

# Former FAO and Other UN Staff Association

Associazione dei Pensionati della FAO e di altre Organizzazioni delle Nazioni Unite



**Newsbrief 99**  
**July 2016**

## **46th FFOA General Assembly** **25 May 2016**

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The 46th session of the FFOA General Assembly was held on 25 May at WFP Headquarters, chaired by Ms Catherine Bertini, former Executive Director of WFP (1992-2002) and one of the honorary Presidents of FFOA. The Assembly reviewed progress over the year, and endorsed the Association's financial reports that showed a stable situation with a surplus of approximately 16,000 Euro, mostly due to an increase in members arising from an increased number of retirements and to reinstated members who had paid membership arrears.

Members were addressed by Mr Manoj Juneja, Assistant Executive Director, WFP, and Mr Rui Benfica, Lead Economist, Research and Impact Assessment Division, IFAD. Both speakers highlighted achievements and challenges faced by their respective organizations over the past year. Mr Juneja commended FFOA as a vibrant community addressing issues relevant to retirees of the Rome-based agencies. Both former and current staff play important roles in the organizations' work. The Assembly was then addressed by Ms Marianne Ward, President of the WFP Professional Staff Association (PSA), on behalf of all the Rome-based Staff Associations.

Representatives of the medical insurance manager Allianz and of the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund delivered presentations. Key issues were adapting to the new medical insurance processes, and the steps to address delays in processing pension benefits for new retirees, as well as the continued strong position of the Pension Fund.

Following a subscription lunch, Ms Bertini conducted an information session on the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, Turkey, on 23 and 24 May, and for which the background information document was the Secretary-General's report to the UN General Assembly in January 2016 entitled "One Humanity, Shared Responsibility".

## A Word from the President on Behalf of Your Executive Committee

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The highlight of this quarter has been the Annual General Assembly, held at WFP. We appreciate the facilities placed at our disposal for the team, ably led by VP, Georgia Shaver.

Nominated by Bernd Kaess, the Assembly elected Catherine Bertini as its Presiding Officer. As the former WFP Executive Director and the former Representative of the Secretary General for Investments (of our Pension Fund), she was right at “home” for the discussions.

Highlights of the presentations by Allianz’s three representatives and by the CEO, Sergio Arvizù of our Pension Fund with Elisabeth Chauveau-Bais, Chief of Pension Entitlements in the Geneva Office, are detailed later in the Newsbrief.

Allianz representatives tried to put the best face on how turn-around times have improved. Two key points came out: (1) if you face hospital care, or major expenses, GET IN TOUCH WITH ALLIANZ IN ADVANCE, seeking their guarantees of payment, to avoid undesirable consequences (they can also help negotiate with doctors or hospitals); (2) Ann Burnett, an FFOA member, supported by Ed Seidler (FFOA lead on medical issues), recommended that a direct billing pharmacy be identified in Ostia, where many pensioners

(and current staff) live. Allianz has now identified two pharmacies.

On the pension side, Mr Arvizù regretted the recent delays in processing applications. He attributed those to 3 or 4 factors: staff members, upon retirement, failing to efficiently complete their separation papers; unusually large numbers of separations at the end of 2015, particularly due to reductions in peace-keeping missions; delays by Organizations in submitting applications to the UNJSPF; and difficulties with the new computer system, compounded by staff shortages arising from the UN General Assembly not approving enough additional posts to keep up with an ever-increasing workload. There have been no hiccups with pensioners who already receive benefits, and priority is being given to cases of widow/widower's beneficiaries.

Three members were co-opted by the ExCo at the May 2016 meeting: Ms Angelika Wolf; Mr Alessandro Bertini; Mr Maurizio Palmisano.

For those of our members in the northern hemisphere, have a good summer season, and for the others, a not too onerous winter.

**Alan Prien**  
**President**

### Newsbrief 99 July 2016

Newsbrief, the FFOA official quarterly newsletter, is produced in English and Italian and is distributed free to all members, electronically to those who have internet access, and in print to those who do not. Newsbrief (current and back issues) is also available on the FFOA website: [www.ffoa-web.org](http://www.ffoa-web.org). Suggestions or contributions from members are welcome.

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## Pension matters

(Responsible: M. Breschi, A. Prien, A. Fusco Femiano)

### FFOA updates

Again this year, FFOA will be represented by a member of the Executive Committee at the FAFICS Council in Vienna from 11 to 13 July, immediately preceding the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board (PB). As we went to press, no documents were available for the FAFICS Council nor the PB, but FFOA will continue to participate fully in the debates at the FAO/WFP Staff Pension Committee (SPC) as documents do become available. We can anticipate at this stage that among some of the most heated discussions there will be, on the benefits side, the unusual delays in the processing of new pensions (see also the President's Foreword) and on the assets side, the actuarial valuation, which is expected to show a slight but still safe negative balance.

As is usual in the second quarter of the year, pension matters took a healthy share of the debate at our recent General Assembly. The address by the UNJSPF's CEO Mr Sergio Arvizú, accompanied by the Geneva Chief of Pension Entitlements Ms Elizabeth Chauveau-Bais, was the keynote of pension discussions this year.

Mr Arvizú reassured the audience that the UNJSPF task force overseeing IPAS, the recently introduced administrative system, is taking strong action to tackle the backlog in processing new pensions, resulting in significant progress in recent months. He stated that in the New York area the resolution of outstanding cases is now approximately 80%, while in the Geneva area (serving the Rome-based agencies), 60% of cases still need resolution. He further stated that by the end of May/mid-June, most of the more urgent cases will be resolved, including disabled and low-income beneficiaries.

At the end of June, Mr Arvizú was to address the Rome-based beneficiaries attending a special session of the SPC, and

to present the latest statistics on the new pension processing backlogs, which by then he expected would be back to normal (a maximum two-month delay from retirement date). He stressed the importance of timely action both by retirees and by Organizations in submitting complete and accurate documentation. He expects to report a satisfactory state of affairs to the Pension Board in July.

He further mentioned good progress in fulfilling other administrative obligations of the Fund such as the Certificates of Entitlements, also delayed because of IPAS, as well as the smooth introduction of new ID codes and passwords for access to the Fund's Web areas and the beneficiaries' (and participants') new self-service facilities. As usual, FFOA will follow closely on progress and report promptly any new difficulties.

While Mr Arvizú is responsible for the benefits side of the Fund, questions were asked at the GA about the health of the Fund's investments. While the RSG Ms Carol Boykin is best placed to answer those questions, Mr Arvizú was able to reassure the audience that there are no concerns (other than market fluctuations) regarding the good health of the investments and the upcoming actuarial evaluation.

The RSG is expected to address both the FAFICS Council and the PB in July and FFOA will report promptly her statements on investments. The issue of prompt filling of senior positions in the investment area remains a concern that requires attention and prompt action by the Fund and its governing bodies.

### Update on benefit processing

Subsequent to the General Assembly, the UNJSPF wrote to Alan Prien, FFOA President, with an update on the processing of benefits - a major topic of discussion at the General Assembly in May. The text of the note from Mr Sergio Arvizú, the CEO of the Pension Fund, follows in full as received.

## **Letter from the CEO of the UNJSPF:**

“In August 2015 the UNJSPF (Fund) launched the Integrated Pension Administration System (IPAS). This new state-of-the-art specialized enterprise resource planning system revolutionized the way that the Fund processes its work and was required for the Fund to continue to work effectively and efficiently. Over the past ten months, the new system has worked faultlessly for the 72,000 retirees who were already receiving benefits from the Fund.

There were, however, some delays with the processing of new retirees. These delays were the result of various factors, both internal to the Fund and external. The Fund deeply regrets the inconvenience and hardship that the delays have caused to the beneficiaries of the Fund.

### **Internal**

When the new IPAS system went live it was subjected to an intensive amount of testing to ensure that it was working properly. It was difficult to estimate the exact time it would take, nor how much additional effort it would take to operate two systems simultaneously reconciling every transaction. This testing needed to be done in real time. Naturally, this additional assurance delayed the processing of new retirees. The problem was exacerbated in Geneva by a slow ramp-up of the new system, which related to technical and human resource issues. The responsibility for these delays rests with the Fund.

### **External**

The launch of the new system coincided with an increase in the number of people seeking benefits due to the downsizing of UN peacekeeping missions and an increase in the number of cases being forwarded to the Fund by its member organizations, which wanted to clear their own pending cases. This trend which began in 2015

became more acute in 2016 and continues through today. Additionally, in the Fall of 2015, the UN also launched its own ERP system (for cluster 4 organizations).

The Fund is committed to doing all it can as quickly as it can to ensure that each and every beneficiary receives her or his benefits as quickly as possible, and within four to six weeks from the time that the completed dossier arrives at the Fund. The Fund is devoting all of its resources to speeding up the processing of new pensions and addressing the outstanding cases.

To this end, the Fund met with its member organizations to look at the number of cases that were ready for review and processing. It was agreed that the Fund would process the entire caseload consisting of all actionable cases received by the Fund as of 1 March 2016, by the 31 May 2016, while at the same time continuing to address incoming new cases. This target for outstanding cases was successfully met. The Fund processed over 3,300 outstanding cases and processed some 1,300 new dossiers.

The Fund coordinated with the UN and other member organizations additional actions. These included the creation of a Task Force which assigned UNJSPF staff from back office functions to core case management activities. This will be reinforced with the hiring of additional temporary resources. The Fund has also introduced a case-tracking database that serves as a communication, monitoring and tracking tool (used by the Fund and participating organizations).

The Fund met with the representatives of the Human Resources Network in March 2016. At this meeting, it was agreed that each participating organization would:

- Nominate a pension focal point;
- Re-introduce pre-retirement briefings;
- Provide additional training to Human Resource officers, making it possible for a significant share of basic questions to be answered by HR offices rather than by the Fund itself;

- Ensure that the documentation and information sent to the Fund is complete and accurate (to avoid delays when the Fund has to stop processing a case to ask for clarifications or corrections);
- Participate in monthly (virtual and in situ) meetings between the Fund (in both New York and Geneva) and nominate focal points.
- Finally, and perhaps of most importance, it was agreed that the Fund and member organizations would review jointly, the end-to-end process (from separation to payment) to understand bottlenecks and/or inefficiencies and will introduce harmonized measures to sustainably accelerate and better coordinate the shared end-to-end process.

### Monthly updates

The Fund is providing monthly updates on its website on the volume of new benefits processed. Within three months the caseload number is expected to be down to a level where the remaining cases can be concluded on average (depending on their complexity) within 4 to 6 weeks once all the required documentation has been received by the Fund (considering there are no discrepancies or missing information)."

## Medical insurance

(Responsible: E. Seidler, A. Prien, M. Breschi)

Ms Anissa Maaref-Wilson, Allianz Client Relationship Manager, and her team made a presentation on medical insurance at the FFOA General Assembly, and replied to questions from the audience. Below are a few highlights of that discussion.

Allianz is improving on the turnaround time for reimbursement of claims. Ms Maaref-Wilson reminded participants that it is not necessary to bundle claims and wait until the end of the year to submit them, when there is a peak period for processing claims. As part of their digitalization process Allianz is trying to condense the Statement

of Accounts that participants find unclear, and also to indicate the remaining deductible and dental balances. Until then, the Allianz help desk can provide the information upon request from individuals.

Allianz recently reinstated a travel provision that was not available in 2015, but that had been enjoyed by participants under the previous plan. Whereas there had been a cap of US \$2,000, there is no longer such a cap if participants want to use the travel provision to obtain health care, for example, in their home countries or where they can be close to family members and where the recovery might be better and faster. However, the travel benefit is only able to be utilized if there is a significant reduction in medical costs by traveling to another country/home country.

The latest change of interest to participants in the USA was that at the beginning of 2016 the Coventry network in the US was no longer in use and responsibilities were assumed by Olympus. There is no change in the way participants access healthcare while in America; insurance cards for those using healthcare in the US are still valid because there is a US address on the back, which is what is required by US providers to show that the bill will be paid.

### Pharmacy discounts

Efforts by each beneficiary in our medical insurance plan to reduce costs contributes to reducing future premium increases. FFOA would like to remind members of a recently released flash bulletin informing that FFOA's Treasurer, Gianni Monciotti, met with the Representative of Santa Sabina Pharmacy, across the street from FAO, at Viale Aventino 78 in Rome, and agreed on advantages when utilizing their services, as follows:

- a discount of 15% on all products (not only on products already in stock but also on those to be ordered expressly for the clients);
- direct billing to Allianz, i.e. payment of the 20% in advance and claim to Allianz submitted directly by the Pharmacy;
- a private mail box for FFOA to store the



prescription and the members' data necessary for the direct billing; furthermore, thanks to our agreement with Allianz, we could utilize also the copy of the prescription bearing in mind that any prescription has a validity of one year only;

- the possibility of private delivery by DHL/SDA of any product (this implies an advance payment by bank transfer inclusive of the courier charges);
- the possibility to create an archive of all prescriptions available in the Pharmacy to be used at any time for claims submission purposes;
- the possibility to consult the Pharmacy E-commerce site for the names of the firms utilized, the products and their prices.

Please recall that the pharmacy across from IFAD also offers discounts and direct billing, and there is an in-house pharmacy in WFP with advantageous prices. Further, as announced by the Allianz representatives at the General Assembly, they are in the process of negotiation with several pharmacies in Ostia to provide discounted prices, and will advise us once an agreement is in place.

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## News from the UN Organizations

### WFP

Pope Francis made his first visit to WFP on 13 June to address the Executive Board and WFP staff on the topic of ending hunger (see highlight article in this issue).

WFP is aligning its strategic direction with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is adapting to the global discourse with a new and comprehensive architecture through the "integrated roadmap" that includes a new strategic plan, the corporate results framework, a country strategic planning approach and a revamped financial framework. The expected outcome is coherent, strategically focused portfolios that maximize impact at country level.

WFP will make better decisions on priorities, will better optimize the use of resources that will be aligned with results, and will work with more streamlined business practices and strengthened systems, approaches and processes. Operational effectiveness, accountability and impact should be increased, with more evidence to demonstrate value for money of WFP's work.

### FAO

FAO and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have jointly launched a new e-learning course to raise awareness of the issues of child labour among agricultural policymakers, programme designers and implementers, researchers and statisticians. The course covers all sectors: crops, livestock, forestry, and fisheries and aquaculture. The agencies launched the course as part of efforts linked to the UN World Day Against Child Labour, celebrated on 12 June.

"To achieve zero hunger, we must also achieve zero child labour," said FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva. Together with social protection, and decent work policies for rural youth and adults, "We have the basic ingredients needed to end child labour in agriculture," he added.

"Consumers rightly expect that the people who put food on their plates and clothes on their backs should not be child labourers or forced labourers," said ILO Director-General Guy Ryder. "Our e-learning course sends a clear message that it is imperative to end child labour in agriculture. This tool will help to build the capacity of agricultural stakeholders as well as labour stakeholders - and others - to fully engage where they can best contribute," Ryder added.

Interested readers can access the e-learning course online at the following link: [e-learning child labour](#).

### ICCROM

In the aftermath of the Second World War, a proposal was made to create an

intergovernmental centre for the study and improvement of methods of restoration. The proposal was adopted at the 9th Session of the UNESCO General Conference in New Delhi in 1956. Following an agreement with the Italian Government, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) was established in Rome in 1959.

ICCROM provides knowledge, tools and training to those who are working hard to conserve culture. It works at the international and governmental level, and with institutions and professionals on the ground. It contributes to preserving cultural heritage, both material and immaterial, in today's world and for the future through five areas of activity: training, information, research, cooperation and advocacy.

ICCROM is currently supported by 132 Member States that have adhered to its Statutes. Its current staff is composed by 35 members headed by a Director-General appointed by the General Assembly every six years. To date, 13 former ICCROM Staff Members have joined the FFOA Association, 11 of whom are resident in Italy.

### **Pope Francis urges increased commitment to the fight for zero hunger**

In the first papal visit to WFP, Pope Francis gave his full support to the goal of eradicating hunger and paid tribute to the organization's staff, including those who had lost their lives at work. "I prayed before the Memorial Wall," he said, after seeing brass plaques with the names of staff members who have died in service. "It is a testimony to the sacrifice made by members of this organization, who gave their lives, so that, in complex and difficult situations, others would not go hungry. We remember them best by continuing to fight for the great goal of 'Zero Hunger.'"

He spoke of the impact of conflict, where food supplies were prevented from being distributed in war zones, in violation

of international law. "In some cases, hunger itself is used as a weapon of war," he said. And he highlighted the issue of food waste. "Food discarded is, in a certain sense, food that is stolen from the tables of the poor and the starving." He said an "information overload" was leading to people becoming insensitive to extreme poverty. "In other words, little by little we are growing immune to other people's tragedies. We perceive them as something 'natural,'" he said. "We are bombarded by so many images that we see pain but do not touch it, we hear weeping, but do not comfort it, we see thirst but do not quench it."

"Without faces and stories, human lives become statistics, and we run the risk of bureaucratizing the suffering of others. Bureaucracies shuffle papers, compassion deals with human beings," he added. The Pope's visit shone a powerful and timely spotlight on the urgent need to end hunger, which affects 1 in 9 people on the planet. At the core of WFP's work is a drive to achieve Goal 2, Zero Hunger, by the year 2030.

WFP's Executive Director, Ms Ertharin Cousin described Pope Francis as "our Zero Hunger hero" and said that his call for the elimination of hunger and malnutrition spoke directly to WFP's mission to enable and empower the world's most vulnerable people. "The truth is, the world possesses, as you've just said, the food, the knowledge, the capacity and the skills not only to confront the challenges of food insecurity and malnutrition but to end hunger," she said. "What we need, what we are missing, is the requisite global public will to embrace the fierce urgency of now to address this great failure in our common humanity."

The Pope spoke to WFP staff in an address webcast live to country and field offices around the world. Some 1,000 staff were present at the open-air address in Rome, and up to 14,000 WFP staff members around the world were given the opportunity to watch online. In an exchange of gifts, Ms Cousin gave Pope

Francis a drawing by a Sri Lankan child, Sritharan Sharukan, who receives WFP school meals and drew his vision of a world without hunger.

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## News from the Staff

### Associations

(Responsible: Alex Van Arkadie)

#### WFP-PSA

At the recent FFOA General Assembly Ms Marianne Ward, President of the WFP Professional Staff Association (PSA), spoke on behalf of the FAO, IFAD and WFP Staff Associations, a number of issues including the delayed start of pension payments for new retirees, the increasing use of non-staff personnel, and the change to the mandatory age of separation to 65 for all staff from the beginning of January 2018 and its implementation.

Regarding staff-management relations, she highlighted that there are challenges at both FAO and IFAD; for WFP the situation can best be summarized by the statement that: “We don’t agree on everything, but the consultation and consideration process is robust.”

Over half of WFP staff surveyed conveyed dissatisfaction with the services provided by Allianz. The contract for insurance services will need to be renewed soon, so this would be a good time to review whether the needs of all the Rome-based Agencies are being met.

Regarding the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), support is needed to mitigate the proposed changes to the compensation package, which will have a profound impact on staff in hardship duty stations.

Ms Ward closed by saying: “You [the retirees of the Rome-based agencies] are an inspiration to us all, and we look forward to continued productive work together.” The WFP-PSA recently extended membership to Professional National Officers, increasing the

number of enrolled members and enabling the association to better serve WFP’s professional staff during changes within WFP and in the UN Common System. This extended membership required revision of the PSA’s Statutes, and Rules and Procedures after a vote by all members and approval in May 2016.

The PSA Staff Council Elections will take place in June. Six out of the 11 SC positions are available, and 11 candidates have been nominated. This election is the first in which National Officers are allowed to vote. In 2017, National Officers will be able to stand for election.

In May, the PSA participated in the WFP Staff-Management Council to discuss Cost Excellence, Career Development for Short Term Professionals and Consultants, Abolishment of the Administrative Place of Assignment (APA) and mitigating measures, Reassignment, Promotion, and Mandatory Age of Separation at 65 years of age.

#### AP-in-FAO

Following early June elections, the Executive Secretariat of AP-in-FAO is composed of Roberto Bonafede (President), Wadsanai Katsande (Vice President), Juan Coy (General Secretary), Tony Jarrett (Treasurer), David Dion (Deputy General Secretary), Jean Risopoulos (Deputy Field Secretary) and Ruth Charrondiere (Information Secretary).

Among recent activities, FAO has shared a revised version of the policy on short-term employment. The sick leave policy is being revised and requires changes to the Staff rules and updating of the relevant manual section.

#### ECSA-IFAD

New officers in the ECSA-IFAD Executive Committee include Philipp Baumgartner, Roman Bezuzsko, Carmalika Cooray, Daniela Cuneo, May David, Robert Delve, Dawood Ghani, Michael Hamp, Mwatima Juma, Dave Nolan, Alessandra Pani, and Seiko Yabumoto. Results of elections for Executive Committee positions will be announced soon.



## UGSS (FAO-WFP)

UGSS recently held elections to the Executive Committee, who together will nominate the Secretariat. Those elected are Gianluca Fiorentino, Francesco Galotti, Barbara Rienzo, Carlos Antoine Palmer, and Silvia Mariangeloni, who will continue for one year with Svend Booth, Mauro Pace, Elena Rotondo, Lisa Falcone, and Margarita Brattlof.

Problems continue with the FAO reform process, which is having an effect on Staff-Management relations.

Progress has been made on non-Staff Human Resources (NSHR). A policy is being developed to ensure that core staff functions will be carried out by duly selected and appointed staff members. UGSS says that “this would go a long way in preventing the use, and misuse, of NSHR within the Organization beyond their natural intended purpose”. UGSS added that it would provide WFP with a list of potential candidates from FAO who would be available for temporary contracts, and likewise that WFP was expected to share with FAO details of temporary staff who will be terminated, to bolster the current temporary roster.

## Social support and recreational activities

(Responsible: J. Smidt, G. Monciotti, A. Van Arkadie, A. Fusco Femiano)

### Previous activities

Since our last Newsbrief 98, the following activities were enjoyed by some of our members:

April 2016	Associazione ARS SACRA – Storytelling Event and Arte Visiva, Palatino Week-end di Storie sull’Antica Roma ARS SACRA Circeo, Villa di Domiziano, Lago e Villa Fogliano Santo Stefano di Sessanio, Rocca Calascio Mantova e Ferrara Matera & Rionero in Vulture,
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	Altamura, Gravina di Puglia Parco Regionale dell’Appia Antica Pompei in Un Giorno
May 2016	Gran Sasso: Sulle Tracce dei Monaci Benedettini Napoli Nobilissima: Museo di Capodimonte e Teatro S. Carlo Sorrento, Capri, Positano e Ravello Ostia: Lunch at La Vecchia Pineta Capena: Festa di Primavera a Casa Loic Ninfa e Castello di Sermoneta Pompei Scavi: Le Nuove Meraviglie Passetto del Papa, Castel Sant’Angelo Welcome to Berlin (Musical in English)
June 2016	

Further dates for il Passetto del Papa will be announced by e-mail shortly Various Concerts were announced during the above period

### Upcoming Activities:

June 2016	Sicilia (mini vacanza): Selinunte, Segesta, San Vito Lo Capo, Riserva Naturale dello Zingaro, Marsala, Favignana ed Erice
July 2016	Ponza, Palmarola e Zannone (4 Trips)
August 2016	Folgaria
September 2016	Matera (3 days)
October 2016	Praga

### New events

Storytelling is a fascinating way of intercultural communication that is becoming more and more popular around the world. Members will recall the two events in April in unique settings at the church of San Bonaventura overlooking the Colosseum and Foro Palatino, including an opportunity to view the artworks of the Frati di San Bonaventura. In view of the great outcome of the initiative we plan to announce more storytelling events. Storytelling events are continuing, with dates announced on the following web-site: [www.raccontamiunastoria@yahoo.it](http://www.raccontamiunastoria@yahoo.it).

Members with e-mail are informed as early as possible of cultural and leisure activities. Members without email may call the FFOA Desk (which has a copy of the Program) on 06

57055623 or 56016 (working hours from 09.30 – 13.00, Monday through Friday) to enquire about events.

### **Assistance to Members**

In Newsbrief 98 of March 2016, we informed our members to carefully select the persons, should the need arise, to assist them in their daily chores and to carefully select any person they choose to have access to their bank accounts. Following that note, FFOA received appreciative comments for this particular warning and the task in which the Social Activities Committee is involved regarding such delicate matters.

Lately, several examples of elderly retired foreigners in Rome, particularly those without families, has been brought to our attention. We have been assisting an elderly pensioner who was about to lose her apartment, having been forced to sign a “delega” to her “Badante” so that she could sell the apartment on her behalf. With the help of an English speaking Italian lawyer, that situation was sorted out and the person is now, with her consent, safely in a retirement home in Rome.

FFOA wishes to reiterate that we are ready to assist our members should the need arise.

### **Special Thank-you**

FFOA wishes to thank one of our members who made a generous donation to our Welfare Fund.

### **Documents**

FFOA wishes to advise our members to always have available, with your personal papers, copies of your birth certificate and your marriage certificate, if married. These are important papers for a range of administrative actions. Additionally, not having these certificates could slow down the payment of a survivor’s benefit because they would need to be provided along with a death certificate and revised payment instructions to the Pension Fund.

## **News from the Executive**

### **Committee**

#### **News from the Membership**

#### **Sub-Committee**

(M. Breschi, S. Dembner, M. de Gaay Fortman, R. Fenix, G. Monciotti, M. Saleheen, G. Shaver)

The newly established Membership Sub-Committee (MSC) for the period 2016-2018 recently adopted Terms of Reference and a Plan of Work for 2016. The principal objective of the MSC is to promote the FFOA in order to increase membership. In addition to encouraging future retirees to join the Association, another major effort is focused on retaining members using various ways, as we have seen in the previous issue of the FFOA Newsbrief. Other Sub-Committees such as those for Finance or for Social Activities, which organizes excursions and monthly coffee mornings, assist substantially with this task. You as an individual member can also play an important role by keeping in touch with other pensioners, and by explaining the achievements of the Association and the benefits of membership. You could also convince new retirees to join the FFOA, as an increased membership gives us more influence.

This year the MSC will focus its primary attention on WFP and IFAD, as pensioners from these two organizations are underrepresented in the Association. We will discuss with the respective staff associations how we could better make known our objectives and activities to their members who are about to retire. You may recall that more than a year ago we launched the Pre-Retirement Service Programme (PRSP), as a tool to attract potential members, offering future retirees free access to all services and benefits during the last 18 months of their careers, in order to prepare them better for retirement. In the first year of the PRSP, more than 250 people were invited, of whom 70 accepted the invitation. Of the 49 who now have retired, 21 have joined FFOA and 28 have not yet become members. The 21 who have not yet retired are still participating in the PRSP. We hope to increase our membership through the PRSP, but

your assistance as a member to convince your former colleagues to join FFOA remains the most effective means to keeping our membership growing. Thank you for your continuous efforts in this important endeavour!

### **General Assembly participants donated Euro 773 for those less fortunate**

Participants at the recent FFOA General Assembly generously donated 773 Euro to the Istituto Santa Margherita, Istituto Suore di Madre Teresa di Calcutta, and Istituto delle Piccole sorelle dei Poveri. The collection is made to honour the memory of Eileen Nolan, who managed the coordination of donations to these homes for many years. Thanks to all who contributed.

### **FFOA summer office closure**

The FFOA Office will be closed from 1 August to 2 September for the usual summer holiday, and will reopen on Monday, 5 September.

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## **News from the Electronic World**

(Responsible; S. Bertini, M. Palmisano)

### **Welcome**

As previously announced, this section will no longer be handled by Pino Pace who, due to health and personal reasons, has decided to step back, although he will continue to assist other volunteers in supporting IT-related activities.

The search to cover all specialized areas will continue for quite some time; however, the good news is that two extremely skilled replacements have been identified in the persons of Sandro Bertini and Maurizio Palmisano. The May Executive Committee meeting endorsed their joining the management team as co-opted members.

Sandro has been a very active and qualified Office Technology Co-ordinator (OTC) in the Corporate Services Department and has expressed his interest in providing assistance to the FFOA. He will be especially helpful in technical equipment support (PCs, printers, mobile tools and related basic software) and

special software packages used for FFOA applications. He has already identified replacement PCs from equipment declared obsolete by FAO; therefore the FFOA workstations will be upgraded, most probably before the end of this year.

Maurizio has also been a very qualified OTC and plans are underway to involve him in other IT operational activities, such as the updating of the FFOA website. We warmly thank them for their offer to assist and welcome them to the Executive Committee and to the FFOA operational team.

### **Medication reminder apps**

Remembering to take medication can be a real challenge as we age. Research indicates that less than 50% of all pills prescribed never get taken. But, as seems to be the case in almost all walks of life, technology is stepping in to lend a hand.

Pillboxes with labeled compartments for the days of the week have been around for a while, and the newest generation come with built-in clockwork mechanisms that ring or buzz and sometimes even open the appropriate pill section automatically. Some even have fail-safe locking mechanisms that impede a user from taking meds at the wrong time.

But the biggest developments are coming in the area of apps for use on cell phones. Smartphone apps that remind you when it is time for medication are flooding the market. The simplest of these are basically sophisticated alarm clocks that can be programmed to alert you at the appropriate moment for each medication. More sophisticated apps link to medical databases to give the user instant information on all major medications. Some can even link with doctors, pharmacies and family members.

Let us take a quick look at the Medisafe app, the unquestioned leader in the field, available for both Android and IOS (Apple) smartphones (not an endorsement, but simply an example).

After downloading Medisafe to your smartphone, you need to input each medication you are taking, and the frequency. Once saved, your phone will remind you when it's time to take a med. You take your pill, confirm in Medisafe,

