

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

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OPENING REMARKS AFICS/NEW YORK ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

New York, 25 June 2018

Dear Mr. John Dietz, President of AFICS/New York,
Members of the AFICS/New York Annual Assembly,
Honorable former staff members of the United Nations System,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor for me to open the Annual General Assembly of the Association of Former International Civil Servants/New York on behalf of Secretary-General António Guterres.

As you know, we are in a time of great challenge but also great opportunity.

The world is witnessing a global landscape of continuing conflict, humanitarian crises, human rights abuses, natural disasters, increasing environmental challenges, and economic and social inequities.

Now more than ever, multilateralism is essential and the purpose and principles of the United Nations, remain relevant and vital.

Yet, to maintain the confidence of the international community, the United Nations must demonstrate its ability to adjust in order to keep pace with and address, effectively and accountably, these contemporary challenges to international peace and security, sustainable economic and social development and respect for and protection of human rights.

Prevention is central to the Secretary-General's vision – aiming for a comprehensive approach across the three pillars of the United Nations – Peace & Security, sustainable development, and human rights. This emphasis on cross pillar work is to promote increased strategic and focused efforts to address the root causes of instability, vulnerability, and conflict.

The Secretary-General's vision for the UN promotes holistic approaches and integrated action to address many interlinked challenges.

Each organization and the UN system itself needs a higher degree of integration, coordination, accountability and transparency.

Reform is not an end to itself. The purpose is simple and clear: to best position the United Nations to do the work the Member States ask us to do to better serve people.

Three strategic priorities for reform: in our work for peace, our support for sustainable development, and our internal management.

Reform of the peace and security architecture is aimed at ensuring we are stronger in prevention, more agile in mediation, and more effective and cost-effective in peace-keeping operations.

Development system reform is about becoming much more field focused, well-coordinated and accountable to better assist countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

To underpin all these efforts--management reform – SG’s vision is to simplify procedures and decentralize decision-making, with greater transparency, efficiency, agility and accountability. Focus on results rather than processes.

AFICS is an important partner and stakeholder in this reform process. The invaluable knowledge and wealth of expertise possessed by the members association is crucial in strengthening and modernizing the fabric of the international civil service. Your voice has already been heard on a number of important issues over the years, in particular in relation to staff pensions and after service health care.

AFICS/New York is represented in the FAFICS delegation in the working group on the After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI). On behalf of the Secretary-General I would like to thank you for your active and constructive involvement.

Participation in the ASHI working group has been essential for the successful presentation of reports to the General Assembly and the Secretariat is counting on this participation for the final report that will be presented to the GA on its 73rd session, to ensure that the rights of staff, retirees and their dependents are maintained.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Secretary-General’s understands that you have concerns.

In particular, the importance of ensuring that new pensions are processed and all pensions are paid on time and without delay, the elimination of the backlog in pension benefit processing first identified in 2015, ensuring continued maintenance of a conservative investment strategy for the Pension Fund's assets, and the need to ensure the continued leadership of the Fund.

While the number of actionable cases related to initial separations pending processing by the Pension Fund has steadily reduced, we continue to closely monitor the situation. Going forward, we are working with the Pension Fund to ensure processes are made easier. For example, we are working with the Fund to create an interface between our two processes, which will eventually be made available to staff so they can monitor their status.

The Organization values your interaction and is committed to meeting regularly with your leadership to discuss issues that are of concern to you.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you, also in the name of the Secretary-General, for your continued support for the goals of the Organization.

Rest assured that we will always be open to hearing the concerns of AFICS/New York and committed to working together with you to find solutions.

Thank you very much.