

# KEY POINTS OF OUR GENERAL ASSEMBLY

By Odette Foudral

1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the 71 participants. She regretted the absence of a representative of the Administration. She thanked Mohammed Chiraz-Baly for being here as representative of the Coordinating Council.
2. She also greeted the volunteer interpreters (Andrew Brookes, Françoise Martin, Katleen Roy Brookes, Claire Stoessel) who allowed the participants to follow the debates as best as possible.
3. She asked the audience for a few moments of remembrance of the members of the Committee who had disappeared during the year, Alain Vincent, Jean-Jacques Chevron and Aamir Ali, as well as Witold Zyss, former President of FAAFI and Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations. She also associated with this tribute all the innocent victims of the madness of men and the wrath of the earth.
4. Monika Spyczak-Von-Brzezinska nominated Arthur Askew to chair the meeting and the meeting accepted it by acclamation.
5. The Chairperson thanked the meeting for the honor bestowed on him.
6. Before adopting the agenda, he then asked if there were any issues to be discussed. In view of the absence of any other business

**The agenda below has been adopted.**

**a. 2018 accounts and related issues**

**b. Appointment of two auditors for 2019**

**c. Report of the Committee and related issues (French version is authoritative)**

**d. Elections of the Committee for 2019-2023**

**e. Miscellaneous**

7. He then gave the floor to the representative of the Coordination Council, who stressed the importance of ongoing relations between the active and the retired and wished the participants a good meeting.

## **8. 2018 Accounts and Related Matters**

The treasurer calls to note the following points:

- a. Investments at MEC are shown separately,
- b. Mission expenses cover the annual meeting of FAFICS Council in Vienna,

- c. The Directorate General of Taxes has not yet refunded the taxes collected on interest from 2017 and 2018,
  - d. The amount collected for the bequest is shown separately from the assets because the amount cannot be used statutorily to cover current expenses.
  - e. The 2019 budget is included in the bulletin attached to the annual report. It is voted by the Committee in November each year,
  - f. The Treasurer thanked the auditors for their help in presenting the accounts accurately and comprehensively.
9. Mohammed Rharha, one of the auditors, insisted that every year a portion of accumulated reserves must be transferred to balance the accounts because annual fees are not enough. He recalled that 40% of the expenses were related to attendance at the annual meeting of FAFICS.
10. Regarding the amount of the bequest there is always a doubt about a possible tax application, even after 5 years, so it is too early to determine its use which must in any case be related to the well-being and the information of the members of the AAFI.
11. To the question regarding the amount of interest paid by the MEC, it should be noted that only individuals receive a bonus of 0.9%. This bonus does not apply to an entity like the AAFI.
12. In response to Riccardo Espinoza's request for the use of reserves which may seem important, it is stated that it took years to build them up when the interest on the investments was high but now it is necessary to face very low or even negative interests and to a sharp decline in membership. Therefore, care must be taken to preserve activities over the long term.
13. The President announced the award of CHF 1000 to set up a specific campaign to recruit new members.
14. Concerning the legacy itself, Pierre Vangeleyn added that at the moment when one could consider that nothing owes to the FISC the sum would be used for social actions (information in particular) for the members. He also reminded the role of the solidarity fund to help retirees in financial distress.

**Budget:**

15. To the question concerning the lack of a budget for 2020, it is noted that it will be voted in autumn 2019 by the Committee, whose prerogative it is. The amounts foreseen for external social assistance in case of necessity have been revised downwards since no case was detected in 2018. A further decrease of this item can be envisaged for 2020.

16. It should also be noted that the AAFI receives logistical assistance from the United Nations Administration for free premises, computers, the printing of the Bulletin and its dispatch, and phone charges.
17. It is also noted that the budget is presented but that the assembly is not empowered to modify it but can make recommendations for the upcoming budget.
18. Mr. Ventura Garcia, auditor, asked the meeting to express his thanks to the treasurer, Venkataraman Narasimhan, for the work done over the years. The assembly joins this message with its applause.
19. With regard to the recruitment campaign for new members, it is necessary to note the creation of a working group composed of Carol Cosgrove-Sacks, Olgatte Abdou, Gerald Walzer and Samuel Mbele-Mbong. The details concerning this Group are given during the study of the report itself.

**Accounts are accepted unanimously.**

**20. Appointment of two auditors for 2019**

Both auditors accept the charge for a new year. The assembly thanks them.

**21. Report of the Committee and related issues**

22. Following the presentation of the members of the Committee present, the emphasis is on the importance of attracting new members to prepare the future of the association.

**Working group to attract more memberships**

23. Carol Cosgrove-Sacks provided details on the Group's action plan as well as the findings related to the lack of memberships:
  - a. Difficult access to the Palais des Nations
  - b. Interest in pre-retirement seminars but no action
  - c. Lack of visibility
  - d. Lack of interest for those who do not retire in the region
  - e. Lack of social activities
  - f. Some tracks have been or will be explored to boost the Group and make it more attractive:
  - g. Resumption of lunches with the organization of a lunch on June 4 at Lauriers
  - h. Improve coordination between different associations
  - i. Contact the administrations to help promote the association

- j. Limit help and information to affiliates only
- k. Defend mainly the interests of those who do not have direct access to the sickness funds or the Pension Fund
- l. Provide a better defense for pensioners receiving a small pension
- m. Create a FACEBOOK page
- n. Review the membership brochure with more emphasis on what is being done to help retirees
- o. Give more advice on the various scams that are waiting for retirees

24. Carol Cosgrove-Sacks thanked the participants for the comments and called on everyone to send comments to the Working Group.

### **GPAFI**

25. Pierre Vangeleyn reminded that the GPAFI premiums now depend on the age group completely deviating from a solidarity system and also basic insurance (insurance organization) who have no such approach. It also recalls that retirees have been excluded from the Management Committee. The letter of protest sent by the AAFI will be published in the next Bulletin of the AAFI.

### **Insurance organizations**

26. Two persons represented the WHO Insurance. The other insurances were not represented but the assembly asks that their presence be confirmed for the next assemblies.

27. Insurance organizations must prove their equivalence with the KVG. Although dental and eye care are better reimbursed, the insurance companies are less "generous" about long-term care.

28. Swiss residents must prove their membership in the insurance companies to avoid payment of the very high premiums LAMal insurance.

29. François Kienzler announced that new statutes for the CAPS would be adopted. He recalled that the information is on the website.

### **ASHI**

30. Katia Chestopalov received the draft resolution of General Assembly A / RES / 73/662 adopted without a vote. She recalled the proposals made by the HLCM Working Group on ASHI namely:

31. Replacement of the current system (pay-as-you-go) that does not allow the creation of reserves to cover the long-term expenses of medical expenses through a pay-as-you-increased system.

32. Studies have been conducted to ascertain whether the use of retiree coverage by national insurance would be financially more attractive than the current system. This study was conducted in the countries with the most pensioners and proved that it was not.
33. The report appears to favor an option based on criteria related to the number of years of pre-retirement contributions that are not endorsed by FAFICS (see page 12-13 of our October Bulletin 77.3). 2018).
34. The resolution and report will be made available on the AAFI website.
35. The General Assembly did not make any formal recommendations, but asked for more surveys on national insurance without specifying whether the mandate of the Working Party would be extended or whether another body would be in charge of the survey.
36. FAFICS will ensure that it is present in any entity dealing with this subject affecting all retirees.

## **PENSIONS**

37. Mohammed Sebti spoke about the Pension Fund. Many items are on the agenda and will be the focus of the meeting of the Joint Committee in July 2019 in Nairobi. General Assembly resolution A / RES / 73/274 will be one of the most critical issues to be dealt with as it relates to the designation of retired representatives to the Joint Committee either through FAFICS or through direct elections. It must be remembered that FAFI currently enjoys the full confidence of the Joint Committee in the quality of its delegation.
38. On the other hand, another point will no doubt be the work entrusted to the Working Group on the Governance of the Fund in order to respond to the criticisms of OIOS (report A / 73/341) in which the representatives of the administrations, the Members, Assets and FAFICS. This Group deals with many issues, namely, the structure of the Fund, its functioning, representativeness of its various bodies.
39. It should be recalled that the Fund belongs to pensioners who must mobilize to defend it through FAFICS.
40. AAFI members will be informed of future developments.

## **41. Elections to the Committee for 2019-2023**

42. Annex I contains the composition of the new Committee. The President regretted that so few people volunteered to join the Committee.

As every year, there was no time, but the report provided before the meeting is the basis for the necessary information.

The meeting thanked the chair, the committee and the volunteers who officiate for the well-being of all members.

This part of the meeting ended at 11:45 am

## **PRESENTATION BY THE PENSION FUND**

43. Alan Blythe first introduced the facts about the Fund and then answered the various questions.
44. The new Acting Secretary, Ms Janice Dunn Lee is very dynamic but is still in the process of discovering the specificities of the Fund. According to Alan Blythe she has little experience in the field of pensions.
45. With regard to the vacant post of Deputy Executive Secretary, it may only be chosen after the Executive Secretary has been selected by the Selection and Planning Group for the posts of the Fund. The position of Secretary of the Fund will be separated into two posts, one dealing with the operations of the Fund (human resources management, contributions and payments of pensions) and the other being the secretary of the Fund dealing with the Joint Committee. Ms. Lee will remain in office until the chosen secretary takes office.
46. The lack of clear communication from the Fund was once again underlined (impossibility to download the newsletter for example and thus be able to make it available to its members who do not necessarily have a powerful computer equipment). A communications expert is sought after by Ms. Dunn Lee.
47. With regard to investments, the year 2018 was very bad, but the Caisse is doing well and complies with the obligation of a return on investment of 3.5% over the long term. In addition, the figures for the first quarter of 2019 are much better.
48. The questions posed to the Pension Fund by retirees must be dealt with taking into account their age-related problems (computing, comprehension, etc.).
49. Alan Blythe will retransmit the comments.
50. Aliamane Bacar-Said explains that the new call-center system has been in place since April 25, 2019, but requires more work. You have to create a request ticket which is deleted if you use the system. However, Caisse staff continue to manage requests made via the telephone or paper letter.
51. Gerald Walzer suggested that the document containing the quarterly paid pension information slip should also be used for information purposes, thus affecting those who do not have INTERNET access.
52. With regard to the request of Mohammed Sebti concerning the new post of Executive Secretary, it should be noted that the date of submission of

applications was set for 24 May for a post at the D.1 level. The resolution concerning the separation of the position has been applied.

53. A member of the assembly said that he was quite satisfied with the on-line help system.

54. Concerning the **Certificate of entitlement**, for the dual track the document must be signed and returned to verify the place of residence. For the dollar track, new control procedures are under study. It should be noted that 1600 pensioners saw their pension suspended. Some react at that time and are put back into the system.

Translation: Elisabeth Belchamber

