This is the second edition of “ICSC MATTERS”, a newsletter designed to keep our interlocutors more fully informed. We appreciate the positive feedback and suggestions received, so please continue to send us your ideas and suggestions about what you would like to see included in the next issue.

Since the first edition in January 2012, the Commission has held two sessions and worked on a range of topics affecting all staff categories throughout the United Nations common system. While the various organizations which make up the common system may have different funding mechanisms, operating environments, mandates, management practices and sometimes even different governance structures, in the end they all adhere to a single common system – a system which was specifically designed to avoid internal competition for talent by providing equity in conditions of service across organizations.

The underlying notion of a common system is to promote harmonization and ensure that narrow tactical interests are balanced against long-term strategic ones. For its part, the Commission can regulate and coordinate common system conditions of service as per its statute, but holding the system together is a collective responsibility in which all stakeholders have roles to play. It is only through the combined good will and effort of all parties that we can achieve common system goals and expectations of Member States, the organizations and staff members and their representatives, each with differing perspectives.

### Composition of the ICSC

There have been some changes in the composition of the ICSC with the Commission recently welcoming two new members: Mr. Luis Hermosillo (Mexico), and Mr. Sergei Garmonin (Russian Federation) who is filling the remaining period of Mr. Afanasiev’s term, set to expire on 31 December 2012.

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We also bid farewell to two former Commission members, Mr. Gilberto Velloso of Brazil and Mr. Yevgeny Afanasiev of the Russian Federation, whose rich contributions to the Commission over the years have been invaluable.

In total, the Commission is composed of fifteen members who serve in their personal capacity. They are appointed by the General Assembly for four-year terms, with due regard for broad geographical representation. Two of the members are designated Chairman and the Vice-Chairman who are full-time members and are based in New York. The full Commission meets twice a year.

**Commission’s 74th and 75th Sessions**

The ICSC held its 74th session at the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok, Thailand from 27 February through 9 March 2012 and its 75th session at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 9 - 20 July 2012. A number of important matters affecting all staff categories common system-wide were considered. The Commission, _inter alia_:

- Decided to submit to the General Assembly for its approval a revised standards of conduct for the international civil service;
- Implemented danger pay as of 1 April 2012 for both internationally recruited and locally recruited staff;
- Increased the level of danger pay effective 1 January 2013 to 30 per cent of the net midpoint of the applicable 2012 GS salary scales of those duty stations qualifying for danger pay, with the subsequent delinking of danger pay effective 1 January 2013 from the applicable General Service salary scales;
Encouraged the common system organizations to use the existing recognition and reward framework, including both cash and non-cash awards;

Established a security evacuation allowance (SEA) to assist in offsetting direct added expenses of staff members and their eligible family members who are evacuated from their official duty stations, and set the amounts of the allowance; the Commission also decided to apply an extended security evacuation allowance set at the same amount as that provided under the additional hardship allowance payable at non-family duty stations when an evacuation continued beyond six months, and the duty station had not been declared as a non-family duty station;

Completed its review of Pensionable Remuneration;

Reported the results of the General Service salary survey in Rome;

Supported the recommendation from the UNJSPB to raise the mandatory age of separation to age 65 for new staff of the UNJSPF Member Organizations effective no later than 1 January 2014;

Decided to defer the promulgation of the revised New York post adjustment multiplier of 68.0 which became due in New York on 1 August 2012 in accordance with the approved methodology, in view of the financial situation of the United Nations as described by the Secretary-General. It also decided that, unless the General Assembly acted otherwise, the multiplier would be promulgated on 1 January 2013 with a retroactive effect as of 1 August 2012;

Regarding the Education Grant, with effect from the school year in progress on 1 January 2013, recommended adjustments to boarding costs, the maximum education grant level, maximum admissible expenses at some locations and made a number of decisions regarding special measures;

Affirmed that the ICSC framework for contractual arrangements in the organizations of the United Nations common system covers three types of appointments: continuing, fixed-term and temporary. Organizations are not required to implement all three types of appointments as described in the framework but may implement any combination of the defined contract types in accordance with the particular needs of the organization.

The details of the Commission’s consideration of the various items during 2012 are issued in the Commission’s annual report (A/67/30) available on the ICSC website. In accordance with Article 17 of the ICSC statute, the Commission’s annual report has been submitted to the United Nations General Assembly. Once the General Assembly adopts the resolution on
the United Nations Common System later in the fall, a circular will be issued outlining the
decisions taken and the future work requested of the Commission.

During the 75th session the ICSC secretariat invited staff of the common system to
participate in a panel discussion and provide their personal experiences regarding mobility.
Several of the panelists had made a number of geographical moves and served in difficult
duty stations. While they all stressed that mobility was key to the character and the
objectivity of the United Nations system and offered many benefits for the organization as
well as for the staff members, it had an impact on their personal and family lives.
Suggestions for what the organizations could do better to facilitate mobility included
offering more orientation -- including for the families -- prior to taking up the new
assignment, updating toolkits, supporting families and in particular spousal employment,
simplifying transactions, and checking in with families systematically.

**Commission’s upcoming session**

The ICSC will hold its 76th Session at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 25
February - 8 March 2013. Items for consideration include the report of the working group on
the ICSC Framework for Human Resources Management, resolutions and decisions adopted
by the General Assembly relating to the work of the Commission, review of the level of the
children’s and secondary dependant’s allowances, methodology for the grade equivalency
study, survey of best prevailing conditions of employment in Paris, review of the common
system compensation package, and methodology for the adjustment of danger pay for both
categories of staff.

**General Assembly resolution 66/263B**

The General Assembly in its resolution 66/263B entitled “United Nations Common System”
approved the revised set of criteria for the granting of rest and recuperation (R&R) travel
and corresponding frequencies of travel. Accordingly, the automatic link between danger
pay and the four-week cycle was removed and the four-week travel cycle is now outside
the rest and recuperation framework. In very exceptional cases, however, a four-week
cycle may be approved by the ICSC Chairman and would then be communicated to the HR
Network Standing Committee on Field Duty Stations for inclusion in the Global List of duty
stations entitled to Rest and Recuperation as per the established procedure.

The General Assembly also requested the Commission to provide an update on the
estimated annual system-wide financial implications of the replacement of hazard pay by
danger pay. The ICSC Human Resources Policy Division collected information from the
organizations and provided revised estimates in the context of the Commission’s annual
report for 2012.
Other activities

After the session in Bangkok, seven Commission members, accompanied by members of the ICSC secretariat, and staff of the United Nations Office of Human Resources Management and the Department of Field Support visited the UN Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and other offices of the UN common system in that country. This mission provided Commissioners with the opportunity to see at first-hand how such a large, complex and high-risk mission such as UNAMA functions and to learn about the challenges UN system staff in Afghanistan face in their daily life and work. They experienced for themselves the effect of security incidents on operations, for example having had their planned visit to Kandahar cancelled at the last minute because of extreme danger.

The ICSC Tripartite Working Group for the Review of Conditions of Life and Work in Field Duty Stations held its mid-year review meeting in June 2012 to review hardship classifications and non-family duty stations (NFDS). This was the second review of non-family duty stations since the Commission decided to delegate to the ICSC Chairman the authority to declare a duty station non-family. That some five hundred duty stations were reviewed speaks to the scope of this exercise, and also to the increasing number of duty stations facing security issues. The list of current NFDS effective 1 July 2012 was promulgated by the ICSC Chairman on 15 June 2012 and forwarded to the organizations.

In connection with the promulgated list of non-family duty stations and the Commission’s decision at the 73rd session, rates for the unified special operations allowance (SOLA) approved by the Commission (as contained in Annex IX of the annual report for 2011) were revised effective 1 July 2012 to include newly designated non-family duty stations. The revised list was promulgated by the ICSC Chairman on 19 July 2012 and disseminated to the organizations.

The ICSC Human Resources Policy Division also participated in the work of the HR Network Standing Committee on Field Duty Stations regarding the determination of the frequency of the rest and recuperation cycles in line with the ICSC Rest and Recuperation Framework as approved by the General Assembly.

The Working Group on the Review of Pensionable Remuneration completed its work in May 2012. Four Commission members took part, along with representatives of the organizations and the staff and a team from the ICSC and Pension Fund secretariats. The Working Group undertook a comprehensive review of this very complex issue and made its recommendations. The Chairman also briefed the UN Joint Staff Pension Board at its session in Paris in July 2012 on the Working Group’s findings.

The ICSC Division of Salaries and Allowances participated in meetings of the Headquarters Salary Survey Steering Committee which considers the results of General Service and National Officer salary surveys conducted worldwide. In accordance with the approved timetable, the secretariat has begun the seventh round of surveys of best prevailing conditions of employment of General Service and related categories of staff. The Rome
survey has been completed as well as the pre-survey consultations for the GS salary survey in Paris. In June 2012 the secretariat initiated the survey process in Montreal.

The 34th session of the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions (ACPAQ) was held in Rome from 23 to 30 April 2012. A number of recommendations were submitted for the Commission’s consideration at the 75th session, pertaining to the calculation of the post adjustment index for Group I duty stations, based on refinements of the existing methodology and encompass, among others, the specification of the out-of-area weight; the methodology for the collection and processing of external market rent data; and the post adjustment classification of Geneva.

The 2012 round of cost-of-living surveys is currently in full swing. The ICSC secretariat has implemented results of surveys conducted in all Group I duty stations, and is on schedule with surveys in Group II duty stations. In addition to the ongoing methodological research pertaining to the next round of surveys, the ICSC secretariat will be conducting a comprehensive review of the rental subsidy scheme.

**Review of ICSC Framework for Human Resources Management**

The ICSC Framework for Human Resources Management was adopted in 2000 to enable the organizations of the United Nations common system to manage their human resources effectively. Because a number of developments had taken place in the area of human resources management in the common system since 2000, it was considered timely to re-examine the elements of the framework. The purpose of the review is to make an assessment as to whether the framework remains relevant and up-to-date, and to propose modifications, if and as necessary. In order to embark on such a comprehensive exercise, it would be essential to take detailed account of the current status of human resources management in the United Nations common system and to analyse the recent developments in human resources management within and outside the United Nations system.

A Working Group on the Review of the Human Resources Management Framework will take place in Accra, Ghana from 8 to 12 October 2012. The Working Group will be comprised of four Commissioners, four representatives from the organizations, one representative from each Staff Federation, as well as the ICSC secretariat.
In Focus: The post adjustment for New York - It affects everybody!

The post adjustment for New York was reviewed in August 2012, twelve months after the last review. As reported in the Consolidated Post Adjustment Circular of 1 August 2012 (ICSC/CIRC/PAC/452, available on ICSC website), “a revised post adjustment multiplier of 68.0 would become due in New York, effective 1 August 2012. However, at its seventy-fifth session, from 9 - 20 July 2012, the ICSC decided to defer the promulgation of this revised multiplier to 1 January 2013, with retro-active effect as of 1 August 2012, unless the United Nations General Assembly acted otherwise. The post adjustment multiplier of 65.5 therefore remains in effect for New York until further notice.”

It is important to remember that the post adjustment for New York affects all staff members in the professional and higher categories, everywhere in the world. As the base of the post adjustment system, New York plays a special role in two important ways. First, its post adjustment is reviewed on the basis of increases in the cost of living in New York, but that of every other duty station is set with the objective of achieving purchasing power parity of salaries relative to New York. Furthermore, an increase in net remuneration in New York (via an increase in post adjustment) leads to a commensurate increase in pension contributions by both staff and organizations of the entire UN common system.

That is why the General Assembly’s ultimate decision on this matter will have an impact on all organizations and staff in the professional and higher categories, regardless of their posting. A decision to endorse a revised post adjustment multiplier of 68.0 for New York effective 1 August 2012, (or if no action is taken on the matter) would result in retroactive payments to all eligible staff in New York, parallel retroactive recoveries of pension contributions from all eligible UN common system staff and recalculation of pension benefits for those who retired since August 2012. On the other hand, a decision to maintain the multiplier of 65.5 would effectively impose a freeze in net remuneration for New York. In this case, the post adjustment indices of all duty stations around the world would have to be reduced (by the same extent as the reduction in the pay index for New York from 168.0 to 165.5, that is, about 1.5 per cent), effective 1 August 2012, to ensure purchasing power parity of salaries relative to New York.

The Cost-of-Living Division of ICSC plans to organize information sessions to help members of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly better understand the operation of the post adjustment system, before they begin their deliberations and decision-making process on this issue.

ICSC secretariat staffing news

Presently, the ICSC secretariat employs 37 staff members in its three divisions - Cost of Living, Salaries and Allowances, and Human Resources Policies, as well as the Office of the Executive Secretary. There have been several staffing changes to date in 2012. We bid farewell to Bechir Bouzid (Tunisia), Rajkumar Cheney Krishnan (Singapore), and Alan Miller
(USA) who retired in July 2012. We also welcomed Michael Jacobs (United Kingdom), Prakash Shrestha (Nepal), Sharon Haughton (Jamaica) and David Suarez (Mexico).

Efforts have been made to reach the goal of 50/50 gender balance, in particular to recruit qualified female candidates at senior and policymaking levels, while paying full respect to the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

This goal has now been reached as the representation of women in the Professional and higher categories is at 50%. Efforts will continue to retain the momentum and maintain the 50/50 gender target.

With regard to geographical distribution, the ICSC continuously strives to diversify its workforce by applying recruitment practices that highlight and promote diversity. The 20 ICSC staff members in the Professional and higher categories currently represent 16 different nationalities from various regions, including Canada, Cuba, Dominica, Germany, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Montenegro, Philippines, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom and the United States of America. Looking at all staff members of the ICSC secretariat, 25 nationalities are represented, including Benin, Brazil, Fiji, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Nepal, Peru and Romania.

The table below depicts the geographical distribution of ICSC staff members in the Professional and higher categories.

Changes: Mexico and UK added, Singapore and Tunisia departed
Vacant posts in the ICSC secretariat are advertised on the United Nations careers portal (https://careers.un.org/lbw/Home.aspx) and the ICSC website (http://icsc.un.org/joblinks.asp), as well as on websites of other common system international organizations.

Recruitment processes are currently underway for several vacant posts, including for a Statistician (P-3) and Compensation Officers (P-4 and P-3) and several posts in the General Service category.

Recipients of the newsletter are encouraged to disseminate the ICSC vacancies to interested individuals.

**ICSC Secretariat in figures**

- 37 staff members at present
- 20 in the Professional and above categories
- 17 in the General Service category
- 21 women (10 P & above, 11 GS)
- 16 men (10 P & above, 6 GS)
- 25 nationalities represented

**ICSC Workshops**

At the request of the Rome-based organizations and staff associations, the ICSC secretariat conducted two workshops on post adjustment in April 2012 prior to the opening of ACPAQ session. Both workshops were well-attended and the ICSC received positive feedback from participants.

At the request of a group of duty stations in Southeast Asia, the ICSC secretariat organized a series of briefings on compensation and pension matters for those locations. The sessions were hosted by UNDP Vietnam and were conducted by members of the secretariats of ICSC and the Pension Fund and were webcast to a number of neighbouring locations.

During June 2012, the Human Resources Policy Division held two briefings sessions for approximately 40 human resources staff from the UN Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) on the mobility and hardship scheme, including the designation of non-family duty stations and related allowances.

The ICSC secretariat also organized briefing sessions for a number of delegations from Member States and other international organizations wanting to learn more about the common system remuneration and benefits package. They included delegations from Algeria, India, Israel and Cuba, as well as from the Agency for Aerial Navigation Safety in Africa and Madagascar (ASECNA).
The annual ICSC workshop on the United Nations Compensation System took place in Bogota, Colombia from 3 to 7 September 2012. Participants were internationally and locally-recruited staff of United Nations common system organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean, who have operational responsibility for administering the compensation of staff, including the post adjustment system, the mobility and hardship scheme, daily subsistence allowance (DSA) rates and other allowances and benefits.

A Workshop on the Salary Survey Methodology I for General Service and Related Categories took place from 10 to 12 September in New York.

Information about upcoming workshops is announced on the ICSC website. These workshops are very popular among the staff of the United Nations common system organizations and are often over-subscribed, so make sure you register early to avoid disappointment.

Staff Development

Since 2011 ICSC has been holding Staff Development Lecture Series and inviting prominent individuals to address topics of common interest. The objective of these series is to provide ICSC staff with the opportunity to learn about current issues relating to the United Nations and how they impact our work in the secretariat. The third lecture under this series was held in April 2012.

Mr. Ethan Schutz was invited to speak about “Trust-based Working Relationships and related Comparative Advantage”. Mr. Schutz is the President of The Schutz Company, a consulting and publishing company and has been working on The Human Element, work designed to improve individual, team, and organizational effectiveness through self-awareness and direct, honest communication. An architect early in his career, Mr. Schutz managed projects where he encountered people who did not work collaboratively. Motivated by this experience, he applies his combined experience from the building industry and his knowledge of human interactions to his consulting and training work.

In April 2012, a training session was arranged for the ICSC staff members on the topic of “e-Performance Training: Creating and Approving the Work-plan”. This training session, delivered by the Career Support and Performance Management Section of OHRM,
was organized in connection with Inspira "E-Performance", a new performance management e-tool launched by the UN which will replace ePAS, as well as to reinforce one of the principles of performance management, namely, to establish individual goals, key related actions, and success criteria at the beginning of the cycle in the work plan, and to identify the competencies needed to successfully carry out these goals.

**Contributions from readers**

If you have any comments, questions or suggestions for ICSC secretariat please email them to Ms. Danijela Milic, Human Resources Policies Officer and communications focal point, at milicd@un.org. Your feedback will provide valuable insight, helping us serve you better.

The ICSC website also includes a “Frequently Asked Questions” page (http://icsc.un.org/resources/FAQ/default.htm) through which you can get in contact with us. The content of the ICSC website is continuously being updated and enhanced to facilitate interactive usage, so be sure to visit often.

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**OTHER INFORMATION**

**ICSC Offices**

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**Did you know?**

Mrs. Lucretia Myers (USA) celebrates her 20th year in the Commission, currently its longest-serving member. She was initially appointed by the General Assembly in 1992.

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