



Thursday, October 17, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

CCISUA, FICSA and UNISERV, the three Federations representing the totality of the UN common system staff, have been informed, to their great dismay, that the ICSC decided to launch the Global Staff Survey on UN Common System Compensation Review on 14 October 2013, despite the absence of agreement on the scope of the survey and the structure of the questionnaire used.

Exchanges of views with the ICSC by the Federations are recorded as recently as 14 October 2013, when the Federations informed the ICSC secretariat as follows:

[...] We regret to inform you that we still have reservations, in particular on certain sections in the questionnaire, as we doubt several questions of a very sensitive nature (such as those in section E) will be answered in a questionnaire, due to confidentiality concerns. We do not believe that, under the current financial circumstances and the growing sense job insecurity across the UN, staff would candidly declare "I cannot find a job at the same compensation level that I currently receive" or "I intend to leave my organization in the next 12 months" without fearing consequences. Based on evidence available to us, most research institutes collect this type of information by means of confidential interviews of representative samples of the population. In the end this is what the Chair and the Vice-Chair have been doing with Executive Heads...

Furthermore, even if the questionnaire eventually captured the intentions of the staff, it is still silent on the root causes of dissatisfaction; job satisfaction would be the result of a number of concurring factors (management style, career opportunities etc.). In general, there is positive correlation between the managerial quality, performance and the quality of life. But we doubt that the questionnaire, as it is in its current format, would allow to go much further than this in the analysis.

Finally, we maintain a major reservation on the overall process, including the absence of established staff survey committees at organizations.

As for the Working Groups 1, 2 and 3, we are not in a position to comment until we see the ToRs, including:

- (i) deliverables,*
- (ii) composition and*
- (iii) programme of work.*

Thank you for your attention and warm regards [...]

Colleagues, this action circumvents the purportedly inclusive nature of the compensation review which the ICSC has touted and shows no respect of the consultative process. It further deprives the Federations – your elected representatives – of the opportunity to brief their constituencies on the nature of the survey as well as informing them of reservations raised with the ICSC on specific sections of the survey, especially those of a confidential nature.

To the Federations' knowledge, in almost all cases staff representatives were not contacted locally on the launch and the process of the ICSC global staff survey, as was agreed. Moreover, in absence of adequate replies concerning the scope, the purpose, the structure and the participation at all stages of the exercise, CCISUA, FICSA, and UNISERV wish to warn that there is no control over the potentially highly detrimental effects of the Compensation review on our conditions of employment.

Based on the foregoing, the three Federations are requesting the ICSC to withdraw the current staff survey, with a view to re-issue it after agreement on modalities.

In the meantime, CCISUA, FICSA and UNISERV will suspend cooperation with the survey and the ICSC Review of the Compensation Package, until such time all pending issues concerning the modalities of the compensation review receive satisfactory answers.

The Federations call on their members not to provide answers, particularly those of a confidential nature, until such time we receive satisfactory answers on the nature and the use of the questionnaire.

Finally, we invite our members unions and associations to contact their respective focal points and alternates (as indicated in the attachment) and request immediate suspension of the survey pending resolution of the dispute over such a sensitive issue.

We shall keep our respective constituencies informed on developments.

Regards,

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