

Report of the International Civil Service Commission

Report by the Secretariat

1. Under Article 17 of its Statute,¹ the International Civil Service Commission is required to submit an annual report to the United Nations General Assembly which is transmitted to the governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system through their executive heads.

2. The Director-General submits to the Executive Board herewith the thirty-second annual report of the Commission,² which is due to be considered in December 2006 by the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-first session. Decisions expected to be taken by the General Assembly on the Commission's recommendations that require a revision of WHO's Staff Rules are reported separately to the Board.³ The subjects concerned are the remuneration of the professional and higher categories, the review of the level of education grant, and the review of the methodology to determine the level of education grant.

3. The main elements of the Commission's report are summarized below.

Mobility and hardship allowances

4. The Executive Board, at its 117th session, was provided with detailed information of the Commission's review of the mobility and hardship scheme.⁴ The United Nations General Assembly deferred consideration of this matter to its sixty-first session. The Commission has recommended to the United Nations General Assembly that it should: (a) approve the proposed arrangements for mobility, hardship, non-removal and the assignment grant as set out in Annex II of the Commission's report for 2005; (b) approve the criteria for the payment of hazard pay (as set out in Annex III) and the definitions of hardship and mobility (as set out in paragraphs 76 and 77 of the same report); and (c) decide to introduce the new arrangements as from 1 January 2007.

5. The decision of the United Nations General Assembly is expected in December 2006. Meanwhile, WHO has identified and addressed the implications for its payroll and information

¹ WHO Official Records, No. 226, 1975.

² *Official Records of the General Assembly, sixty-first Session; supplement No.30 (A61/30)* (copies available in the meeting room).

³ Document EB120/29.

⁴ Document EB117/22.

technology systems, and has communicated the expected changes in the mobility and hardship scheme to the staff at large.

Contractual arrangements

6. Proposals for model contracts for continuing, fixed-term and temporary appointments were put before the Commission by its secretariat for consideration at its 2004 session. At that session, the Commission agreed that the contracts could be further refined by its secretariat in collaboration with the organizations for consideration at its session in early 2005. The outcome of this process was the draft guidelines, prepared by the Commission's secretariat, which took into account many of the concerns expressed by the organizations in 2004.

7. The Commission decided to adopt the framework for contractual arrangements as set out in Annex IV to its report for 2005¹ and to submit its final report to the United Nations General Assembly at its sixtieth session. The General Assembly deferred consideration of this issue to its sixty-first session. In its report for 2006,² the Commission has reported to the General Assembly its decision to adopt the framework of guidelines for contractual arrangements as set out in Annex IV to the 2005 annual report.

8. The United Nations General Assembly is expected to endorse the framework of contractual arrangements in December 2006. Meanwhile, the Staff Rules have been reviewed and adapted where necessary, to this broad framework. At its 118th session, the Executive Board confirmed the corresponding amendments, with effect from 1 January 2007,³ subject to endorsement by the General Assembly of the general framework recommended by the Commission.⁴

Common scale of staff assessment

9. In 1996, the Commission, in close cooperation with the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board, recommended a common scale of staff assessment for the Professional and higher categories and the General Service and related categories for determining the pensionable remuneration levels of both categories. The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 51/216, approved the revised scale with effect from 1 January 1997. At that time, the Pension Board recommended, and the Commission agreed, that the scale should be updated, as necessary, every two years, based on changes in average taxes at (the then) seven headquarters duty stations.

10. At its sixty-second session, the Commission examined the changes made in taxes at the eight headquarters duty stations concerned since the last time it considered this item. The data showed that average taxes had increased or decreased minimally at the relevant income levels between 2003 and 2005.

11. The Commission decided to report to the United Nations General Assembly that the current common scale of staff assessment should continue to apply and indicated its intent to review the scale

¹ Document A/60/30.

² Document A/61/30.

³ See document EB120/26 for details of the amendments to the Staff Rules on contract reform, implementation and cost implications.

⁴ Resolution EB118.R5.

every five years or at the time of the next comprehensive review of pensionable remuneration, whichever was first.

Evolution of the United Nations/United States net remuneration margin

12. Under a standing mandate assigned to it by the United Nations General Assembly, the Commission continued to review the relationship between the net remuneration of United Nations staff in the Professional and higher categories in New York and that of United States federal civil service employees in comparable positions in Washington, DC (hereinafter referred to as “the margin”).

13. The Commission was informed that the net remuneration margin for 2006 was estimated at 114.0. The Commission was also informed that the average margin level for the past five years had remained below the desirable midpoint of 115 and stood at 111.3.

14. The organizations noted with concern that the average margin level for the past five years had remained consistently below 115 and was currently standing at 111.3, and therefore requested the Commission to recommend to the United Nations General Assembly a real salary adjustment in order to restore the margin to the desirable midpoint of 115.

15. Different views were expressed by Commission members with regard to the margin averaging. Some members were of the view that it was the Commission’s duty to monitor and report on the five-year average level of the margin and to recommend adjustment when that level was not around the 115 midpoint. The fact that the margin had been consistently below the midpoint since 1998 justified a recommendation for such action to be taken to the General Assembly.

16. The Commission did not recommend an adjustment to the level of the margin to bring it to the 115 midpoint. Instead it decided to draw the attention of the United Nations General Assembly to the fact that the margin had not reached the level of the desirable midpoint of 115 since 1997 and that its average level for the past five years stood at 111.3.

Children’s and secondary dependant’s allowances: review of the level

17. The Commission has recommended that the United Nations General Assembly should approve, with effect from 1 January 2007, the revised amounts of children’s and secondary dependant’s allowances for Professional and higher categories, as indicated in Annex V of its report for 2006.

Survey and report of gender balance in the United Nations common system

18. The Commission has reported to the United Nations General Assembly that it had reviewed progress in the representation of women in the organizations of the United Nations common system for the period 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2004 and, inter alia, decided to urge the organizations to establish policies and strategies to achieve improved gender balance.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

19. The Executive Board is invited to take note of the thirty-second annual report of the International Civil Service Commission.