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Programme, Financial and Administrative Section

PFA

FOR INFORMATION

Decisions of the United Nations General Assembly on the report of the International Civil Service Commission

Summary: This report covers the decisions taken by the United Nations General Assembly concerning the recommendations contained in the 2011 report of the International Civil Service Commission, and in particular refers to a revised base salary scale and revised staff assessment rates for staff in the Professional and higher categories, a slight increase in the mobility, hardship and non-removal allowance scheme and the replacement of hazard pay by danger pay, including revised levels for the allowance.

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Related documents: GB.312/PFA/13, GB.312/PFA/PR, GB.310/PFA/10.

1. This paper provides information on the report of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) for 2011¹ and the decisions taken by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly at its 66th session (2011)² in relation to the recommendations contained in the report. In accordance with the delegated authority conferred upon the Director-General,³ these decisions have been implemented through the necessary amendments to the ILO Staff Regulations. The Staff Regulations, as amended, are available on the ILO website.⁴

I. Conditions of service of staff in the Professional and higher categories

A. Base salary and staff assessment rates

2. At its 312th Session (November 2011), the Governing Body accepted the recommendation of the ICSC concerning a 0.13 per cent increase in the base/floor salary scale on a “no loss/no gain” basis, and authorized the Director-General to implement it, subject to the approval of the UN General Assembly.⁵
3. The UN General Assembly has now approved this recommendation, along with the revised rates of staff assessment necessary to address the surplus accumulated in the tax equalization funds of organizations using them. These changes have been implemented with effect from 1 January 2012 through amendments to article 3.1 of the ILO Staff Regulations.

B. Evolution of the net remuneration margin

4. The ICSC regularly compares the net remuneration of United Nations staff in grades P1 to D2 in New York with that of United States federal civil service employees in comparable positions in Washington, DC. The average percentage difference in the remuneration of the two civil services, adjusted for the cost-of-living differential between New York and Washington, is the net remuneration margin.
5. The UN General Assembly reaffirmed that the range of 110–120 for the net remuneration margin should continue to apply, on the understanding that it would be maintained at a level around the desirable midpoint of 115 over a period of time. While the margin for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2011 was estimated at 114.9 (compared to 113.3 in 2010), the average margin level for the past five years (2007–11) stood at 114.1.

¹ General Assembly, Official Records, 66th session, Supplement No. 30 (A/66/30), available on the ICSC website at <http://icsc.un.org/resources/pdfs/ar/AR2011.pdf>.

² A/RES/66/235.

³ GB.312/PFA/PR, para. 163(b) and (c).

⁴ <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/pers/staffreg/index.htm>.

⁵ GB.312/PFA/PR, para. 163(a).

II. Conditions of service applicable to both categories of staff

A. Mobility and hardship scheme

6. The mobility, hardship and non-removal allowance was introduced by the organizations of the common system in 1990 as one of a number of measures to address the loss of competitiveness of UN salaries and allowances and the evolution of the operational realities of multilateral organizations. Since then, the scheme has been subject to a number of adjustments and reviews. Most recently, in March 2011, the ICSC approved new rating scales for the hardship factors (security, health, housing, climate, local conditions, isolation and education) used to determine the classification of a duty station in categories from A to E and decided that the resulting hardship classification system be implemented as of 1 January 2012.
7. In addition, the General Assembly approved, with effect from 1 January 2012, a 2.5 per cent increase in the hardship, mobility and non-removal allowances, including the additional non-family allowance introduced in July 2011.⁶
8. The General Assembly also approved the replacement of hazard pay (introduced in 1984 as a special allowance for staff required to work under particularly hazardous conditions) by danger pay, and increased the amount of the monthly allowance for Professional staff from US\$1,365 to US\$1,600. Although this represents a 17 per cent increase, it is expected that with the stricter criteria pertaining to a determination of a duty station as qualifying for danger pay, there will be a reduction in the number of staff eligible for danger pay (ten at the ILO as at 1 December 2011). The replacement of hazard pay by danger pay, including the revised level, will become effective on 1 March 2012.
9. Decisions on whether a duty station qualifies for danger pay will continue to rest with the Chair of the ICSC, under delegated authority from the Commission, either on the recommendation of the UN Department of Safety and Security in situations of war, conflict or exposure of staff to risk where the UN is a target of violent attack, or on the recommendation of the Director-General of the World Health Organization in situations where medical staff are exposed to unprotected environments.
10. The Director-General has implemented the revised amounts for these allowances through amendments to relevant provisions of the Staff Regulations.

B. Conditions of service in the field

11. Further to its decision in 2010 to confer upon the ICSC the authority to regulate the operation of the rest and recuperation framework as part of the measures intended to harmonize the conditions of service applicable in non-family duty stations, the General Assembly approved, with effect from 1 January 2012, a revised set of criteria for the granting of rest and recuperation travel and the corresponding frequencies of such travel. These changes have been introduced in the Office's regulatory framework by means of its Internal Governance Document System.

⁶ GB.310/PFA/12.

III. Other matters

- 12.** The UN General Assembly also supported a series of initiatives and studies undertaken by the ICSC concerning eligibility criteria for the education grant; the establishment of a common system performance management framework, including consideration of rewards and incentives; the possible use of the post adjustment system to reflect the pay freeze in the comparator civil service; and consideration of recruitment policies as a means to improve geographical balances within the staff.

- 13.** The cost of implementing the ICSC's recommendations are covered by provisions made for that purpose in the Programme and Budget for 2012–13.

Geneva, 1 February 2012