association, I am writing in support of the communication sent to you by the UN Office of Geneva (UNOG) Staff Coordinating Council on 5 July 2019 regarding the urgent call for a single salary scheme for all international civil servants in Geneva. I am also contacting you to request that the ICSC redo its 2019 global staff survey and initiate internal reforms to rebuild confidence in the ICSC, which is arguably at an unprecedented low. Welcoming the positive agenda outlined in your [acceptance statement](#) as the new ICSC Chairperson, we are hopeful that we can explore better ways to work together.

As you are aware, on 3 July 2019, the ILO Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) declared the 5.2% pay cut recommended by the ICSC and implemented in 2018 to be illegal. Importantly, the ILOAT judged that:

- 1) The ICSC only has the power to make recommendations and cannot decide post adjustment multipliers;
- 2) The cost of living survey methodology did not ensure stable, foreseeable and transparent results; and
- 3) The reduction of the gap closure measure from 5% was not substantiated nor transparent

We welcome the commitment of the specialized agencies' to uphold the ILOAT's ruling and reverse the pay cut. We also take this opportunity to thank you for agreeing to provide corrected historical post-adjustment multipliers without delay. Although the judgement is only directly applicable to professional staff of the specialized agencies at ILO, WIPO, IOM, ITU and WHO, we believe that the findings are relevant for the entire common system. Firstly, there is a risk that two separate salary schemes emerge while the UN Disputes Tribunal considers the appeal of UN Secretariat staff in Geneva. Considering the ICSC's mandate to preserve and safeguard the common system, we are hopeful that the ICSC will take note of the ILOAT ruling and communicate this to the UNDT. Secondly, the ILOAT judgement raises questions about the validity of cost-of-living survey results in other duty stations as well as scheduled future surveys. Thirdly and most fundamentally, the ILOAT judgement highlights the need to revise the cost-of-living methodology to make it more transparent, stable and predictable as well as improve the way in which the ICSC works with Heads of Agencies and the Staff Federations.

Cc: Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization (WHO)
Mr Ian Richards, President, Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions
and Associations (CCISUA)
Mr Brett Fitzgerald, President, Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA)
Mr Stephen Towler, President, United Nations International Civil Servants' Federation (UNISERV)

Linked to the above points about validity, transparency and collaboration, we would like to urge the ICSC to redo its 2019 global staff survey, which closed on Friday 19 July 2019, on the grounds that the implementation of the survey was flawed and the survey instrument itself was not organized in proper consultation with the Staff Federations. While we understand that the 2019 survey is a repeat of the one conducted in 2013, the Staff Federations only learned about the scheduled launch of the 2019 survey a short time in advance and feedback on the content was not possible. At the request of the ICSC, UN organizations sent a link to the survey and a common login ("ICSC2019"), which meant that anyone with this password irrespective of whether they were actually UN staff could complete the survey from anywhere in the world. Furthermore, there were no security measures such as CAPTCHA to prevent automated bots from answering the questions and the survey could also be completed and submitted multiple times from the same computer. We do not believe it would be credible to use the results obtained from the above described process. For these reasons, the WHO HQ Staff Association called for a boycott of the survey. In the spirit of collaboration and improving our ways of working together, we call on the ICSC to acknowledge staff concerns and initiate a discussion on redoing the global staff survey.

More generally and most importantly, we would like to open discussions with you about the reform of the ICSC, including its statutes and operating procedures. As you are aware, the Staff Federations and Heads of Agencies have raised concerns about consultation and the transparency of ICSC recommendations. Encouragingly, you acknowledged this in your [acceptance statement](#) as the new ICSC Chairperson and proposed an agenda of change, saying:

"After a decade of austerity, it is important that organizations are able to enhance staff satisfaction and moral and maintain their capacity of engagement and commitment. I am conscious that the ICSC's continued relevance depends on the support, not only of Member States, but also of staff and organizations. The ICSC needs to engage in a more meaningful way with staff union federations and the Chief Executives Board, both to render a positive impact, but to also rebuild trust"

We are mindful of the urgency of the change you propose and we trust that this will be prioritized as the highest agenda item at the forthcoming ICSC meeting in Vienna from 29 July to 9 August 2019. Concretely, we ask the ICSC to:

- 1) Support and fully implement the fundamental principle of equal pay for equal work across the UN system;
- 2) Remedy the substantive and procedural errors in calculating pay outlined in the 3 July 2019 ILOAT judgement;
- 3) Consider the implications of the aforementioned judgement for UN personnel globally and encourage the UNDT to apply the ruling for all UN personnel in Geneva;
- 4) Initiate discussions on redoing the 2019 global staff survey in acknowledgement of staff concerns about a lack of consultation and a flawed process;
- 5) Expedite reforms of the ICSC's governance and operating procedures to ensure fairness, transparency and independence; and
- 6) Make UN personnel an equal partner in deciding how their conditions of service are set.

We thank you for giving due consideration to our proposals and we look forward to constructive discussions on meaningful ways we can work better together.

Yours sincerely



Catherine Kirorei Corsini
President, 67th Staff Committee
World Health Organization