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Agenda item 145

United Nations common system

Report of the Fifth Committee

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I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 17 September 2021, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its seventy-sixth session the item entitled “United Nations common system” and to allocate it to the Fifth Committee.

2. During the main part of the seventy-sixth session, the Fifth Committee met formally and remotely owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, during which it considered the item. The Committee formally considered the item in person at its 8th and its 9th meeting, on 16 November and 23 December 2021. Statements and observations made in the course of the Committee’s formal consideration of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records.¹

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the International Civil Service Commission for the year 2021 ([A/76/30](#));

(b) Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the programme budget implications arising from the recommendations contained in the report of the International Civil Service Commission for 2021 ([A/C.5/76/3](#));

(c) Related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions ([A/76/7/Add.10](#)).

¹ [A/C.5/76/SR.8](#) and [A/C.5/76/SR.9](#).



II. Consideration of draft resolution [A/C.5/76/L.14](#)

4. At its 9th meeting, on 23 December, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled “United Nations common system” ([A/C.5/76/L.14](#)), submitted by the Chair of the Committee on the basis of informal consultations coordinated by the representative of Bangladesh.

5. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.5/76/L.14](#) without a vote (see para. 6).

III. Recommendation of the Fifth Committee

6. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

United Nations common system

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [44/198](#) of 21 December 1989, [51/216](#) of 18 December 1996, [52/216](#) of 22 December 1997, [53/209](#) of 18 December 1998, [54/238](#) of 23 December 1999, [55/223](#) of 23 December 2000, [56/244](#) of 24 December 2001, [57/285](#) of 20 December 2002, [58/251](#) of 23 December 2003, [59/268](#) of 23 December 2004, [60/248](#) of 23 December 2005, [61/239](#) of 22 December 2006, [62/227](#) of 22 December 2007, [63/251](#) of 24 December 2008, [64/231](#) of 22 December 2009, [65/248](#) of 24 December 2010, [66/235 A](#) of 24 December 2011, [66/235 B](#) of 21 June 2012, [67/257](#) of 12 April 2013, [68/253](#) of 27 December 2013, [69/251](#) of 29 December 2014, [70/244](#) of 23 December 2015, [71/264](#) of 23 December 2016, [72/255](#) of 24 December 2017, [73/273](#) of 22 December 2018, [74/255 A](#) and [74/255 B](#) of 27 December 2019, [75/245 A](#) of 31 December 2020 and [75/245 B](#) of 16 April 2021 and its decision 67/551 of 24 December 2012,

Having considered the report of the International Civil Service Commission for the year 2021,¹

Reaffirming its commitment to a single, unified United Nations common system as the cornerstone for the regulation and coordination of the conditions of service of the United Nations common system,

Emphasizing the importance of, and benefits derived from, maintaining a coherent and unified United Nations common system,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the work of the International Civil Service Commission;
2. *Takes note* of the report of the Commission for 2021;
3. *Reaffirms* the role of the General Assembly in approving conditions of service and entitlements for all staff serving in the organizations of the United Nations common system, bearing in mind articles 10 and 11 of the statute of the Commission;²
4. *Stresses* the independence and impartiality of the Commission in accordance with its statute;
5. *Recalls* articles 10 and 11 of the statute of the Commission, and reaffirms the central role of the Commission in regulating and coordinating conditions of service and entitlements for all staff serving in the organizations of the United Nations common system;
6. *Reaffirms* the authority of the Commission to continue to establish post adjustment multipliers for duty stations in the United Nations common system under article 11 (c) of the statute of the Commission;
7. *Underlines* the importance of the effective and efficient implementation of the new cost-of-living surveys to re-establish a unified common system, stresses the need for regular surveys with changes based firmly on reliable data, including verified

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-sixth Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/76/30).*

² Resolution [3357 \(XXIX\)](#), annex.

external data, and in this regard requests the Commission to complete the current round of surveys as scheduled;

8. *Recalls* paragraph 6 of its resolution 74/255 B, expresses concern at the continued application of two concurrent post adjustment multipliers in the United Nations common system at the Geneva duty station, and urges the member organizations of the United Nations common system to cooperate fully with the Commission in line with its statute and to apply a single multiplier per duty station after the cost-of-living surveys are completed in 2022;

9. *Requests* the Commission to conduct a study on the feasibility and impact of establishing a separate post adjustment index and General Service salaries for Bern;

10. *Recalls* its resolution 75/245 B, and requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Commission, to review the legal expertise available to the Commission and to report thereon at the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly;

11. *Looks forward* to receiving the review of the jurisdictional set-up of the common system at its seventy-seventh session, as requested in paragraph 8 of its resolution 74/255 B and in paragraphs 8 and 9 of its resolution 75/245 B, and invites the Sixth Committee to consider the legal aspects of the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General, without prejudice to the role of the Fifth Committee as the Main Committee entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters;

12. *Recalls* paragraph 57 of section III of its resolution 70/244, underlines the importance for the General Assembly to maintain a comprehensive oversight of the common system compensation package and consider its components in a holistic manner, and invites the Commission to undertake a comprehensive assessment and review of the compensation package for the United Nations common system on a five-year cycle, taking into due consideration the previously agreed objectives of the exercise,³ as well as the context both in Member States and in the United Nations common system;

13. *Requests* the Commission to present, for the consideration of the General Assembly at its eighty-first session, this comprehensive assessment and review of the compensation system, including a detailed analysis on its cost-effectiveness, attractiveness and impact on the workforce and proposals for updating parameters and comparators;

14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide to the Member States, on an annual basis starting at the seventy-eighth session, comprehensive data on system-wide compensation costs for all staff categories, including all compensation package components,⁴ and in this regard acknowledges the importance of timely submission by the United Nations common system organizations to the Commission of necessary information in order to ensure that the decisions and recommendations of the Commission are based on updated and reliable data, and requests the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to intensify his efforts in this regard;

15. *Requests* the Commission to analyse the possibility of using external data for staff expenditure surveys and other pertinent items in the next round of cost-of-living surveys, taking stock of the relevant exercise in the 2022 round, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session;

³ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventieth Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/70/30)*, chap. VI, sect. A.

⁴ As currently reflected in International Civil Service Commission, "United Nations common system of salaries, allowances and benefits", February 2021.

16. *Also requests* the Commission to conduct a pilot application of external data for salary surveys, taking into account the opinions of all the parties concerned;

17. *Notes* the lack of formal guidelines for geographical distribution in 19 member organizations and the high average age of staff members in the United Nations common system, and encourages the Commission to identify good practice and provide advice to common system organizations on ways to promote geographical diversity and rejuvenation, including by measures proposed in paragraph 144 of its report, such as programmes to support internship candidates from developing countries, and notes the Commission's request to establish clear indicators to track progress in this regard;

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to review job classification practices across the United Nations common system and to propose recommendations for ensuring adherence to and consistent application of the classification standards of the Commission;

19. *Invites* the Commission to include the issue of multilingualism of the workforce in its programme of work for 2022–2023;

20. *Notes* that the Commission will consider the standards of accommodation for air travel and report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session;

21. *Requests* the Commission to review the scope and parameters of the non-family service allowance, in particular the eligibility of staff without dependants, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session;

Conditions of service of staff in the Professional and higher categories

A

Base/floor salary scale

Recalling its resolution [44/198](#), by which it established a floor net salary level for staff in the Professional and higher categories by reference to the corresponding base net salary levels of officials in comparable positions serving at the base city of the comparator civil service (the United States federal civil service),

1. *Approves*, with effect from 1 January 2022, as recommended by the Commission in paragraph 24 of its report,⁵ the revised unified base/floor salary scale and updated pay protection points for staff in the Professional and higher categories, as contained in annex II to the report;

2. *Requests* the Commission to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session on the impact of such revision on the expenditures on post resources for 2022, including separation payments, post adjustment payments and pension contributions from member organizations;

B

Evolution of the margin and margin management around the desirable midpoint

Recalling section I.B of its resolution [51/216](#) and the standing mandate from the General Assembly, in which the Commission is requested to continue its review of the relationship between the net remuneration of the United Nations staff in the Professional and higher categories in New York and that of the comparator civil

⁵ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-sixth Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/76/30).*

service (the United States federal civil service) employees in comparable positions in Washington, D.C. (referred to as “the margin”),

1. *Reaffirms* that the range of 110 to 120 for the margin between the net remuneration of officials in the Professional and higher categories of the United Nations in New York and officials in comparable positions in the comparator civil service should continue to apply, on the understanding that the margin would be maintained at a level around the desirable midpoint of 115 over a period of time;

2. *Notes* that the margin between net remuneration of the United Nations staff in grades P-1 to D-2 in New York and that of officials in comparable positions in the United States federal civil service in Washington, D.C., for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2021 is 113.3;

3. *Recalls* its decision contained in resolution [70/244](#) that, if the margin trigger levels of 113 or 117 are breached, the Commission should take appropriate action through the operation of the post adjustment system;

4. *Notes* the decision of the Commission to continue monitoring the level of the margin and to take the necessary corrective action under the operation of the post adjustment system should the trigger levels of 113 or 117 be breached;

C

Education grant: review of scale and level of the boarding lump sum

Decides, for implementation as from the academic year in progress on 1 January 2022, to maintain the reimbursement rates of the seven brackets and adjust the revised sliding reimbursement scale upward by 14 per cent on the basis of the scale approved by the General Assembly in its resolution [70/244](#), and to increase the boarding lump sum to the amount of 5,300 United States dollars, and requests the Commission to consider providing a review of the education grant scheme, including detailed analysis of the methodology of the sliding reimbursement scale and the level of the boarding lump sum;

D

Payment of amount in lieu of settling-in grant at category E duty stations that are not designated as non-family

Recalls section III of its resolution [73/273](#), concerning conditions of service in the field at duty stations with extreme hardship conditions, decides to continue the pilot project of granting 15,000 dollars on an annual basis for staff members who opt not to install eligible dependants in category E duty stations not designated as non-family, and to grant, on a pilot basis, 14,000 dollars on an annual basis for eligible staff members in category D duty stations not designated as non-family until 31 December 2024, on the understanding that the payment will be granted only to the eligible staff members when they physically report to their normal duty stations, and requests the Commission to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session a recommendation on this payment, based on a thorough review of the impact thereof, including on workforce planning, in different categories of duty stations, including non-family duty stations, and the actual cost to the organizations.