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JOINT WRITTEN STATEMENT BY

**THE FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS' ASSOCIATIONS (FICSA),
AND UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS' FEDERATION (UNISERV)
TO THE 72nd SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS JOINT STAFF PENSION BOARD (UNJSPB)**

(Virtual meeting, 25 to 29 July 2022)

Delivered in Geneva, video conference, by Tanya Quinn-Maguire, FICSA President on 27 July 2022

To: Chairs, Member Associations/Unions
Members of the Executive Committee
Chairs, Members with Associate Status
Chairs, Associations with Consultative Status
Presidents, Federations with Observer Status
Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Standing Committees

From: Tanya Quinn-Maguire, FICSA President

Mr. Chair, Distinguished members of the Board, Dear colleagues, Dear friends,

On behalf of two of the UN system staff federations, FICSA and UNISERV, thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

It has been an established practice for the Staff Federations to participate in the Board as observers and to provide input based on feedback received from our member staff associations / unions. Unfortunately, the participants representatives' group has not included the federations in its deliberations at this session of the Board, so this is our only opportunity to provide input on these proceedings. We note that the Board is meeting for the first time in the new format and appreciate that we can continue to be part of the agenda, albeit from afar.

As you are all aware, the Pension Fund is the primary source of social security for United Nations staff. As such, the careful management of the Fund is understandably of paramount importance to our members, and we take our role as observers very seriously.

It is impossible, on day three of this session of the Board, not to remark on what appears to be unanimous support for the work of both the CEPA and the RSG and their teams. FICSA and UNSERV would like to join that chorus of support. We note with appreciation the presentations made by the CEPA (*Chief Executive, Pension Administration*) and the RSG (*Representative of the Secretary-General*) and particularly efforts made to clarify the issues raised with regard to the use of external experts in the management of fixed income portfolio. Effective communication is crucial in times when misinformation is spread rapidly through social media and other channels. While there is always room for improvement, we have experienced firsthand the concerted efforts to improve communications with UNJSPF participants with prompt responses to concerns raised as well as opportunities for staff to ask questions directly during virtual Q and A sessions. We strongly encourage continued efforts to engage with staff directly and to continue to improve transparency and accountability.

During our statement last year, FICSA and UNISERV welcomed the establishment of the Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy. We understand that the Board will be discussing the report of the Ethics Advisor which we commend as another step towards strengthening the governance of the Board and enhancing transparency and accountability. In this context we would like to share with you that the ICSC has initiated a review of the Standards of conduct for the International Civil Service. This is yet again another confirmation from the General Assembly on the need to continuously work on strengthening governance and establish procedures to address cases of inappropriate and unethical behavior.

FICSA and UNISERV noted with appreciation the report of the Medical Adviser in document R.29. In particular, we note that mental health issues remain the leading cause of disability, as well as the likely impact of long-COVID on disability cases in the coming years. As such, we applaud the attention paid by the medical adviser to the implementation of the UN Strategy on Mental Health and Wellbeing. Huge strides have been made in this regard and we entreat the common system organizations not to lose the momentum just as we are seeing the efforts of the past five years come to fruition.

In closing, I would like to express our federations' appreciation to both the staff and management of the Pension Fund for their efforts and dedication in serving both participants and beneficiaries. We particularly applaud the new Pension eLearning Modules and would like to end by congratulating the FUND Secretariat for the United Nations Secretary-General Award for innovation and sustainability.

Thank you for your attention.
