



FÉDÉRATION DES ASSOCIATIONS DES ANCIENS FONCTIONNAIRES
INTERNATIONAUX
FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS

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Item 6: Report of the Working Group on FAFICS:
An Overall Review

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I. Introduction

The Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) was established in 1975 with four member associations: Geneva, New York, Paris and Rome¹. Bangalore joined in 1977 as the fifth member and by 1985, FAFICS had four more members; by 1995 it had 15 members; today it has 24 members, with another 11 in the pipeline. The total membership of all FAFICS members is about 15,000.

It is not only in numbers that FAFICS has grown. In 1985, it was recognised by the UN Joint Staff Pension Board as the representative of pensioners; in 1988 the General Assembly endorsed the recommendation that it be accorded 'Representative' status with two representatives and two alternates on the Pension Board; and one representative and one alternate on the Standing Committee. This has now been increased to 4+2 and 2+2. FAFICS is the instrument of **all** former international officials, whether they are pensioners or not, whether they are members of an AFICS or not.

While a small Council could often act as a friendly and informal club, a larger body calls for greater formality and more explicit rules. Noting that its Statutes and procedures had been adopted almost 30 years ago, the FAFICS Council decided at its 30th Session 3-6 July 2001, to set up an open-ended Working Group to conduct an over-all review of all the issues raised by the expanding membership and the increasing complexity of the Federation's duties.

These should include the working and procedures of the Council, the relations between the larger and the smaller associations; the appointment of representatives to the Pension Board, the role of the Chairman and the Vice-Chairmen, the Secretariat, the difficulties for some associations in attending the Council; the admission of new members; the role of observers; the promotion of UN ideals and activities. The Council appointed Aamir Ali as Chairman of the Working Group.

In September 2001, the Chairman of the Working Group circulated a draft to **all** member associations for comment. The Chairman of FAFICS and five associations submitted written comments: Argentina, Bangalore, Mali, New York, UK. The Working Group (referred to as the Group for convenience) met in Vienna on 9-10 April 2002 and the following attended:

George Saddler, Chairman of FAFICS
Witold Zyss, Chairman of AFUS (Paris)
Richard Nottidge, Chairman, AFICS NY (New York)
Anders Tholle, Chairman, AAFI-AFICS (Geneva)
S. Janakiram, Chairman, AFUNPI (Bangalore)
Klaus Feldmann, President, ARICSA (Vienna)
Peter Lillie, Vice -President, ARICSA (Vienna)

¹ Associations are indicated by their location rather than their acronyms which are not always easy to identify.

Aamir Ali, Chairman, Working Group.

The Group expressed its appreciation to the Chairman for the work he had done in preparing and conducting the meeting and its deep gratitude to ARICSA for the excellent arrangements for it. The Group submits the following Report for consideration by the FAFICS Council.

II. The Concept and the Purpose

The principal reasons that impel former international civil servants to band together in Afics's are: a feeling of community; the desire to support the work of the UN system, and the promotion of their interests, in particular, their representation on the Pension Board. As the document submitted to the **Informal Meeting on the Role of FAFICS and its Member Associations**, held in Turin on 5 July 1996 stated:

It is also becoming clear that something like an 'international community' is emerging. People who have worked in an international organization find they have much in common with their colleagues - a language, a way of looking at the world's problems, an attitude. While not becoming 'de-nationalised' or losing their cultural roots, they often find themselves more in tune with other internationals than with national, ethnic or sectional communities.

As many former international officials live in a country which is not theirs, they form a grouping of their own, an 'international community' with its own culture, traditions, language and identity. And this has affinities with similar international communities in other parts of the world.

If this concept of the international community is accepted, certain consequences follow inevitably from it and many questions which arise find a logical response.

FAFICS and its member associations give an institutional framework to this concept. (Council 25/1996/INF.1)

At its 26th Session, New York, 25-27 June 1997, the Council endorsed this concept. (Council 26/1997/D.4).

The link with the UN system and the promotion of its ideals and work, are the defining elements of FAFICS and its member associations. The primary importance of this should be emphasised in any future revision of the FAFICS Statutes and in any statement of the aims and purposes of the Federation and its member associations.

Many of the activities of Afics's do in fact go towards strengthening the sense of an international community. It might be desirable to undertake a regular review of these activities. This could be an expansion of the regular item: "Social Questions other than Health Insurance."

The Group **recommends** that the Council re-affirm the concept of an international community and include an additional standing item on its agenda to exchange information and views on their activities. (See item XIX below.)

It further **recommends** that member associations should endeavour to strengthen the role and prestige of FAFICS in their individual activities and avoid, at all cost, by-passing, circumventing, weakening or undercutting the central coordinating role of the Federation.

III. Size and Composition of Associations

As is natural, each member association has its own characteristics, shaped by location and the propinquity of an international organization. International civil servants tend to retire where they have served during their active career, so inevitably there are concentrations of former officials where there are major offices of the UN system. Where there is only one organization, the association tends to be dominated by former staff of that organization. Most associations have members spread over the world, but there is always a geographical concentration and base.

Thus AAFI-AFICS Geneva has a third of its membership in 91 countries outside Switzerland but these are small pockets; 34 countries have only one member, 20 countries have only 2-3 members. New York has a similar situation. The bulk of Paris's membership is UNESCO; the bulk of Rome's membership is FAO. BAFUNCS (UK) has a membership scattered over that country, most of whom spent their career elsewhere and are often members of other Afics's as well. Vienna has a concentration of members from the IAEA, UNIDO and the UNOV. Many of the other associations are mainly local, their members are predominantly nationals of the country, and they are geographically removed from any major office of the UN System.

It may be assumed that new associations will be of this latter variety: mainly local and not linked to any major UN office. This might well change the character of FAFICS. Should some particular attention be given to issues of interest to such associations?

IV. Conditions for Membership of FAFICS

Associations vary greatly in size, ranging from those with over 3000 members to those with just over 50. Of the 24 member associations, four have more than a thousand members, two have between 500 and 1000 members, and eight have between 100 and 500. The remaining nine have less than a hundred (Brazil, Colombia, Turin, Mexico, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Uruguay).

In tabular form:

> 1000 members:	4 associations. Geneva, New York, Paris, Rome
500 - 1000 members:	2 associations. Austria, UK
100 - 500 members:	9 associations. Addis Ababa, Argentina, Australia, Bangalore, Canada, Delhi, Moscow, New Delhi, Santiago, Thailand,
< 100 members:	10 associations. Beirut, Brazil, Colombia, Mali, Mexico, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Turin, Uruguay.

It is important that FAFICS embrace all types of associations but there must be some basic principles to which they must conform: these are set out in the

Guidelines which have been in force for a decade and have proved their validity. These guidelines are:

In general, for an association of former international civil servants to be accepted for membership in FAFICS, it should meet the following criteria:

1. Its aims must be compatible with those of FAFICS as defined in chapter II of the Statutes.
2. Its membership must be open to all former officials of the UN system and their survivors.
3. It must be independent.
4. It must be able to meet its financial obligations.
5. It should be of viable size, preferably with no less than fifty members.
6. It should not be established in a location where a member association of FAFICS already exists.

The Council is invited to **confirm** these guidelines.

There are of course other associations based on other principles, mainly the links with a particular organization. In Geneva, there are five such associations; there is a UNICEF association in Delhi; a UNFPA association in New York; an association of Spanish internationals in Madrid. It seems important that cooperative arrangements should be worked out in each locality. Geneva has the largest number of Organizations and the largest number of organization-based associations; while the situation is unique, the arrangements worked out there might nevertheless provide a helpful guide to other locations. In the main, these are full cooperation with all associations which are invited to appoint representatives to the AAFI-AFICS Committee and to all its Groups.

V. Larger and Smaller Associations

There is inevitably some resentment among associations with a smaller membership about the dominance of those with larger one. This is natural and inherent in all federal arrangements.

The Statutes provide for weighted voting rights. Article 6 states: *In the case of a vote in the Council, each Member Association represented shall have one vote for each 300 (three hundred) members of that Association, or fraction thereof, calculated as at the first of January of the current year. Only members of Associations who are international civil servants, former international civil servants, or other persons entitled to periodic benefits in a pension scheme in the United Nations System shall be counted for this purpose. Decisions may be taken by correspondence.*

Thus two associations would have 11 votes while eleven associations would have one vote.

Happily, it has never been necessary to take a vote, and it is hoped that the necessity will never arise. The voting system does provide additional weight to larger associations; one hopes it also places a heavier burden of responsibility on them.

The Group pointed out that should the Council wish to consider the revision of the present voting system, it would have four options:

1. Maintain the status quo.
2. Change the one vote for every 300 members to one vote for every 500 members.
3. Each member association should have one vote; there would be no weighted voting.
4. Don't provide for any voting system in the Statutes assuming that the Council will continue to work by consensus. If a vote became unavoidable, the Council, master of its procedure, would determine how the vote would be taken, presumably one vote per association present and voting..

The Group did not feel it was competent to recommend any one solution. It does **recommend** very strongly however, that the Council continue to work by consensus

VI. Financial Support for Smaller Associations

Past suggestions for helping to bear the costs of representation on the Council by the 'smaller' associations have usually proved impractical and it was felt that they raised more problems than they solved.

The Group **recommends** that requests for financial assistance should be considered on an *ad hoc* basis. The question of increasing membership dues for this purpose could be considered after some experience has been acquired.

VII. Conditions for Membership in Afics's

The FAFICS Council has often discussed questions such as: should former officials of the Bretton Woods institutions be accepted? Should experts and consultants be accepted? Should membership be limited to pensioners of the UNJSPF?

On past occasions, the Council has admitted an association that limited its membership to pensioners, and an association that included former officials of non-UN organizations, eg. the Asian Development Bank and the Commonwealth Secretariat (Sri Lanka). The Council, in calculating the 50 members required by the Guidelines, counted only members from the UN family.

In general, the Council felt that:

- determining the conditions of membership of an association was the responsibility of the association itself, not of FAFICS;
- FAFICS was responsible for determining the conditions of its **own** membership. In the event, it adopted six guidelines for this purpose.

- in general, FAFICS believes that associations of former international civil servants should be as open as possible, and there was no reason to exclude officials of the Bretton Woods institutions, or of WTO, or experts and consultants, or former officials who were not pensioners of the UNJSP, or serving officials.

The Council may wish to formally **confirm** this understanding.

VIII. Observers

Should the FAFICS Council accept observers from associations which do not qualify for membership?

In the past, observers have been accepted from UNPA, Delhi, and from the Vienna association before it became ARICSA. At its 30th Session, the Council held a discussion arising from the request of AFICS Paraguay to attend. It did not qualify for membership as it had less than 50 members. The Council agreed to its request to attend as an observer.

In general, it seems desirable for the FAFICS Council to be as open as possible and welcome observers from associations which do not meet all the guidelines; it is useful to remember that FAFICS is responsible for representing **all** pensioners on the Pension Board, and in some circumstances, **all** former officials. However, it is important that associations seeking to attend as observers meet the basic guidelines: their aims must conform to those of FAFICS; they must be independent; they must be open to all former international civil servants and their survivors; and they must be the only such association in a particular location.

The Council may therefore wish to **decide** that when an association or embryonic association meets all the conditions of membership except the ones regarding financial capacity or viable numbers (50), it should be welcomed as an observer. The Chairman should **accept** such a request without the need to refer it to the Council.

IX. Associate Membership in FAFICS

Should such a visitor be designated as an Associate Member or an Observer?

The question of associate membership arises in the context of a rapidly increasing membership, with several new members of 'small' associations. Such associations, often distant from the usual meeting places of the Council, are limited in the extent to which they can participate in meetings. Should there be a special category of membership for them: Associate Members with a reduced contribution?

In general, it is undesirable to have different categories of membership; it smells of discrimination. The UN attempted to deal with micro-States in this way but finally decided against such differentiation. In any case, it is a bit late to think of this as FAFICS has already accepted several 'small' associations.

In fact, with the ease of travel and the frequency with which former officials do travel around, participation in FAFICS activities and attendance at Council meetings is not as difficult as it was. Representatives of 'distant' associations have been able to attend by combining business with pleasure (Argentina, Australia, Santiago, Mexico, New Delhi, New Zealand, Uruguay),

The Informal Meeting in Turin, 1996, discussed possibilities of financing the travel of 'small' associations; it concluded that this raised too many difficulties, including of course financial. However, it felt that with increasing use of communications technology, ease of travel, possibilities of combining business with pleasure, representation through another association, there need be much less sense of isolation or 'distance'. It also suggested that when there was a special problem in any specific country, *ad hoc* measures should be taken to ensure that the corresponding association could attend.

It might be noted that in recent years, tensions between larger and smaller associations have eased and need no longer be considered a problem.

The Council is therefore invited to **decide** that there should **not** be different categories of membership. Observers from associations which do not qualify for membership, should be designated as Observers, not as Associate Members. Financial help should only be considered when there is a special need for representation of a particular association.

X. Associate Membership of Afics's

Some Afics's have provision for Affiliate Members. This was the case of Paris for former officials of organizations other than UNESCO; now happily changed.

In the case of one association (AAFI-AFICS), there was provision for Associate Membership for persons who were already members of a sister association. This provided for membership at a reduced rate of contribution but without the right to vote. AAFI-AFICS recently changed this rule: it felt that there was never any vote anyway and having a category of second class members was pretty nonsensical. It now admits as life members without additional payment any person who is a life member of a sister association.

While this is relatively easy for AAFI-AFICS which has few people moving into its area, it would be difficult for an association like BAFUNCS, many of whose members come to Britain after having joined an Afics where they worked.

It is for each association to decide if it wants a category of associate members, and if so, on what conditions. However, FAFICS **recommends** that, wherever possible, member associations provide special consideration to life members of sister associations, without relegating them to the status of Associate Members.

XI Where should Council Meetings be Held?

It has often been suggested that meetings of the Council should be held outside the Europe-North America axis, and separately from the Pension Board.

The reasons for this are:

- attendance at Council meetings is expensive for the 'smaller' associations and if meetings were held nearer, it would be easier for them to attend;

- FAFICS is too focused on the western world and direct contact with other regions would be salutary;

- it would be a gesture to the 'smaller' associations and mitigate the feeling that the 'big' associations are ruling the roost;

The idea of meeting at locations of our own choosing (and not those of the Pension Board's choice) is attractive; the idea of meeting in Bangkok or Santiago is generally more attractive than meeting - once again - in New York or Geneva. There are however some other considerations:

- while meeting in Santiago or Rio might make it easier for the Latin American associations to attend, it would make it more difficult for those from Asia and Africa; a meeting in Asia would make it more difficult for the Latin Americans;

- members of the 'smaller' associations are more likely to be travelling to Europe and North America than to other continents;

- facilities such as meeting rooms and secretarial services which are available without cost at locations where the Pension Board meets might have to be paid for at other locations;

- for those appointed as representatives to the Pension Board or Standing Committee, it would mean double travel and increased costs; this would make it even more difficult to appoint representatives from the 'smaller' associations;

- a major part of the Council's work relates to pensions; the documents for the forthcoming session of the Board or Standing Committee would not be available nor would it be possible to have a session with the Secretary of the Fund and his colleagues. Some members consider this just about the most useful part of the Council's meeting.

- if a meeting of the Council were held separately, it would presumably have to be a few months before or a few months after the Pension Board. If the succeeding session of the Council were to meet in conjunction with the Pension Board, the interval between its sessions would be much more or much less than a year. Or the Council could always meet separately from the Pension Board and maintain a twelve-month cycle of its own; this has not been suggested by anyone nor is it likely to find any acceptance.

All these are weighty considerations but need not rule out a meeting in a 'distant' location altogether. One could consider a special session outside the yearly

cycle for a particular reason; one cannot help feeling that the examination of **this** report would have provided an ideal occasion!

The Group **recommends** that the Council should continue to meet in conjunction with the Pension Board and Standing Committee. Should there be, however, a suggestion that one or the other of these bodies meets in a location other than its usual ones, FAFICS should support such a proposal.

XII. The Chairman

It is important to remember that the Chairman is not only the presiding officer of the Council, but the Chief Executive Officer of the Federation. She or he is responsible for the secretariat and for the smooth running of the Federation.

With the increase in the number of members and of the volume of work, the role of Chairman takes on greater importance. The Chairmanship has often been assumed by the Chairman of one of the member associations; it has also been assumed by someone who was on the Committee but not the Chairman of a member association. There are pros and cons to either situation. The common sense position would be for the Council to elect the best candidate available, whether he is the Chairman of his association or not.

When a candidate is not a Chairman of his Association, his Association would be expected to formally declare that the infrastructure of the Association would be available to the candidate, if elected.

The Group **recommends** that the title of Chairman be changed to President; as a consequence, Vice-Chairmen would become Vice-Presidents.

XIII. The Secretariat

The Secretariat of FAFICS is formally established by its Statutes in Geneva. When the Chairman is from Geneva, this obviously facilitates the work; equally obviously, when the Chairman is not from Geneva, it makes it more difficult.

It is important that the Chairmanship of the Council should not be entirely dependent on this factor. In the past there have been Chairmen from Paris (Guiton), Britain (Elliot), New York (Molly Bruce, George Saddler) and from Geneva (Paul Blanc, AamirAli). With the increase in the activities and work of the Federation, the geographical separation of Chairman and Secretary makes it more difficult than in the past; however, electronic communications mitigate the difficulties. In any case, it is not possible to envisage moving the Secretary and the Secretariat every time there is a new Chairman.

With each new Chairman, it becomes necessary to work out the best secretarial arrangements possible.

It is important to keep in mind that at present the Secretary is a volunteer with extremely limited space and facilities, sharing the AAFI-AFICS with many others. The work has increased almost exponentially and the difficulties of confined space and inadequate facilities become more and more clearly manifest.

The Group was informed by the Chairman of FAFICS that the present Secretary of the Federation had resigned. It was proposed that the Chairman of AAFI-AFICS, Anders Tholle, should himself take on the role of Secretary of FAFICS; in this he would be assisted by his AAFI-AFICS colleagues. The Group noted this with satisfaction and gratitude and **recommends** that Anders Tholle should be automatically a member of the Bureau of the Federation, thus being assimilated to the position of Vice-Chairman. This would apply only in this particular case and would not be a precedent.

XIV. Vice-Chairmen

It is a tradition to have four Vice-Chairmen. In earlier times, these four were representatives of the 'Big Four': Geneva, New York, Paris, Rome. In more recent years, the way was opened for a wider representation. Several representatives of 'small' associations, including women, were appointed: Inga Poulsen, Copenhagen; Imogen Mollet, UK; Rosa Nielsen, Santiago; Rita Douesnard, Montreal; Edouardo Albertal, Brazil.

There is good practical sense in maintaining the link with the larger associations; if nothing else, they are more likely to be able to attend any meeting of Vice-Chairmen in between sessions of the Council. It also seems good sense to keep a seat for a 'smaller' association. Without being rigid about it, the Council might wish to **endorse** the present practice, keeping in mind that there are often special considerations which must be taken into account. The Chairman should hold consultations with the Vice-Chairmen and others before each election to ensure that all views are taken into account and a balanced slate presented to the Council.

The term 'balanced slate' should be used as convenient shorthand but never as a rigid definition. And it should always be borne in mind that the individual is as important as the size of his association.

The Group pointed out that gender balance could only be fully achieved if more member associations were represented on the Council by women.

XV. The Role of the Officers

In past years, the officers have met on several occasions, usually just prior to a Council meeting in order to minimise or eliminate extra costs. 'Mini' meetings have also been held, taking advantage of the private travel of the officers.

These meetings have proved useful. Without formalising them, the Chairman should be authorised to convene such meetings when (s)he considers them necessary and when they can be held without excessive cost.

XVI. Representation at Pension Meetings

Earlier, FAFICS representation was two representatives and two alternates at the Pension Board, and one representative and one alternate at the Standing Committee. This has now been changed to 4 plus 2 and 2 plus 2.

Over the past years, there have been various considerations advanced in the choice of representatives. The following are the most weighty and still valid.

- the representatives must represent **all** pensioners, not just the members of their own particular association or of member associations of FAFICS;
- they must be well versed in pension questions, both policy and practical;
- they must be familiar with the culture of the Pension Board and Standing Committee, its procedures and peculiarities, and preferably, its personalities (FAFICS has been fortunate in having several members who have served on the Pension Board);
- they must have studied the relevant documents of the particular session beforehand;
- their association must be willing and able to bear the costs of attendance.

Members who are not familiar with the Pension Board and Standing Committee must - and should, ask: if familiarity with the Board is necessary, how do I acquire it if I am never invited to attend it?

A very legitimate question. One of the arguments constantly advanced by FAFICS to the Pension Board in favour of increased representation has been the need to introduce more of its members to the workings of the Board. Now that we have increased representation, this aim can be fulfilled.

The choice of representatives has occasionally caused problems though fortunately these have usually been resolved without bloodshed. The present practice of prior consultation and a proposal from the Chairman might be consecrated in the following procedure.

1. The Chairman should consult all associations as early as possible, asking them if they wish to propose a candidate, and if so, whether they are ready to bear the costs which will be incurred.
2. The dates for the meeting should be indicated so that each association knows for how long they would need to support their candidate, if appointed. (It is not essential for all representatives to attend for the whole period.)
3. The Chairman should prepare a list of representatives and alternates, keeping in mind the criteria indicated above and the need to give new representatives a chance of familiarising themselves with the working of the Board.
4. In cases of difficulty, he should consult the Vice-Chairmen and any others (s)he considers appropriate.
5. The Chairman's proposals should be circulated to all members well in advance of the meeting so that the chosen representatives can make preparations accordingly.

6. The proposals for representation should be formally adopted by the Council when it meets.

The Council is invited to **adopt** this procedure formally.

XVII. Preparation for Pension Meetings

Besides deciding on the FAFICS delegation to a meeting, it is necessary to study the documents and the questions on the agenda. It has not been easy for Afics's to obtain and study these in time, though the situation has improved greatly by prompter issue of documents and electronic communication.

AFICS NY has rendered most useful service by preparing draft statements on specific items and submitting these to the Council. In previous times, the then Chairman of AAFI-AFICS (Sven Grabe) used to prepare summaries of selected documents, with a short paragraph suggesting the position that FAFICS might take. Circulating actual copies of documents is a cumbersome and time-consuming process; it is doubtful whether recipients have time (or inclination) to read them.

The Group noted that the FAFICS website could be used to circulate documents and information and this could be useful in preparing for pension meetings.

The Group **suggests** that Afics's in a position to undertake the work - obviously AFICS NY should be one - should prepare a short **summary** of the document in question, with a suggested position. On occasion, it might be preferable to prepare a draft statement. The Council would debate the position and then leave it to the representatives to make their intervention in whatever terms seem most effective. In cases where a draft statement has been prepared, the representatives should be free to adapt it according to the situation.

XVIII. Promotion of the Work of the UN System

While all member Associations are agreed that the promotion of the work of the UN System should be a primary goal of Afics's, there is no agreed indication of how this might most usefully be achieved.

Much of the activity must be by individuals: speaking and writing about the UN.

FAFICS has intervened on several occasions in the Commission on Human Rights on the subject of the independence and security of international civil servants. It has also participated in some of the big World Conferences: Women, Social Development, Aging. It has taken part in relevant Committees in New York, Geneva and Vienna.

At the 30th Session of the FAFICS Council 2001, there was some dissatisfaction expressed at the lack of direction and of effort in this field.

It would be useful to have a regular exchange of information and views on action taken by Afics's in this field. This exchange could be linked to the exchange suggested in Section II above, relating to the International Community.

The Group therefore **recommends** that there be a standard item on the agenda: "Activities in Support of the Concept of an International Community and the Advocacy of the Ideals and Work of the UN System." A cumbersome title but it's necessary to make the focus clear. (See item II above.)

XIX. Activities as an NGO

When Molly Bruce guided FAFICS into Consultative Status with ECOSOC, there were not too many members of the Council who applauded the arrangement. It was not familiar territory and anyway members felt that FAFICS should stick to its last: pensions, health insurance, solidarity and not become too airy-fairy.

This is no longer so. Most members feel strongly that FAFICS should play an active role with other NGOs in promoting the work of the UN System and in formulating some of its major declarations and action programmes.

Inevitably, the work of FAFICS as an NGO has been, in the main, the work of a few individuals. This must continue to be so, but it would be helpful to define what role FAFICS can play and what activities it should concentrate on. The field is vast, the number of meetings infinite: it would be useful to map out our field more carefully.

The Group **recommends** that the Chairman be requested to prepare a document for the Council making practical suggestions about these problems and how they might be tackled.

XX. Bulletins and Newsletters

Just about all Afics' have a Bulletin or Newsletter and these are exchanged more or less regularly among all members of FAFICS. It must be confessed, however, that it is sometimes only the Chairman or Secretary of an association who has occasion to look at another Bulletin; it is seldom that all members of **all** Afics Committees get to see **all** the Bulletins of other associations.

To send enough copies to be able to distribute to all members of all Committees would be excessive and wasteful, but would it be possible for the larger associations (NY, Geneva, Paris, Rome, Vienna, UK) to send sufficient stocks to everyone? Would Afics's welcome this and would their Committee members appreciate it?

On occasions, one Bulletin has reproduced an article from another one; this is surely to be welcomed. At least one Bulletin (*Link*, Paris) has given indications of the main articles in other Bulletins. This is also a welcome feature.

The possibility of a FAFICS Newsletter has been raised on several occasions but, in view of the time and labour this would require, has wisely been shelved. A

twice-a-year circular letter was initiated in August 1989; about a dozen such letters were issued before wilting for lack of support. (It should be recorded that Pat Tsien, then Chairman of AFICS NY provided much encouragement.) An issue carrying selected items from the Bulletins of all associations was also issued in 1989; this effort wilted even more quickly.

A FAFICS Newsletter would indeed be useful and sooner or later it will have to come. . However, it should not be attempted unless there is full commitment from a competent editor, ready and willing to undertake this onerous task and there are human and financial resources to undertake the production and distribution.

Several Associations have issued special publications and Information Notes. New York has issued two packed Bulletins of Memoirs of the early days and a Memorial to Dag Hammarskjold; Geneva has issue two Special Bulletins; Paris had a special issue on UNESCO; BAFUNCS often publishes Recollections of past days.

Of particular interest are the plans of the Paris association outlined in its Bulletin *Link*, No. 76, April-June 2001. These include the preparation of an Annotated Bibliography; Individual Recollections; Monographs and thematic studies; and A Real "History of Unesco".

These initiatives might inspire other associations. One booklet that might be considered at the FAFICS level: Collect the Recollections published in the Bulletins of member Associations.

The Group noted that FAFICS had a website as did some member associations; these could no doubt be increasingly used for the dissemination of bulletins and newsletters. The Chairman of FAFICS agreed to issue a circular giving information on websites.

XXI. Finances of the Federation

The present rate of contribution, \$0.75 for each member, generated an annual income of \$9726.62 in 2000. (In addition there was income from the payment of arrears, bank interest, and donations amounting in all to \$ 712.76.)

In general terms, one could say that the present rate of contributions brings in an income of about \$ 10,000.

This seems to meet the present needs and the Council decided in 2001 to maintain this rate.

It should always be remembered that activities take place at the level of the member associations. While one can envisage several directions in which FAFICS could extend its work, at present it seems wise to maintain the *status quo*.

XXII. Relations with External Offices of the UN System and Establishing New Associations

Thanks to the tenacious efforts of the FAFICS Chairman, the Administrator of UNDP has issued a circular to Resident Coordinators urging them to establish relations with pensioners in their areas.

As the circular itself stresses, the onus for setting up any association of former international civil servants must rest with former officials themselves. The general pattern in recent years seems to have been that when a few former officials want to set up an Afics, they contact the Chairman of FAFICS, or some Afics they happen to know about (and get referred to FAFICS).

The Chairman of FAFICS sends them advice and documents: the Statutes of the Federation, some samples of the Statutes of some Afics's, the Guidelines.

Would it be helpful if FAFICS were to prepare a small booklet which could be sent to those contemplating the establishment of an Afics? This would stress the essential requirements (aims), the criteria contained in the Guidelines, the Statutes of FAFICS, and the important areas covered by different Afics' Statutes. It could also outline possibilities of establishing a Chapter rather than an independent association, giving the pros and cons.

While most Afics's maintain good relations with the local offices of the UN System, it might be useful to stress the importance of this. Several locations have offices of more than one UN organization, and it is important that relations be maintained with them all.

The Group **recommends** that FAFICS consult member Associations with a view to preparing a list of useful contacts in external offices to whom some selected Bulletins and documents could be sent: eg. the Special Bulletins of NY, Geneva, Paris, BAFUNCS and so on. the Guide to Retirement, What Happens to the Second Generation?

XXIII. Pre-Retirement Courses

Several Afics's take regular part in Pre-Retirement courses. This can be one session providing information on the local Afics, a session on the problems of retirement, a discussion of varying experiences. Or, in the case of Vienna, organizing and chairing the whole session.

Most Afics's called upon to take part submit a document or two. Thus the 212 page document *United Nations Pre-Retirement Programme 2001* issued by the Staff Counsellor's Office in New York contains full information on AFICS NY as well as on FAFICS and lists all its members and their addresses. AAFI-AFICS has produced a 14 page booklet summarising the information a pre-retiree should know. It also distributes a 47 page booklet giving the personal experiences of over 40 retirees relating to the choice of a place to settle in, the lump sum, and coping with taxes.

Here again, the websites of FAFICS and member associations could prove an important source of information for retirees.

XXIV. Meetings of Members

While representatives of the associations meet each other at Council meetings; it might be useful and enjoyable for members of different associations to meet each other on social occasions. There is a certain amount of looking up sister associations during holiday and private travel, but this is obviously, limited.

The Chairman occasionally visits other associations; in the past he has been invited to the Assemblies of Rome, Vienna, UK, and had special meetings during private visits to Bangalore and Delhi; he has also visited Paris, Rome, Vienna, BAFUNCS. Some years ago, there was talk among the Latin American associations (only 3-4 at that time) to have a meeting open to all their members at some central location. Further study showed that the costs would be high and enthusiasm dimmed.

The group visit by ten members of AFICS NY to Geneva in 1999 was most successful and enjoyed by both the visitors and AAFI-AFICS Geneva. We are constantly told that travel is becoming easier and easier (though our own experience often seems to belie this), neighbouring associations might study possibilities of joint recreational meetings. One could envisage European, Asian, Latin American, North American meetings.

BAFUNCS has a well tried formula for weekend gatherings for its Assemblies and this could serve as a sample for others.

15 April 2002.