

**Remarks by FAFICS President Emeritus Andres Castellanos
at the Annual Assembly of AFICS/NY on 22 May 2025**

Mr. Darshak Shah, President of AFICS NY and members of the Governing Board, Mr. Jerry Barton, President of FAFICS, Distinguished guests, Colleagues:

In addressing you on this special occasion, the 50th anniversary of the founding of FAFICS I am honored and privileged, bearing in mind that I am speaking remembering all other colleagues who preceded and succeeded me in my functions, whether as President of AFICS/NY and or FAFICS.

In its respect, exceptionally, allow me at this moment to pay public tribute to our colleague George Saddler, the Dean President Emeritus of FAFICS and former President of AFICS/NY and Honorary Member of its Governing Board, for his steadfast dedication of many years of his precious life, as a strong pillar of support for the welfare and wellbeing of all former UN system staff, institutionally through FAFICS and AFICS/NY, and with other Member Associations. George you are a giant and we salute you, knowing that you are *On line* with us at this moment.

For fifty years, both our Organizations, FAFICS and AFICS/NY, have maintained a close cooperation on our commitment to the welfare of the entire retiree community. Since the founding of FAFICS in 1975 in Geneva, by AAFI-AFICS Geneva, FFOA Rome and AFICS/NY, a growing expanding worldwide community has emerged with the formation of other Associations dedicated to the recognition of the inherent rights and benefits of former staff of the United Nations system Organizations.

To recall a few but most importantly the first one, is the cardinal right exercised by FAFICS representatives on behalf of all retirees, beneficiaries and dependents, in the deliberations of the UN Joint Staff Pension Board, wherein all pensions' issues are not only discussed, but agreed upon, and subsequently reported to the UN General Assembly through ACABQ, for approval.

This initial crucial achievement of retiree representation of FAFICS on the Pension Board, for all retirees and beneficiaries, was thanks to the steady and diligent solidarity of our towering defenders within the then Pension Board sessions years ago. Such recognition was *championed by Alfred Landau leading the request and arguing for our representation, joined by Patricia Tsien and Antonio Garcia representing the UN staff on the Board* with other colleagues, who supported FAFICS representation to Pension Board deliberations, on agenda items relating to policies on pensions.

Today, and for a few decades, our voices are respected by both the Pension Board and Pension Fund, as the officially recognized voice on the needs of all retirees and other beneficiaries residing in all regions, close to 90,000 spread all over the world.

By now it behooves us to recognize the extent and quality of the Pension Board's relations with FAFICS, as a true partner on a plethora of issues, achievements and concerns of common interest. FAFICS is recognized for its strong intellectual and substantive contributions and constructive approach to the complex array of issues handled by the Pension Board.

For example, it is worth reaffirming that during half a century, FAFICS has stood and stands for the welfare, rights and benefits of retirees and speaks on their behalf worldwide, as their recognized voice before the UN legislative bodies. To cite a couple of significant results: a) on the recognition of a Pension entitlement to a second surviving spouse, leading to its approval by the Board to enshrine it on the Fund Regulations, as Article 35 bis, thereby culminating years of joint efforts by AFICS/ NY and AAFI-AFICS until accepted; b) and the now accepted readjustment of requirements of the Fund Regulations for the increase of small pensions, a case in point having it being initiated by FAFICS several years ago.

FAFICS has also played a key role in supporting the operations of the Pension Fund. To cite a few examples of effective partnership: the support of FAFICS thru its Member Associations to help the Fund locate members if their Certificate of Entitlement to pension payments had not been received; and/or Fund members affected by natural disasters or war.

And last but not least, the location of AFICS/NY has allowed us, on behalf of FAFICS, to participate in substantive meetings of UN bodies in New York. In accordance with FAFICS support and advocacy for United Nations Principles and Programmes, AFICS/NY has been able to deploy its many experienced members, across several fields of activity, to follow discussions at the United Nations on issues such relating to ageing, gender equality and the many other facets of social development. FAFICS support for the work of the United Nations is reported on in its Quadrennial Report to ECOSOC every four years, as required for an NGO in Consultative Status.

Let me conclude by congratulating Jerry Barton, our esteemed President of FAFICS and a dear colleague, here with us, today on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of FAFICS, which will be celebrated next July in Vienna; and also recognize the sterling contribution of the FAFICS Secretary Delia Barcelona also present. May the relationship between AFICS/NY and FAFICS continue to grow in the service of all retirees and beneficiaries.

As our journey continues with the advent of new generations of retirees, for as long as the United Nations maintains an international civil service, the torch will continue being passed from generation to generation of staff members of the UN system, working for a better world for us all.

So be it ! . I Thank you.
