

Former FAO and Other UN Staff Association



FFOA/GA/2019/03

PROVISIONAL REPORT

Forty-Eighth Session of the General Assembly

Wednesday, 30 May 2018 - Green Room, FAO Headquarters

1. Opening of the Forty-Eighth Session of the General Assembly

The Vice President of the FFOA, Ms Georgia Shaver, opened the Session at 9:45 hours, welcoming guests and participants and announcing that interpretation would be in two languages: English and Italian. She also announced that proceedings could be followed via Webcast for those unable to be present in Rome. Ms Shaver apologized for the absence of the FFOA President Mr Alan Prien who was unable to attend due to illness.

2. Establishment of a quorum and announcement of the number of proxies declared valid

Ms Shaver announced that a quorum was achieved and 11 proxies had been received; thus all decisions would be binding, including on those members not present. She declared the meeting officially opened and constituted in accordance with the Articles of the Association.

3. Nomination of Rapporteur, announcement of the Interpreters and the Photographer

Ms Shaver announced that Ms Mariam Ahmed would serve as Rapporteur for the Provisional Report of the General Assembly; Ms Marta Boicchio and Ms Gabriella Sabato would provide Italian and English interpretation, and Mr Alex. Van Arkadie would be responsible for the photography.

4. Election of the Presiding Officer of the Forty-Eighth Session of the General Assembly

Mr Michael Fitzpatrick, formerly of the FAO Investment Centre was proposed to chair the Assembly. He was elected by acclamation and welcomed to the Chair by Ms Shaver.

Mr Fitzpatrick said it was an honour and a pleasure to preside over the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly and extended a warm welcome to all members.

5. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda (FFOA/GA/02/2018)

As no proposals for changes were received before the deadline of 28 April 2018, the Provisional Agenda was adopted as presented.

Footnote: The report follows the order in which the agenda items were discussed and thus does not conform with the numbering of the items on the agenda.

6. Address by Mr Pierre Moreau-Peron, Director, Human Resources Division on behalf of the President of the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD)

The Presiding Officer welcomed Mr Moreau Peron and thanked him for agreeing to address the meeting.

Mr Moreau-Peron expressed a special thought for Alan Prien and wished him the very best for a speedy recovery. Mr Moreau-Peron noted that FAO, WFP and IFAD had a longstanding history of partnering, particularly in insurance and other benefits. He recalled that in June 2017 a tender was issued jointly by the three Rome based agencies for the selection of a service provider for the provision of medical insurance services for staff members, retirees, and their dependents. For this purpose, the Common Procurement Team of FAO, WFP and IFAD was represented by the Procurement and Insurance Section of IFAD and the tender was conducted on the basis of the IFAD Corporate Procurement Guidelines. The tender aimed to establish common medical insurance policies for all RBAs to better the administration and payment of claims under all four plans.

Mr Moreau-Peron informed that after an extensive and careful review, involving the comparison of different proposals which resulted in an increase of 14%, the RBA Team decided to extend the contract with Allianz Worldwide Care for an additional two years at a premium increase rate of 7.5% annually. He also noted that medical expenses increase annually by an average of 7% every year so if our medical expenses increase by 6 to 7% every year, in two years' time we would probably be experiencing the same scenario and facing the challenge of how to contain costs and to attract another service provider.

The message today was therefore that preventive and wellness services need to be taken urgently into consideration to balance costs of our next medical insurance contract which will start on 1 January 2020 (in 2019 we will tender again for our medical insurance services).

Mr Moreau-Peron stated that the three RBAs support any initiative for cost containment, especially for the BMIP. He added that IFAD, in collaboration with Allianz, was organizing sessions for all staff (FAO and WFP staff and retirees were also welcome) on cost containment and to raise awareness on this subject. Some examples of this initiative included: i) encouraging staff and retirees to use pharmacies where Allianz has a discount rate, sometimes up to 17%, and that these pharmacies should be known to all which would immediately result in savings; ii) encouraging staff and retirees to contact the two Allianz representatives based in Rome in the case of planned surgery, pregnancies and high cost procedures to find good optimal solutions that are convenient and cost effective; iii) encouraging the use of the cost estimate form to avoid bad surprises after a medical problem; and iv) informing staff and retirees of the most convenient and qualified provider in Rome such as the Gemelli Hospital, the Fate Bene Fratelli Hospital and the CD (Centro Diagnostico) for ambulatory services.

Mr Moreau-Peron informed the Assembly of certain Personnel changes at IFAD since last year. Ms Candida Sansone was appointed to another division and has been temporarily and very ably replaced by Ms Cristina Schiarini who has been assigned to the Social Security Unit in IFAD. Ms Schiarini was the immediate interface for all Pension matters and also a focal point for IFAD retirees. She was also acting as Secretary for the IFAD Pension Committee and would attend the next meeting of the Joint Pension Fund Board to be hosted in Rome.

Cristina has introduced Pension Seminars and Briefings on pension matters designed to provide staff with retirement options. These seminars and briefings have proven to be very popular at IFAD as they focus on how to enroll in the UN Pension Fund, how to access the



Audience, General Assembly hosted by FAO.

Members Self Service (MMS), how to estimate one's pension before getting to full retirement as well as how to calculate the impact of the Mandatory Retirement Age (MAS) at 65 years on Pensions. Mr Moreau-Peron informed the Assembly that the President of IFAD approved with effect from 1 January 2020 the implementation of the MAS for all staff appointed before January 2014. IFAD has also made progress in the UNJSPF interface to extract financial data (monthly contributions) and directly send it to UNJSPF for validation. Mr Moreau-Peron closed by stating that IFAD was committed to giving priority to the health and wellbeing of its staff and therefore a regular staff position of Chief Medical Adviser had been established and a vacancy announcement issued. The Chief Medical Adviser will work in close synergy with the FAO Medical Service. Mr Moreau-Peron requested the Assembly to encourage good doctors who would be interested in the position to apply.

The Presiding Officer thanked Mr Pierre Moreau-Peron for his intervention and the special attention that had been given to cost containment in the negotiation of the tender for the provision of medical insurance coverage, the information provided on the recent staff changes and the seminars, and briefings initiated in IFAD on pension matters. On behalf of FFOA, the Presiding Officer thanked IFAD for the mailing of the FFOA General Assembly documentation and Newsbrief.

7. Address by the Representative of the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Mr Amir Abdulla, Deputy Executive Director

Mr Abdulla thanked FFOA for the invitation and regretted that Alan Prien could not be present and wished him a speedy recovery. He also conveyed the WFP Executive Director's regret for not being able to be present as he was attending to a family commitment in the United States. He would certainly have been happy to meet with the many who have served so well their institutions. He acknowledged the value of FFOA in helping to keep in touch and bringing together former colleagues. He also acknowledged the wealth of experience existing within the community of retired staff and how important it was for all of the RBAs. Mr Abdulla noted that WFP greatly valued this experience and remained in close contact with the WFP Alumni Group and drew on this group to be hired as consultants on a Pro

Bono or short-term basis. He noted that experience, expertise and institutional memory inherent in the FFOA is highly beneficial in guiding the work of the younger generation of staff as a source of wisdom and knowledge. WFP was always happy to welcome back not only retired staff for their impact, wisdom and knowledge but also to welcome old friends as part of the large WFP family.

Mr Abdulla underlined that WFP attached great importance to staff wellbeing both at Headquarters and in the field. WFP was committed to provide adequate medical coverage, holistic and decentralized health support to all staff who are under an inordinate stress, with a strong focus on field staff where health care is a challenge. Such an approach and strategy could also be extended to potential retirees who are the heart of the WFP family. With the aging process, health requirements also increase and it was important to ensure that those needs were adequately catered for. Mr Abdulla noted that over time needs had changed based on demographics, field locations, type of contract but also advances in medicine and medical technology and facilities such as “Mobile Health” which can also improve communication channels and result in cost containment. Mr Abdulla also informed that WFP has recently introduced more adequate maternal coverage for short term staff.

He stated that the three RBAs were carefully attending the After-Service Health Insurance Review Group which was part of the Financial Network of the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM). He acknowledged FFOA’s concern that the Joint Advisory Committee on Medical Coverage (JAC/MC) has not met for some time and FFOA’s feedback was of crucial importance to identify changes and improvements needed in the current policy and plans. He noted that the JAC/ MC was an important forum where crucial matters were addressed and discussed in a collaborative manner by all stakeholders. The JAC/ MC was the appropriate forum for the discussion of these issues. He noted that unfortunately the Committee had not met as frequently as required. He noted that the terms of reference of the Committee were being reviewed and expressed the hope that the Committee would be revamped and reconvened in the near future.

With regard to the Mandatory Age of Separation being raised to 65, this is a matter before the FAO Council in June but in the meantime, the WFP Executive Director had taken steps to implement, automatically approving all requests from Staff to work until 65 years of age.

Mr Abdulla referred to the possible move of the FAO Social Security Services to Budapest and in this regard expressed concern that any change not result in a degradation of services to WFP staff. He noted that WFP management was reviewing options and alternatives to ensure optimum services to staff and former staff, including the associated budgeting.

He closed by reiterating the importance of receiving views and feedback from FFOA for its services and current activities and wished the Association best in its future endeavours.

The Presiding Officer thanked Mr Abdulla for his encouraging remarks and support to the FFOA. On behalf of the FFOA Executive Committee, he thanked WFP for assisting in the printing of FFOA documentation and the Newsbrief.

8. Address on behalf of the Director General of FAO, Mr Laurent Thomas, Deputy Director General, Operations

Mr Thomas, Deputy Director General Operations (accompanied by Mr Fernando Servan, recently appointed FAO HR Director) spoke on behalf of the FAO Director General. He welcomed the General Assembly, also on behalf of the FAO secretariat. He conveyed the Director General’s best wishes for the success of the meeting and his regret for not being present as he was out of town. Mr Thomas indicated that it was a pleasure to host the General

Assembly at FAO Headquarters. He assured the meeting that FAO would do its best to support the FFOA in ensuring the smooth running of the meeting. He noted that over the years the collaboration with FFOA had been excellent and reiterated that FAO would continue to cooperate with FFOA for the benefit of the retiree community. FAO welcomed FFOA's expert knowledge and experience in matters of common concern. He recognized that FFOA unites former international civil servants and offers the opportunity to meet many former colleagues. Mr Thomas also noted that the FFOA provided a valuable forum to discuss important issues for the retiree community including pensions. In this regard he acknowledged the presence of Mr Sudhir Rajkumar, Representative of the Secretary General for United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund Asset Investments. Mr Rajkumar was a trusted senior investor and a long-term advisor to FAO. There was full confidence in his capacity to lead the Investments side of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF).

Mr Thomas also informed the Assembly that the Director General had recently appointed a new Assistant Director General for Corporate Services who would be leading the team dealing with social security matters.

The Presiding Officer thanked Mr Thomas for his supportive remarks and in particular the commitment of FAO to cooperate with FFOA and in appreciating the long-term service of FFOA members. He looked forward to future collaboration with the new Assistant Director General of Corporate Services Department on matters of concern to the retiree community.

9. Pension Matters

The Presiding Officer welcomed Mr Paul Dooley, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Mr Herman Bril, Director Investment Management Division, UNJSPF and Mr Alan Blythe, Head of the Geneva UNJSPF Office, as well as Mr Sudhir Rajkumar, Representative of the Secretary General for the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund Asset Investments.

Mr Dooley acknowledged the presence of several participants at the Assembly, who were also members of the Pension Board, and remarked that the Rome-based agencies were well represented on the Pension Board. He expressed the hope that pensions were now being received in a timely manner and indicated that pensions on the dollar track had received a 2.2% cost of living increase. Mr Dooley made a presentation on the status of the Fund where he stated that in 2018 the Fund was in a good financial position. The Fund has also stabilised and made more efficient benefit processing 80% of cases being processed within the same month in which it received them. Many new initiatives have also been implemented to expand outreach, increase processing rates, and provide a more agile response such as the opening of three call centres located in New York, Spain and Geneva, the New Members Self Service and Dashboard, the opening of a Liaison Office in Nairobi, and a new website. Mr Dooley also informed that an exercise for the actuarial valuation of the fund was being conducted, introducing mortality tables. The preliminary results of the exercise would be presented to the Board in July. He further indicated that the good investment performance in 2017 was expected to have a positive impact on the Fund. The UNJSPF serviced 205,000 participants in 2017.

Contributions were not enough however to cover beneficiary payments as this is a "maturing fund" meaning that the difference is made up by returns on investments. He confirmed that the Fund had enhanced its client servicing facilities and that most Pension Board recommendations had been supported by the United Nations General Assembly except for some posts in the Client Services and Communication. Four new posts had been approved and non-post resources had been reduced by 5%. A governance audit was being conducted at the request of the UN General Assembly and the draft results would be shared with the CEO, the RSG and the Chair of the Pension Board.

Mr Sudhir Rajkumar, Secretary General's Representative for the UNJSPF Asset Investments.

Mr Rajkumar expressed his pleasure at being invited to the FFOA General Assembly. He has had the privilege to have worked with all three of the RBAs in the past and was happy to see so many familiar faces and to be on familiar ground.

It was an honour to have been appointed by the Secretary General to manage the assets of the Fund. He understood that in the past, concern had been expressed by stakeholders on investment aspects and he wanted to assure all that these concerns were being actively addressed and reviewed in a careful and considered manner. He stated that both the Asset Investment Division and all stakeholders shared a common concern that the assets of the Fund are managed in a prudent and optimal manner.

The ultimate shared objective was to ensure that the Fund fully discharges its obligations to current and future beneficiaries who number over 200,000. This called for a proactive and open two-way communication with all stakeholders and oversight bodies to strive together to achieve our common objective. He stated that his aspiration was to have the Fund's investments regarded as the best long-term investments organization globally. He reiterated that investment returns would become more and more important in their impact on the long-term financial sustainability of the Fund. Currently pension payments exceeded contributions by US\$ 300 million more than contributions made. This meant that investment returns were becoming an ever more crucial factor in the long-term financial sustainability of the Fund. He confirmed his commitment to nurture and strengthen the long-term sustainability through adequate investments to optimize the flow of returns and to ensure harmonious functioning of the Fund.

The UN General Assembly had mandated the Secretary General to have the fiduciary responsibility for the Fund's assets. Mr Rajkumar stated that despite the volatility of financial markets the Fund's value had remained stable.

He informed that in 2014 the UN General Assembly had decided to establish a full time RSG position, and he was very committed to follow his terms of reference very closely. In 2017, US\$ 9.7 million had been added to the Fund's assets - the largest increase in the Fund's history. Investment returns had increased the policy benchmark. While his direct reporting line was to the Secretary General, he would certainly seek advice and speak to members who all have a legitimate right to know about the financial health of the Fund. The assets of the Fund were valued at US\$ 64.2 billion as of 31 March 2018 despite increasing market volatility. Measuring returns over long-term periods (10 to 15 years) is most appropriate for Pension Funds since pensions are paid out over a long time.

The good news was that the Fund was financially healthy and in a good position to meet its obligations to its beneficiaries. The Fund was close enough to being fully funded. A number of measures had been taken in the first quarter of 2018, including: the operationalization of the Risk and Compliance Committee; proactive and two-way communication with stakeholders; and an approach to sustainable investing which was available on the UNJSPF website.

Mr Herman Bril, Director, Investment Management Division, UNJSPF.

Mr Bril provided a detailed power point overview of the UNJSPF investments in 2017. He noted that these were based on four key investment criteria established by the UN General Assembly:

- Safety
- Profitability
- Liquidity, and
- Convertibility.



FFOA Executive Committee members Sabatino Salvi and Alessandro Bertini.

The goal was to exceed the 3.5% annualized rate of return over the long term. He noted that in 2017 the policy benchmark had been exceeded. The policy was to invest globally and through multiple asset class. He also elaborated on the Fund's asset allocation both policy and actual. These consisted of Global Equities Real Assets, Alternative Investments, and Global Fixed Income. The performance of these investments had been very strong in 2017. Mr Bril also provided details of the long-term real rate of returns versus objectives and key achievements during 2017 and goals for 2018.

The Presiding Officer thanked Messrs. Rajkumar, Dooley and Bril for their thorough and informative presentations.

10. Health Insurance

Ms Kamila Guseynova from FAO Social Security Services thanked FFOA for their continuous support in dealing with social security matters and communicating to them when Social Security Services of FAO were not in a position to do so. She informed that FAO had decided to change the premium setting for health insurance coverage for staff and retirees in 2018, while WFP and IFAD had retained the present practice. So far in the case of FAO staff and retirees, premiums were calculated on the same basis as in 2017 as the final formula was still being identified and information on this would be shortly issued. She hoped FFOA would then communicate to its members the revised premium rates and how retroactive deductions would be processed through pension benefits.

Mr Ed Seidler briefed the Assembly with regard to certain social security issues concerning the FFOA membership. He noted that FAO had decided two years ago to change the premium setting for its staff and retirees while WFP and IFAD had agreed to retain the same premium levels. An Administrative Circular had been issued in February this year but was still pending as the formula to calculate the exact amount staff members and pensioners would be paying for their medical coverage was still being worked out. FFOA was deeply

concerned over such an unprecedented protracted delay. Another concern which had also been expressed by both WFP and IFAD was the lack of meetings of the JAC/MC established 25 years ago at which both FFOA and the Staff Representative Bodies were represented and at which issues such as the criteria for premium setting, performance of the medical plan, selection of the most appropriate service provider and the use of the accumulated profit sharing account were reviewed. FFOA was concerned that FAO, as host of the JAC/MC, was unable to convene any meetings of the JAC/MC over the last two years. This has created a lot of concern in FFOA and the staff bodies of the three RBAs and was also of concern to the managements of IFAD and WFP. It was hoped that the matter would be resolved this year and that the JAC/MC would be reborn and fulfil its functions and provide the opportunity for stakeholders to put forward their views on the operation and performance of the RBA medical plan.

There was an intervention from the floor stating that increases in the premiums were normally offset from the profit sharing account which was composed of monies of management and staff. It was therefore questioned how decisions to raise the premiums and use funds of the profit sharing account, which also belonged to staff and retirees, were taken without consultation with and input from the staff and retirees.

In regard to the question on the possibility of the FAO Social Security Service moving to the Shared Service Centre (SSC) in Budapest, and the resulting implications for retirees, Ms Kamila Guseynova replied that the matter was under discussion between FAO and WFP as part of the review of the Social Security Services. She mentioned that the tentative timeline for her transfer to Budapest was 1 October 2018. Ms Guseynova also informed that a new Human Resource Officer (P-5) had been appointed who would be heading the Social Security Branch. She regretted that she had no additional information on this matter and further questions would be best addressed to FAO and WFP senior managements.

The Presiding Officer thanked Ms Guseynova for the information provided.

11. Statement by the Representative of the Staff Bodies of FAO, WFP and IFAD

Mr Fitzpatrick welcomed Ms Eva Moller, Deputy General Secretary of the Union of General Service (UGSS) staff, speaking on behalf of the AP-in-FAO, WFP-PSA, the IFAD Staff Association, IFAD- ECSA, and the UGSS.

Ms Moller stated that she was honoured to have been invited by FFOA to address the General Assembly. She noted with regret that once again this had not been an easy year for staff representative bodies (SRBs) at FAO. The UGSS Executive Committee saw new representatives elected who had little exposure to staff representation, and an overall small Executive Committee that had significant tasks to carry out. The UGSS also saw membership dwindle, one of the reasons being the perceived loss of effectiveness of the Union in negotiations with FAO Management.

Ms Moller also referred to the abrupt dismissal of the President of the AP-in-FAO, Mr. Roberto Bonafede which created a crisis in the AP and its ability to function. Despite such factors, the SRBs were able to repeal Management's decision to delete the provision for parental leave in case of adoption.

Ms Moller noted that in IFAD, staff-management relations were more straightforward and staff was given ample opportunity to provide input and communication was sound. She also pointed out that the UGSS's physical spread between two agencies in Rome also revealed some differences between managements of WFP and FAO, with relations at WFP

being considerably better than those at FAO. Another difference being the agencies' stance in relation to the Mandatory Age of Separation (MAS). At IFAD the MAS would be raised to 65 for those who joined the Fund before January 2014 starting in 2020. In WFP, while the MAS had not yet been officially changed, Senior Management had confirmed that all requests for extension to work until the age of 65 would be automatically approved. Ms Moller noted that in FAO the issue was discussed at the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee but was met with resistance from Management.

She recalled that the JAC/MC had not reconvened since April 2016 despite several requests from the SRBs and FFOA while in the meantime the contract with the medical insurer Allianz was extended for another two years starting from January 2018. The SRBs had expressed deep concern over the fact that the tender process was not reviewed through the JAC/ MC because had the JAC/ MC been allowed to function, things would have gone differently. She informed that a new tender process would begin in July 2018 which the SRB would follow closely and would argue strongly for the revitalization of the JAC/MC. In this endeavor, the SRBs looked forward to working closely with FFOA.

Ms Moller noted that the priorities in FAO would include working to improve the GS recruitment procedures as this was linked closely to the low morale amongst GS staff in the Organization. She hoped that FAO Management would recognize the connection between performance and meritorious job growth and career development. She also added that the UGSS would work to fully represent field staff, prepare for the GS salary survey, work on appeals against the closure of the Commissary, and in WFP support lifting of the freeze of GS fixed term positions. The IFAD staff association, while appreciating the freeze on external recruitment for the GS category while it undergoes reform, is still nevertheless concerned about the conditions of short-term temporary staff and was currently negotiating with Management on their contractual conditions.

Ms Moller concluded by observing that this would be a challenging year for all UN staff, and it was the intention of the SRBs to defend their rights, safeguard their conditions of service and support them when they are subject to unfair treatment.

The Presiding Officer thanked Ms Moller for her remarks and reiterated the importance of collaboration with the Staff Associations, and for exchanging views on subjects of common concern and interest. He indicated that FFOA would reciprocate its support for their endeavours which FFOA supported wholeheartedly.

Under the section devoted to Wellness, the Assembly was provided with a presentation by Dr Felicita Andreotti, Cardiologist associated with the Gemelli Hospital of Rome on Awareness of Heart Attack and Stroke.

The Presiding Officer thanked Dr Andreotti for a very useful and informative presentation and requested that this be made available to the FFOA membership.

12. Reports of the Executive Committee

The Presiding Officer invited Ms Shaver, Vice President of the Executive Committee to present the Provisional Report of the 47th Session. After the presentation the Presiding Officer opened the floor for discussions.

As there were no comments, the Presiding Officer proposed the motion to adopt the Report. The Provisional Report of the 47th Session was adopted (FFOA/GA/2018/06/A).

The Presiding Officer requested Ms Shaver to provide any updates to the 2017 Report.

Ms Shaver informed the Assembly that in addition to the information contained in the document on the Statement of Work, she wanted to add a few points in regard to certain issues that had been carried over from 2017 and the Association's priorities for 2018.



FFOA Executive Committee members Jamie Wickens, Mariam Ahmed (Rapporteur), Angelika Wolf and Joan Smidt.

The Statement of Work noted that for the first time in seven years there had been a 1% decrease in membership of the Association compared to 2016 even though, there had been an increase in members living in Italy. In light of that fact, she assured that FFOA would continue to work hard to come up with measures to attract and retain new members. She referred to the Pre-Retirement Seminars which had been very popular. She reminded that this was an election year and that the term of the present Executive Committee would expire in December 2018. Elections would be held in November for a new Executive Committee of eleven and she invited all to participate actively in this process. Members would be kept informed on updates regarding the elections through the Newsbrief with the next issue coming out in September. Nominations were invited by September this year. She encouraged members to provide their email addresses so that communication could be faster and more efficient. However, she assured that ballot forms would be provided in hard copy as well.

Ms Shaver indicated that the Association would continue relationship building, including the regular meeting with HR Directors of the three Rome-based agencies. She also assured that the Association would continue to work harder to ensure that the JAC/MC would finally meet again and to keep abreast of decisions that organizations are taking with less than optimal consultations with staff representative organizations. She informed that the next FAFICS meeting in July, which precedes the Annual Pension Board meeting, would be hosted in Rome. FFOA would continue to work hard to ensure that information is provided as soon as it becomes available. Moreover, reference was made to the availability of the Duty Officers at the FFOA Office and the monthly coffee mornings. She noted that contact and communications were now available on Skype to reach out to members who were not in Rome to ensure that information is shared as broadly as possible.

Ms Shaver then requested Mr Ed Seidler to provide the Assembly information on the Membership Defense Fund (MDF). Mr Ed Seidler informed the Assembly of the establishment

of a Membership Defense Fund by the FFOA EXCOM to obtain voluntary contributions from membership world-wide to support FFOA in seeking legal opinions and taking up cases on behalf of Association members. The MDF was a voluntary fund and a note on the purpose and modalities for contributions would be made available in the next Newsbrief.

The General Assembly congratulated the Executive Committee and approved the report with the adoption of Resolution “B” of document FFOA/GA/06/2018/B.

13. Reports of the Association’s Financial Transactions

The Presiding Officer requested the Treasurer, Mr Gianni Monciotti, to present the Financial Reports for 2018 and the proposed budget for 2019.

Mr Monciotti, indicated that an addendum had been issued after the final report was made available which however did not prevent the certification of our accounts. In this regard he thanked the reviewers John McGhie and David Baugh.

He referred to the financial report which showed an increase of US\$ 6,000 compared with last year. He noted, however, expenses had also increased due to the preparation of a legal document which had proved to be very well received and appreciated by the members. Postal expenses had also decreased and in this regard he thanked IFAD for meeting the costs of mailing the FFOA General Assembly documents.

Mr Monciotti informed that there were adequate funds in the FFOA accounts, also due to the liquidation of an investment, as advised by the reviewers, that had proved not be very profitable. About 50% of the liquidated funds had been deposited with the Banca di Sondrio and the remaining 50% with the Banca Intesa San Paolo while other profitable investment opportunities were being studied.

In conclusion, the Treasurer proposed the reconfirmation of Messrs John McGhie and David Baugh as reviewers of the accounts for 2018. The Assembly unanimously approved the financial reports, the proposed Reviewers - John McGhie and David Baugh for 2018 and adopted en bloc Resolutions C, D, E and F.

14. Other Business

As no further proposals for other business were received from the members, Mr Fitzpatrick handed the meeting over to the Vice President of the FFOA. Ms Shaver reminded the meeting to update their email addresses so that the FFOA could use electronic communications and continue "to cut costs". She informed that there was a “Before and After” document, so survivors knew what they have to do to receive benefits. This document is available on the FFOA website or could be requested in hard copy from the FFOA Desk Assistants. Ms Shaver renewed the pledge that the Association would continue to work for all members and reminded participants that they could contribute to the Old Folks Home. (A total of 724 euros was collected.)

15. Closure of the Forty-eighth Session of the General Assembly by the Vice President of the Executive Committee

Ms Shaver requested Mr Jamie Wickens to say a few words of appreciation for Mr Alan Prien who after six years as President of FFOA was now stepping down.

Mr Wickens acknowledged that as FFOA President, Alan Prien had demonstrated exceptional leadership skills by being dynamic, supportive and inclusive, in delegating responsibility to his team and other FFOA members. He had also shown vision in seeking to expand FFOA support to the entire membership. Alan had further been an active participant in the Staff Pension committee (SPC) and FAFICS meetings and would be the



Presiding Officer at this year's FAFICS Session at FAO. At the human level, and perhaps more importantly, Alan is one of the finest persons that one can ever meet, always caring and considerate with whom he interacts. Mr Wickens illustrated that if ever you had an emergency at 3 am in the morning, Alan was that rare individual who would always be there for you. On behalf of the Association he wished Alan Prien a speedy recovery.

Ms Shaver thanked Mr Fitzpatrick for chairing the Assembly and all others who helped prepare and carry out a successful meeting.

Ms Shaver reminded members of the informal information session to be held after lunch on issues of concern to members.

A moment of silence honoured serving and retired UN Staff who had passed away during the year was held.

Ms Shaver, Vice President of the FFOA, closed the Assembly at 13:15 hours.

The Assembly was followed by a lunch jointly sponsored by Allianz and FFOA.

The Forty-Ninth Session of the General Assembly
will take place on
Wednesday, 29 May 2019
at WFP Headquarters starting at 9:45 hours

So plan ahead, mark this date in your calendar,
and bring this report with you.