



ASSOCIATION OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS – THAILAND

REPORT OF

THE EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY (Tuesday, 17 July 2018)

The Eighteenth Annual General Assembly (18th AGA) of the Association of Former International Civil Servants – Thailand (AFICS-T) was held on Tuesday, 17 July 2018, in Conference Room 4 of the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok. Altogether 110 AFICS-T members attended the Meeting. Mr. Yossuwan Anandhwanlert, President of AFICS-T, called the Meeting to order at 09.00 hours. He expressed deep appreciation for the presence at the Meeting of Mr. Hongjoo Hahm, Officer-in-Charge of ESCAP Secretariat, and other distinguished guests who kindly answered to AFICS-T's invitation to participate at this 18th AGA. The President also thanked all members of AFICS-T who had made their efforts to attend the 18th AGA. He then invited Mr. Hongjoo Hahm to address and open the 18th AGA.

Agenda Item 1. Address of the ESCAP Deputy Executive Secretary

Pending the appointment of a new Executive Secretary, Mr. Hongjoo Hahm, Deputy Executive Secretary, was designated as the Officer-in-Charge of the ESCAP Secretariat. In his opening address, Mr. Hongjoo Hahm welcomed all participants to ESCAP and to the 18th AGA of AFICS-T. He thanked the AFICS-T President for inviting him to officiate at the opening ceremony of the 18th AGA and was pleased to be associated again with this annual gathering of former international civil servants. In this context, he noted with satisfaction that after spending a career working with the United Nations system organization many of former non-Thai staff have elected to spend their retirement lives in Thailand along with their Thai fellow retirees. Indeed, more than 800 former international civil servants have made Thailand their retirement home. While recognizing that UN retirees benefited in the excellent UN pension system and comprehensive after-service medical coverage as well as life insurance benefits, he particularly valued the benefits and assistance that AFICS-T was able to extend to its members to circumvent problems that they might face in their retirement life. In this connection, he congratulated AFICS-T for the various activities undertaken which greatly benefited the AFICS-T membership at large, especially issues regarding pension matters. Mr. Hongjoo Hahm also wished to praise the initiative taken by AFICS-T to award scholarships to four meritorious students of Wat Makutkasat School for a period of three years. In this context, he was particularly honoured to be invited by AFICS-T to confer the third-year scholarship awards to the four awardees from Wat Makutkasat School in a subsequent ceremony.

In ending his remarks, Mr. Hongjoo Hahm also wished on behalf of his colleagues to thank AFICS-T for its excellent work in ensuring that former international civil servants under

its wing could find the needed assistance in time of difficulties as well as a place of gathering together and enjoying continuous camaraderie. He then further extended his very best wishes to all participants for their well-deserved retirement. He then concluded his statement and officially opened the 18th AGA and wished it a success.

Agenda Item 2. Statement by the President

The President thanked Mr. Hangjoo Hahm, Officer-in-Charge of the ESCAP Secretariat, for his presence at this session and opening remarks for the third consecutive year since he joined ESCAP as the Deputy Executive Secretary. He then expressed AFICS-T's deep appreciation for the support provided by the Officer-in-Charge of the ESCAP Secretariat, the Director of ESCAP Division of Administration and all staff in her Division, in particular the Chief of Human Resources Management Section and his staff, the Chief of Central Support Services and her staff, in particular the staff in the Conference Management Unit, and the Facilities Management Unit, and the Chief of ESCAP Staff Security and Safety Section and her staff. He further thanked the ESCAP Staff Council Chairperson and Council members and its staff, and the MAF Executive Committee and its staff for their support and cooperation. He also acknowledged the support provided by the various UN Funds and Programmes as well as Specialized Agencies. He also reaffirmed that AFICS-T stood ready to cooperate fully with ESCAP and all other United Nations system organizations in carrying out activities in support of the United Nations ideals, purposes and programmes.

The President wished to reiterate that AFICS-T had continuously and promptly been rendering assistance and full support to all its members and their respective family members in resolving any issues encountered mainly in pension, medical insurance and life insurance matters. AFICS-T Executive Board Members, Advisers and all volunteers had untiringly and willingly been assisting members and their family members whenever they approach AFICS-T for assistance.

The President then informed the Meeting that as customary we would discuss in details the activities undertaken by the Executive Board as contained in its annual report for the period July 2017 – June 2018. These activities were carried out through various committees which provided related services/advices to AFICS-T members on issues ranging from pension benefits, medical services and health insurance, benevolent and charity activities, to recreation and tours, as well as issues concerning foreigners living in Thailand. The President also drew the Meeting's attention to the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee for the implementation of awarding AFICS-T scholarships to four meritorious high-school students at the Wat Makutkasat School starting from 2016 until 2019. In this connection, after the opening statements and as part of the activities carried out by the AFICS-T's Ad Hoc Committee on Scholarships, there would be a small ceremony to award the third-year scholarships to the four needy students from the neighbouring school, Wat Makutkasat School. Mr. Hongjoo Hahm had kindly accepted to confer the scholarship awards on behalf of AFICS-T.

The President also wished to express his sincere appreciation to Executive Board members, advisers, all volunteers and many others who had been working behind the scene for their strenuous support and dedication in discharging their functions and responsibilities amicably without any remuneration in return from AFICS-T. Without their support, AFICS-T

members and their family members would not have received such prompt services and assistance in dealing with their retirement benefits, medical insurance and many other related issues. While appreciating the cooperation of all volunteers, AFICS-T Office would be more than pleased to welcome more volunteers to assist AFICS-T in its activities.

In concluding his statement, and on behalf of the Executive Board, the President expressed his gratitude and appreciation to all participants for attending the 18th Annual General Assembly. The President wished them and their family good health and a happy long life.

Agenda Item 3. Award of the AFICS-T scholarship (final phase) to four students of the Wat Makutkasat School

Mr. Vudhithep Tanghongse, Co-Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Committee on AFICS-T Scholarships, provided a brief background of the three-year AFICS-T Scholarship project. It all started when Mr. Suthat Ungsuthornrungsi, the then President of AFICS-T, organized a fund-raising campaign during an “AFICS-T Home Returning and Reunion Christmas Party” in December 2015 at the UNCC. Out of the total financial contribution raised from retiree members of AFICS-T participating at this fund-raising, a sum of 270,000 Baht was earmarked and approved for launching a three-year AFICS-T Scholarship project, with an annual budget of 90,000 Baht. The main objective of the project was to promote the principles and ideals of the United Nations in human development areas. Wat Makutkasat School was selected under the rational of “Gold neighbours versus silver relatives”, a philosophy that aims at enhancing and fostering closer neighbourhood carefulness relationships. Four scholarship awards have been established annually, with an annual award of 20,000 Baht for each scholarship. The balance of 10,000 Baht from each annual budget has been retained for eventual extra-curriculum courses to be approved by the Ad Hoc Committee in consultation with the Student Counsellors of the School. The main criteria for the scholarship awards, inter-alia, included (a) excellent academic performance, (b) positive participation in public service activities and non-curriculum activities of the School, and (c) comparative economic and social situation of the potential scholarship awardees.

Mr. Vudhithep Tanghongse then expressed his thanks for the cooperation of members of the Ad Hoc Committee which comprised: Ms. Suntaree Suwannasing (Co-Chairperson), and the following members: Ms. Pagapunt Anecknidhi, Ms. Duangthip Pattraplachai, Mr. Boonkerd Suadsong and Mr. Suthichai Thaveto; and the adviser/initiator of the project: Mr. Suthat Ungsuthornrungsi, as well as the representatives of the School management.

At the onset of the third and final year of the project, given their respective regularly excellent academic performances, the Ad Hoc Committee strongly believed that the four awardees would certainly be successful in their forthcoming competitive national university entrance examination into the faculties and the universities of their aims.

Mr. Vudhithep Tanghongse then invited Mr. Hongjoo Hahm, Officer-in-Charge of the ESCAP Secretariat, to confer the four scholarship awards. The four awardees were: Mr. Anirut Arunsarn, Ms. Yakeeta Sopol, Ms. Pranadda Srinath, and Ms. Kochaporn Anantana. At the end of the ceremony, Mr. Vudhithep Tanghongse addressed the four awardees in Thai with few words

of encouragement. He also thanked Mr. Hongjoo Hahm for his kind and generous consent to personally grace this award ceremony. A group picture was also taken.

After the departure of the Officer-in-Charge of the ESCAP Secretariat, the Meeting was in recess for 20 minutes during which coffee, tea and snacks were served.

Agenda Item 4. Adoption of the Agenda

The President requested the Meeting to consider the provisional agenda and inquired whether there was any proposal for change or inclusion of additional items. There was none and thus the Meeting adopted the following agenda as drafted:

1. Address by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP
2. Statement by the AFICS-T President
3. Award of the AFICS-T scholarship (final phase) to four students of the Wat Makutkasat School
4. Adoption of the Agenda
5. Report of AFICS-T activities in the preceding year (as contained in the attached Annual Report of the Executive Board)
6. Questions and Answers
7. Recommendations on activities to be undertaken by AFICS-T
8. Presentation by Cigna, Kuala Lumpur office
9. Other matters

Agenda Item 5. Report of AFICS-T activities in the preceding year

Before commencing discussion on this agenda item, the President expressed his sincere appreciation to the Chairpersons and Co-Chairpersons of the various Committees of AFICS-T Executive Board and their members and the Working Group on Draft Report for the preparation, revision and finalization of the annual report of the Executive Board.

The President then invited the Meeting to refer to the Annual Report of the Executive Board covering the period July 2017 – June 2018 and listed the various Committees and Sub-Committees which had been established for ensuring the smooth and efficient functioning of the activities of AFICS-T. He then briefly walked through the various sections of the report highlighting the major activities along with those normal services undertaken during the reporting period.

1. Membership of AFICS-T

As of 30 April 2018, the paid-up memberships stands at 240. However, the total number of members, including those with membership fees in arrears totaled 826. Among them, 110 members have reached 80 years old or over, and are exempted from annual membership fees. There are also 586 members who are life members of AFICS-T.

2. Summary of Financial Report

The President invited the Meeting to consider the document on Report of Auditor which was distributed at the AGA. At the outset, he expressed his appreciation and thanks to Ms. Panvipa Thammakoranonta, a member of AFICS-T, who had very generously audited all accounts, as it was done in previous years, on a free of charge basis.

As reported on the first financial statement, being the balance sheet of the Association, the current total assets of AFICS-T stood a Baht 3,099,787.41, out of which Baht 3,094,787.41 were deposited with the Siam Commercial Bank (SCB), and Baht 5,000.00 held on hand as petty cash.

The President also briefed the Meeting that AFICS-T as a member of the Federation of the Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) has continued to liaise with the Federation on issues of concern and to provide, upon request, substantive comments. During the reporting period, AFICS-T had paid its membership dues to FAFICS in a timely manner, to ensure that the Association would not fall into arrears.

3. Report of the Committee on Pension and Group Life Insurance Benefits

On pension matters, Mr. Suthat Ungsuthornrundsri, Adviser to the Executive Board, while on his trip to New York in July 2017, met Ms. Christine Höfer, Chief, Client Services and Records Management and Distribution Section (CRMDS) of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF), and had a very fruitful discussion on various matters, and in particular on the possibility of organizing a video conference (VTC) to present the new UNJSPF website. After months spent on technical and logistic preparation, AFICS-T conducted a very successful and fruitful VTC on 19 February 2018 with Ms. Christine Höfer who made a very informative and practical presentation of the new UNJSPF website providing also many examples on how to navigate through the many features and functions of the website. Subsequently, AFICS-T disseminated the information and established a help desk at the office of AFICS-T to assist and guide members to new features and functions of the new UNJSPF website. To the extent possible, the help desk would also provide services relating the on-line medical reimbursement claims submitted to Cigna and e-banking of the UNFCU.

With effect from April 2018, pension benefits had been adjusted with the increase of 2.2 per cent for beneficiaries on the US dollar track. For beneficiaries on the local currency (Baht) track, no adjustment was made, as the increase in Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Thailand did not reach the threshold of 2 per cent.

Regarding the 2017 CE exercise, AFICS-T had efficiently handled their timely submission to the UNJSPF in New York for those CEs which had been entrusted to AFICS-T for collective delivery.

The Pension Fund had already started 2018 CE exercise and their distribution through mail or pouch had commenced in June 2018. There were also available in the Member Self Service (MSS) on the UNJSPF website for those beneficiaries who are on US dollar track only. For those members who entrusted their CEs to AFICS-T for collective delivery, the first batch of CEs was transmitted to the Pension Fund at Headquarters by DHL on Friday 13 July 2018. However, those who had not yet submitted their 2018 CEs might still avail themselves of the services of the AFICS-T. For those who had not received their CEs during the first mailing, they

should be patient and wait until the UNJSPF second mailing in September. Should anyone by any chance not receive their CEs during the second mailing by September, they should promptly inform AFICS-T office so that necessary follow-up action could be taken accordingly.

The Executive Board continued in providing assistance to pensioners and their spouses in drafting e-mail messages or letters to UNJSPF, regarding their periodic benefits, disabled child benefit, spouse benefit, two-track pension adjustment system, change of mailing address and bank accounts for pension deposit, transfer of funds, birth certificates of spouses, etc.

4. Report of the Committee on Medical Benefits

The President was pleased to report that AFICS-T Executive Board continued to successfully entertain very close communication and cooperation with Cigna. In this context, the Cigna Office in Kuala Lumpur had been continuing sending its representative to visit Bangkok with regular interval of three months.

During each Cigna representative's visit to Bangkok, AFICS-T had regular discussions on many issues relating to improvement of Cigna services especially the long delay in settlement of the reimbursement to either participants or hospitals as well as unclear instructions given to hospitals. AFICS-T also took the opportunity to always follow-up on a regular basis on the possibility to increase the maximum reimbursement level for MIP as well as other entitlements in WWP.

Within its policy to enhance its services, Cigna had successfully launched a new feature through its website, namely the on-line submission of medical claims. This new facility can be accessible thanks to a user-friendly programme either on computer or on smartphone. However, those members who are not familiar with the use of either computer or smartphone, can still submit their medical claims through HRMS/ESCAP or Thai postal service. Since the launching of the on-line submission, AFICS-T had received a number of very good response and feedback from members expressing their appreciation on the quick response in acknowledging the receipt of the claim and the fast processing of its reimbursement.

The Cigna Office in Kuala Lumpur had generously accepted AFICS-T's invitation to attend this AGA Meeting for a brief presentation of recent services improvement in Cigna followed by a question and answer session on both MIP and WWP, as scheduled under agenda item 8.

5. Report of the Committee on Information and Records

Since last AGA, the AFICS-T website had been successfully launched. It provided, in a very user friendly manner, useful basic information on pension, medical and other benefits for members and spouses. However, in October 2017 AFICS-T Executive Board reviewed the operation of the website and decided to recruit a new web designer in order to improve AFICS-T's website with additional features. These included: (1) to facilitate posting of latest news relevant to retirees/beneficiaries; (2) to determine different levels of website accessibility by AFICS-T members and general viewers; and (3) to explore different modalities of video teleconference (VTC). A new web designer had been recruited and is currently working on redesigning the website. While the new website is still under construction, the domain has been recently modified from "aficsthailand.in.th" to "aficsthailand.com". An announcement would be made shortly when the new website would become officially operational.

AFICS-T continued to disseminate and sharing useful and relevant information on all issues related to the benefits to retirees through its “Line Group” while providing also a platform for keeping members connected among themselves.

6. Report on Committee on Publicity and Newsletters

AFICS-T, on a regular basis, issued circulars and newsletters to all its members so as to keep them abreast of the latest information on any issues and activities of interest to them.

7. Report of the Committee on Benevolent Fund and Funerals

The President thanked the various generous members who contributed to the Benevolent Fund to the sum of Baht 7,500. He also mentioned that there was no request received from members of the Association for financial assistance under the Benevolent Fund during the past year. The updated financial statement was available in the Audited Financial Report distributed at the meeting.

At the time of writing the Annual Report of the Executive Board, there were 13 members listed as deceased. The President regretfully mentioned that an additional member (Mr. Sombati Pengsupaya) passed away on June 2018, bringing to a total of 14 deceased members during July 2017 to June 2018. As customary AFICS-T had presented wreaths and provided a token financial contribution to the deceased family members.

The participants were requested to stand up and observe a one-minute silence in remembrance of those deceased members.

8. Report of the Committee on Recreation and Tours

The President reported that the Committee on Recreation and Tours organized 2 trips, i.e. one trip to Kyoto-Takayama-Nikko-Tokyo (Japan) in November 2017 and one trip to Prachuap Khiri Khan-Ranong-Chumpon (Thailand) in February 2018.

These two trips were well participated and brought encouraging and positive feedback from those participating members.

9. Report of the Committee on Charity Activities

The Committee on Charity Activities arranged a visit to Siriraj Hospital on 31 January 2018 to donate the sum of Baht 478,000.00 which was contributed by over 148 generous AFICS-T members to support the construction of a special new hospital building for those underprivileged and destitute patients to commemorate the Late King Bhumibol Adulyadej, King Rama IX of Thailand. The Committee and the Executive Board would like to put on record their gratitude and thanks to those members for their kind contribution to the above-mentioned cause.

The Committee also organized in collaboration with the ESCAP Staff Council a Songkran celebration on Wednesday, 11 April 2018 on the ground floor of the UNCC which was well attended by both active staff members and retirees. During the celebration, a group of 14 AFICS-T members who were eighty years old and above, were invited to attend a traditional blessing ceremony with the pouring of water on their palms.

10. Report of the Committee on Foreigners Living in Thailand (FLIT)

The President reported that the Committee on FLIT continued to assist and advise both active and retired UN staff either residing in or outside Thailand. It had regularly been approached by UN staff from different duty stations within and outside Thailand enquiring on the procedural requirements in obtaining non-immigrant retiree visa in Thailand for themselves, their spouses and eligible family members.

11. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on AFICS-T Scholarships

Based on the Executive Board's decision, AFICS-T earmarked a sum of Baht 270,000.00 for providing scholarships to four students from the Wat Makutkasat School – the neighbouring school to the UN compound – for a period of three years starting in 2016. The Scholarship project now entered into its final phase. The detail background of this project has been briefly given by Mr. Vudhithep Tanghongse, Co-Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Committee on AFICS-T Scholarships, in his statement at the beginning of the Final Phase of the Scholarships Award ceremony which took place during the opening session of the 18th AGA. (see agenda item 3 above)

As mentioned by the Co-Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Committee, at the onset of the third and final year of the project, given their respective regularly excellent academic performances, the Ad Hoc Committee strongly believed that the four awardees would certainly be successful in their forthcoming competitive national university entrance examination into the faculties and the universities of their aims.

Agenda Item 6. Questions and Answers

The President opened the floor for participants to intervene on any issues of concern.

The Chairperson of the ESCAP Staff Council, informed the Meeting that during a recent meeting of SMCC there was a discussion about the backlog on payment of pension benefits. She also got a list of names of persons affected by these delays. As far as AFICS-T was concerned, the President clarified that this matter encompasses two different issues. First it relates to the new retirees who have experienced the delay in receiving the first payment of their pension fund benefits including the payments of lump sum. When informed of their predicament, the Executive Board took necessary measures with the CEO of the UNJSPF to expedite the undue delays in such payments. The second refers to the non-receipt of the signed CEs from pensioners/beneficiaries living in Thailand despite repeated UNJSPF reminders which consequently entails suspension of their pension fund benefits passed a certain deadline. When informed by UNJSPF of these cases, the Executive Board took immediate action in trying to locate the whereabouts of these pensioners/beneficiaries. The Chairperson of the ESCAP Staff Council thanked the President and other members of the Executive Board for their clarification on this matter and would provide AFICS-T with the list referred to.

Agenda Item 7. Recommendations on activities

to be undertaken by AFICS-T

The President took the opportunity of this agenda item to reiterate that since the establishment of AFICS in Thailand, AFICS-T had been very active in establishing Committees and Sub-Committees to ensure the smooth and efficient functioning of the Association.

However, AFICS-T would appreciate very much to hear from members any recommendations of new activities to be undertaken and/or suggestion for any improvement in the operations of AFICS-T.

Since no recommendations were put forward by the Meeting, the President invited the members to feel free to approach any members of the Executive Board at any time should they have any recommendations and/or proposals to be made on activities of AFICS-T.

Agenda Item 8. Presentation by Cigna, Kuala Lumpur

The President welcomed Ms. Baljit Kaur, representatives from Cigna, Kuala Lumpur Office, and thanked her for having kindly accepted AFICS-T invitation to make a presentation on the latest development of MIP and WWP. He then informed the Meeting that the presentation would be followed by Q &A session.

Ms. Baljit Kaur thanked the President for his kind words of welcome and proceeded with presentation. At the outset, she stated that she would not walk through the entire presentation as most of the background information were well known but would prefer to focus on the latest improvement and new services that Cigna had initiated.

A new feature has been added to the member's Cigna personal webpages: plan balances on-line. To find the remaining plan balances, simply go to the Cigna personal webpages, click "Claim" then select "My Balances" and then after a claim has been processed, the remaining balances will be available on this page.

Communication via telephone has been improved through additional manpower.

The maximum amount of coverage for medical check-up for WWP members has been raised from US\$ 750 to US\$ 1,050.

Cigna has also launched a new service called "Telehealth Provider": this service is available only for WWP member. A doctor as designated by Cigna can be called for consultation at no cost.

The latest improvement from Cigna was the successful medical claim on-line which could be submitted via computer or smartphone.

The President thanked Ms. Baljit Kaur for her focused presentation and opened the floor for questions.

One of the recurrent issue related to the check-up for MIP members. According to AFICS-T members the type of lab tests and special package accepted by Cigna remain confusing. In this context, it has been clarified that ultra-sound was not included in the check-up. There is an urgent need to simplify the content of the accepted check-up. One proposal however was to fix a maximum allowed amount coverage similar to the scheme adopted for the reimbursement of medical check-up under WWP, thus avoiding the confusion on the content of the said medical check-up. Ms. Baljit Kaur informed the meeting that negotiation were on-going with UN Headquarters on this issue.

Regarding to the pending matter on the stop-loss issue affecting certain members under MIP, Ms. Baljit Kaur was pleased to inform the meeting that the problem has been satisfactorily resolved and concerned members would be reimbursed accordingly.

The maximum annual coverage for WWP members is still fixed at US\$250,000 per member with no hardship entitlement for retirees. In this regard, one proposal was made on the possibility to request UN Headquarters to review and eventually increase this amount.

Ms. Baljit Kaur reconfirmed that, however, hardship entitlement is available to MIP members

The President thanked Ms. Baljit Kaur for her very informative presentation and appreciated her clarification and positive answers to the various issues raised during the Q&A session. He also mentioned that Ms. Baljit Kaur had been regularly visiting Bangkok and at each of her visit the AFICS-T Executive Board had very fruitful discussion with her. We had the opportunity to address issues relating to improvement of Cigna services as well as problems encountered by AFICS-T members. Ms. Baljit Kaur has now become our trusted focal point with Cigna and active facilitator on numerous cases for which AFICS-T is very appreciative and grateful.

Agenda Item 9. Other matters

As there was no further business for discussion, the 18th Annual General Assembly was adjourned at 11.30 hours.

Yossuwan Anandhwanlert
President, AFICS-T 2017-2019