

## UNISERV Statement

### Opening of the 100<sup>th</sup> Session of the ICSC

This 100<sup>th</sup> International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) session takes place at a time of great concern over the sustainability of core organizational mandates and uncertainty around the global commitment to multilateralism. We may be at a turning point for the common system, where decisions made by this Commission will impact the well-being of the international civil service and the hardworking, dedicated staff committed to this service across the globe.

UNISERV believes that, now more than ever, the ICSC is essential to helping the system overcome the current crises and live up to the organizations' core values. By focusing on ensuring the best, unified employment conditions possible for common system staff, we can together achieve lasting and positive outcomes for our beneficiaries and truly achieve our organizational mandates.

Of crucial interest to the ICSC and its mandate may be the analysis of whether we are facing a substantial increase in the use of non-staff modalities to replace those staff being terminated or separated. The concept of the International Civil Service cannot be meaningful if it is only relevant for an increasingly smaller proportion of personnel, who also have been experiencing a continuous erosion of their working conditions and employment stability for many years now.

At this time, when security of employment is at an all-time low, and thousands of staff and their families are losing their livelihoods, staff look to the ICSC to thoroughly study and make recommendations on all related employment issues.

UNISERV, for example, has looked back at the compendium of previous system-wide issues and prior Commission reviews of trends in involuntary staff separation due to expiration of contracts. We noted the long-standing issue of the need for providing severance pay, in lieu of an unemployment benefit, to long-serving staff on fixed term appointments, who face expiration of their contracts when funds are no longer available to continue their positions.

Analysis of the use and prevalence of non-renewals, namely statistics on staff separations, needs to be conducted to ensure that staff, for example with 10+ years of continuous service, are treated similarly as those who may face termination and receive indemnity. In the current situation, ensuring the well-being of staff, sustainability of the service, as well fairness and equal treatment, requires a full tabulation of involuntary staff separations.

It is during such a time of multi-faceted crises, and calls for cost cutting and UN80 efficiency reforms, that staff across the organizations look to the ICSC for both

technical soundness, but also dedication to broad principles such as equity and support for organizational duty of care. We look to the ICSC precisely because we can rely on it to prioritize *stability over time* and transparency, and to not rush into methodology revisions that would undermine the sorely needed predictability of our system's features.

Especially with the ongoing review of the compensation package, and with the updates from Working Groups presented in this session, UNISERV appreciates when there is an ICSC recommendation for either more data collection or more study into the actual impacts of proposals – not just on the expected conditions for staff or the organizations, but on whether proposals adhere to our established contractual modalities and Human Resources framework, which have been crafted over decades and through the careful work of this Commission.

UNISERV, thus, expects adherence to the contractual framework recommended by the Commission, including the importance of staff posts being clearly assigned to duty stations, with established hardship classifications and post adjustment levels. Contracts and contractual allowances and benefits attach to staff members, *and not their dependents*. Neither staff nor their organizations should ever be able to waive an allowance or alter a duty station in the name of flexibilities, cost-cutting for the organization, or career benefits to a staff member. During times of financial strain and political pressure, stability and predictability of core concepts of our employment conditions must be protected.

UNISERV concludes this statement by reiterating its role as a staff federation. All UNISERV executives are duly elected staff representatives and present the views of their constituents, as per staff regulations and rules. Our staff federation is only able to represent its constituent member unions and their staff through the monthly dues paid by staff across the globe.

We do not take lightly that staff continue to pay these dues each month during periods of heightened financial stress and uncertainty. Our attendance at ICSC sessions is solely funded through the voluntary contributions of staff, out of their own pay, and not through the budgets of the organizations. We acknowledge the responsibility and accountability that this direct source of funding entails.