



**REPORT OF THE
2022 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
(Tuesday, 19 July 2022)**

1. The 2022 Annual General Assembly (2022 AGA) of the Association of Former International Civil Servants – Thailand (AFICS-T) was held on Tuesday, 19 July 2022, in Conference Room 3 of the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok. In order to ensure required safety measures for participants in view of the persisting Covid-19 pandemic, the 2022 AGA took place into a hybrid conference format with a restricted number of participants present on site with arrangements been made to allow additional participation online. Accordingly, altogether 136 AFICS-T members registered and attended the Meeting (73 on site and 63 online). As the quorum of at least 80 members of the Association has been attained (Article IV, para. 4 of the Bylaws), the Meeting then could proceed as convened.
2. Mr. Suraphon Songweera, President of AFICS-T, called the Meeting to order at 09.00 hours. He expressed his deep appreciation for the presence at the Meeting (online) of Ms. Soomi Ro, Director, ESCAP Division of Administration, representing the ESCAP Executive Secretary and other distinguished guests who kindly answered to AFICS-T's invitation to participate at this 2022 AGA. The President also thanked all members of AFICS-T who had made their efforts to attend in person the 2022 AGA as well as welcomed those members who followed the proceedings online. He then invited Ms. Soomi Ro to address and officially open the 2022 Annual General Assembly.

**Agenda item 1. Address of Ms. Soomi Ro, on behalf of the Executive
Secretary of ESCAP**

3. In her opening address, Ms. Soomi Ro welcomed all participants to ESCAP and to the 2022 AGA of AFICS-T. She thanked the President for inviting her to officiate at the opening ceremony of the 2022 AGA and apologized for not being able to attend this event in person as being currently on home leave in Korea. At the outset, she wished to convey the warmest greetings from the Executive Secretary and the Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP. She went on congratulating the AFICS-T Executive Board for successfully convening this important meeting after two years hiatus during which time AGAs for 2020 and 2021 could not take place due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation.
4. Having recently joined ESCAP, Ms. Soomi Ro was very pleased to note the existence of AFICS-Thailand as an Association aiming to serve the needs of all UN retirees and their spouses living in Thailand and consequently extending assistance to them. In this connection, she was very impressed to learn, from a recent meeting she had with representatives of the AFICS-T Executive Board on 27 April 2022, that the Association had been serving as an important bridge between retirees and ESCAP as well as other UN offices in addressing matters of mutual interest and well-being of our former UN colleagues. It was also refreshing to learn that the support and assistance that AFICS-T was able to extend to its



members came from a group of kindest volunteers with a wealth of UN experience, greatly benefiting the AFICS-T membership at large. Ms. Soomi Ro was also pleased to note that, despite the difficult times imposed by the ongoing pandemic situation, the Association managed to fulfil its objectives and to continue its efforts in modernizing its support to the members utilizing the best possible IT solutions under the “new normal”.

5. On behalf of ESCAP, Ms. Soomi Ro expressed her sincere thanks to the Association for its notable contribution in protecting the benefits and representing the interests of its members, their spouses and dependents, with regard to UN pension, life and health insurance, and especially its kind support and coordination with the ESCAP Division of Administration. Indeed, fostering strong partnerships would always be one of her top priorities as the Director of Administration, and that would mean maintaining the existing good relationships with all stakeholders of the Organization, including AFICS-T. She felt confident that ESCAP and AFICS-T would endeavour to continue to work closely together on matters of mutual interest.

6. In ending her remark, Ms. Soomi Ro further extended her best wishes to all AFICS-T members for their well-deserved retirement and good health. She then concluded her statement and officially opened the 2022 AGA and wished it a success.

Agenda item 2. Statement by the President

7. The President thanked Ms. Soomi Ro for her opening and inspiring address delivered on behalf of the ESCAP Secretariat. Her encouraging remarks kindly recognized the work of AFICS-T in addressing matters of interest and well-being of former UN retirees living in Thailand. In particular, it was gratifying to learn that ESCAP Division of Administration would maintain fostering strong partnerships and mutual cooperation with AFICS-T.

8. The President then expressed AFICS-T deep appreciation for the support provided by the ESCAP Human Resources Management Section, Commercial and General Services Section, Conference Management Unit, ESCAP Security and Safety Section, ESCAP Staff Council and the MAF Executive Committee. In this connection, the President mentioned the recent establishment in April 2021 of the UNJSPF Bangkok Liaison Office, and the nomination of Mr. Brian Casatelli as UNJSPF liaison Officer. He also acknowledged the support provided by various UN Funds and Programs as well as Specialized Agencies.

9. The President also reiterated that AFICS-T had continuously and promptly endeavoured rendering assistance and full support to all its member and their respective family members in resolving any issues encountered in pension fund, such as collating and transmittal of certificates of entitlement, medical insurance, and life insurance matters.

10. Since the beginning of the 2020, AFICS-T operations and activities had been negatively impacted by the persisting global Covid-19 pandemic. Despite some improvement over time, AFICS-T had to reduce its range of activities but the Association tried its best to extend its assistance to its members upon request. Indeed, during that period, monthly

meetings of the Executive Board had to be conducted via video conference. Duty Officers were requested to operate remotely from home. Annual general Assemblies could not be conducted due to the fact that no meeting could be held at the UNCC facilities. Consequently, AFICS-T had to organize its assistance through social media platforms only. The President took this opportunity to apologize for any inconvenience caused.

11. The President also expressed his sincere appreciation to all Executive Board Members, Advisers, all volunteers and many others who had been untiringly working behind the scene, for having devoted and sacrificed their personal time to provide voluntary services. Without their support, all AFICS-T members and their family members would not have received prompt assistance in tackling issues of concern to them. 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.

12. In concluding his statement, and on behalf of the Executive Board, the President expressed his gratitude and appreciation to all participants present onsite and those online for having spared their precious time to attend this Assembly. The President wished them and their family happiness and good health, and may the pandemic subside soon.

Agenda item 3, Adoption of Agenda

13. The President requested the Meeting to consider the provisional agenda and enquired 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 of the Executive Secretary of ESCAP
2. Statement by the AFICS-T President
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Consideration of AFICS-T activities undertaken during the period July 2021 to June 2022 (as contained in the attached Annual Report of the Executive Board)
5. Presentation by Dr. Surachai Vichankaiyakij, AFICS-T Medical Adviser, on Covid-19 current situation
6. Brief presentation by Mr. Brian Casatelli, UNJSPF Bangkok Liaison Officer, on some issues of interest to AFICS-T members
7. Questions and Answers
8. Executive Board 2019-2021 – Extension of term of office
9. Recommendation of activities to be undertaken by AFICS-T
10. Other matters

Agenda item 4. Consideration of AFICS-T activities undertaken during the period July 2021 to June 2022

14. By way of introducing 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 for the preparation, revision and finalization of the annual report of the Executive Board.

1. Executive Board of AFICS-T

15. As mentioned in his opening statement, the President reiterated the unfortunate and unexpected situation that forced AFICS-T Executive Board, since the beginning of 2020, to reduce the range of its operations and activities on the account of the persisting global Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the Executive Board 2019-2021 was unable to convene sessions of the Annual General Assembly (AGA) in both 2020 and 2021, due to restrictions in organizing meetings in the UNCC facilities. In this context, election of a new Executive Board to cover the period 2021-2023 could not be held as required by the Bylaws (Article V, para. 3) stating “Elections will be conducted at the Assembly meetings on odd numbered years”. Consequently, it was decided to extend the tenure of the current Executive Board 2019-2021 until such time when an AGA could be convened physically. This decision was shared with AFICS-T memberships at large vide Newsletter issue No. 10 dated 4 July 2021 which did not bring any objection from AFICS-T membership at large.

16. Consequently, the existing Executive Board 2019-2021 was therefore reconducted until further notice. However, on 19 May 2022, Mr. Chingchai Likitnukul informed the Executive Board that effective 1 July 2021 he withdrew from the Executive Board thus relinquishing his position of Adviser to the Board as well as all other positions he held in Committees, Sub-Committees and ad hoc working groups. In this connection, and on behalf of the Board, the President would like to put on record his sincere thanks and heartfelt appreciation to Mr. Chingchai for his valuable contribution and devotion to the AFICS-T and untiring efforts in sharing his expertise on pension issues and medical benefits, in particular in being guest speaker to several pre-retirement seminars and other similar events. The President wished him good health and expressed the hope that from time-to-time AFICS-T could still call on his expert knowledge. The Meeting joined the President in thanking Mr. Chingchai for his personal involvement and contribution in the activities of AFICS-T over so many years.

2. Membership of AFICS-T

17. As of 31 May 2022, the paid-up memberships stand at 204. Yet the total number of members, including those with membership fees in arrears, was 853. Since the introduction of the life membership in 2008, the Association now has 649 life members, including 145 members who are 80 years old or over, and are exempted from annual membership fees.

3. Summary of activities

18. The President then invited the Meetings to refer to the Annual Report of the Executive Board covering the period July 2021 – June 2022 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.

3.1 Summary of financial report

19. Ms. Panvipa Thammakoramonta, Auditor, has completed the auditing of all accounts of AFICS-T and the final audited financial statement of account for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 was available for distribution at the Meeting. The President took that opportunity to express his sincere heartfelt appreciation to Ms. Panvipa for her dedication in providing voluntary auditing services of all AFICS-T accounts as it was done in previous years, on a free of charge basis.

20. As reported on the first financial statement, i.e., the balance sheet of the Association, the current total assets of AFICS-T stood at Baht 3,203,759.89, out of which Baht 2,676,633.89 were deposited with the Siam Commercial Bank (SCB), Baht 522,126.00 were deposited with Mutual Assistance Fund (MAF), and Baht 5,000.00 held on hand as petty cash.

21. The Meeting agreed to the proposal of the President to retain the services of Ms. Panvipa Thammakoramonta to audit all accounts of AFICS-T for the period July 2022 to 30 June 2023 and submit the final audited financial statement of account at the 2023 Annual General Assembly. Ms. Panvipa has been auditing the accounts of AFICS-T for many years and is very familiar with the accounting system of AFICS-T. In addition, she kindly accepted to continue to provide her auditing services free of charge.

22. The President also recalled the Meeting that AFICS-T sought membership in the Federation of the Association of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) in 2001, and was accepted in July of that year. Since the beginning of 2020, FAFICS has fixed the contribution rate at US\$2.00 per member per year. As mentioned in the previous Annual Report of the Executive Board dated 2 July 2021, the contribution for 2021 was not paid due to the absence of any request from FAICS on that matter. Since then, FAFICS sent a communication inviting AFICS-T to pay its contribution for both 2021 and 2022. As requested AFICS-T proceeded with the payment of both contribution as follows: US\$2.00 x 201 members = US\$402.00 for the year 2021, and US\$2.00 x 211 members = US\$422.00 for the year 2022. The President recalled that membership fees to FAFICS are being calculated on the basis of the number of subscribing members as of 1 January of each year.

3.2 Report of the Committee on Pension and Group Life Insurance Benefits

23. According to the consumer Price Index (CPI) movement, for the year 2022, there is an upward adjustment of 8.6 per cent in pension benefits for retirees/beneficiaries on the US Dollar Track. But for those on the local Thai Bath Track system, there is no adjustment, since the difference in the local CPI movement was not up to the 2 per cent threshold required for the benefit adjustment.

24. At its session held in April 2022, the Pension Board was apprised that the UNJSPF was in a very strong financial asset value standing at US\$86 billion at the end of March 2022. On the income investment, the real rate of return at 4.27 per cent was well above the benchmark of 3.5 per cent. However, it has noted the underperformance since 2007 (15 years ago) of the fixed income investment, representing 18 per cent of the UNJSPF total assets. As such, the Pension Board was of the opinion that three external managers might be employed to work under the direction and supervision of the Fund's team, which would be reinforced with the recruitment of four additional staff in the Office of Investment Management. Considering this being an outsourcing activity, which is not of advantage and benefit to the Fund, the Coordinating Committee for the International Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA) raised a petition campaign by asking Fund participants (staff members) and beneficiaries to sign a letter to be sent to the UN Secretary-General. CCISUA managed to get some 13,000 signatures and consequently the UN Secretary General has decided to hold off implementing this initiative for three months. In the meantime, the Office of Investment Management, in keeping the commitment on transparency, would hold eight virtual information sessions, each for a duration of 30 minutes, from 31 May 2022 to 19 July 2022, on issues relating to the fixed income portfolio.

25. Mr. Chingchai Likitnukul, who contributed to the drafting of the report of the Committee on Pension and Group Life Insurance Benefits, took the opportunity of sharing some additional information on the solid financial standing of the Pension Fund.

26. The President drew the attention of the participants to the AFICS-T commitment in extending its habitual assistance to retirees and their spouses in drafting e-mail messages or letters to UNJSPF, regarding their periodic benefits, disabled child benefits, spouse benefit, two-track pension adjustment system, change in mailing address and bank accounts for pension benefits deposit, transfer of funds, birth certificates of spouse, etc. In regard to the procedures of the UN Group Life Insurance, concerned retirees were advised that related matters and documentation are to be handled by the Human Resources staff of the respective UN offices from where the retirees had separated their services. AFICS-T members were kindly reminded that a "help desk" had been established in the AFICS-T office, UNCC. However, these facilities are only available when the AFICS-T office re-opened for services which are currently suspended due to Covid-19 restrictions.

3.2.1 Report of the Sub-Committee on Certificate of entitlement (CE)

27. On January 2022, the Sub-Committee issued to the attention of Digital CE users a practical guide for those who needed to change their smartphone device and wished to continue using the "DCE App." This guide also provided practical tips for taking the biometric photo which is an essential and required part of the overall DCE process.

28. On April 2022, the UNJSPF Bangkok Liaison Officer, held an online "Pension Briefing" to the benefit of Board members and advisers. The focus of the presentation was on added requirements for the beneficiaries, whose pension benefits are on the "Two-Track" system, which is particularly relevant to their annual CE exercise. The Two-Track benefits strictly required proof of location in addition to the signature of the beneficiaries. Consequently, beneficiaries on Two-Track benefits will not find their CEs in the Member Self Service (MSS) account as their CEs will be only mailed to the beneficiaries' country of residence. Then the completed CE must be mailed back to the fund from the officially registered country of residence. It cannot be uploaded to the MSS, except as an advance copy.

Upon receipt of the original, the Fund will verify the origin of the mail and the signature/thumbprint. The afore-mentioned requirement does not concern Two-Track beneficiaries who had opted to complete their annual CE exercise through the “Digital CE App,” since the App. uses GPS data to verify the location.

29. With respect to the 2021 CE exercise, its implementation, through the services of AFICS-T, had been successfully completed. Some 243 CEs were accordingly submitted to AFICS-T office and then dispatched to the UNSPF on 15 September 2021. They reached the Fund on 17 September 2021. Subsequently, an additional 39 CEs were received by AFICS-T office and then forwarded to the Pension Fund on 8 December 2021 and reached UNJSPF on 13 December 2021. The AFICS-T Executive Board was also approached to assist the Fund in locating the whereabouts of 27 beneficiaries who did not submit their CEs within the required deadline. After some in-depth investigating efforts, AFICS-T Board was able to contact all the 27 beneficiaries and advise them to submit their signed CEs at the earliest to avoid the payment suspension of their benefit effective June 2022.

30. With respect to the 2022 CE exercise, the first mailing has started beginning July 2022 and the procedure is the same as the previous 2021 CE exercise. Beneficiaries using Digital CE have been issued CEs for submission since January 2022. For those on paper-based CEs, they are advised to follow the instructions from the Sub-Committee on CE on how to proceed in the light of persisting global Covid-19 situation. In this respect, the sub-Committee just issued a Newsletter #15 dated 10 July 2022 providing relevant information on ways of returning 2022 CE to UNJSPF via AFICS-T services.

3.3 Report on Committee on Medical Benefits

31. Cigna remained the third-party administrator of the United Nations Health Insurance Plan covering both internationally and locally recruited staff members, including retirees and their eligible dependents, under the World Wide Plan (WWP) and the Medical Insurance Plan (MIP). Except in case of additional coverage for Covid-19 checking, vaccination and treatment, there were no further changes in the reimbursement rules, nor in the entitlement ceiling in both WWP and MIP.

32. Since the outbreak and persistence of Covid-19 three years ago now, there were no visits by the representatives of Cigna Kuala Lumpur Office which handled medical claims and other related issues in both WWP and MIP. Cognizant that these well-established consultations were mutually beneficial to both Cigna and AFICS-T, the Board had initiated a request for online meetings with Cigna representatives. But so far AFICS-T had not received any positive reply, except that Cigna stands always ready to entertain any consultation with AFICS-T members on individual basis.

3.4 Report of the Committee on Information and Records

33. The Meeting was informed that members could create email accounts under the AFICS-T domain name made available within the AFICS-T web site without any increase in fees. However, as recommended by the Executive Board, creation of such email account under the domain name “aficsthailand” was to be optional. Assistance could be provided to interested members who wished to avail themselves of this facility.

34. AFICS-T also continued to collect essential data on AFICS-T members to update the existing AFICS-T database. It also assisted in printing Newsletters and other relevant documents for distribution through postal mail to AFICS-T members who opted for hard copies.

3.5 Report on Committee on Publicity and Newsletters

35. AFICS-T issued, on a regular basis, a number of “Circulars/Newsletters” with a view to keeping members informed about issues and activities that would be of concern and interest to them.

3.6 Report of the Committee on Benevolent Fund and Funerals

36. As of 30 April 2022, AFICS-T received a voluntary financial contribution to the Fund amounting to Baht 500.00. The detailed statement of income and expenditures on Benevolent Fund is available in the Audited Financial Report.

37. As of 31 May 2022, there were 23 member colleagues listed as deceased. Since then up to time of the present AGA, the President regretfully announced that 6 additional members, Ms. Patchanee Satamool (1 June 2022), Mr. Sakda Chitaratana (2 June 2022), Ms. Lawan Cholumpi (8 June 2022), Ms. Nan Sangketkit (17 June 2022), Ms. Daphne Mary Colwell (28 June 2022), and Mr. Hideaki Fujimoto (9 July 2022) passed away, bringing to a total of 29 deceased members over the period 1 July 2021 to 18 July 2022. As customary AFICS-T had presented wreaths and provided token financial contribution to the deceased family members. A traditional minute of silence had been observed in remembrance to the deceased members.

3.7 Report of the Committee on Recreation and tours

38. Due to the ongoing Covid-19, the Committee on Recreation and Tours did not undertake or propose any project for both international and domestic excursions. Consequently, all activities had to be suspended until the time when safe travels are allowed to take place again.

3.8 Report of the Committee on Charity Activities

39. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic which remained critical over the reporting period, and in order to minimize the risk of infection, it was decided to suspend temporarily all charities' activities. The Meeting was informed that the earlier sales of Polo shirts had generated enough income and made the entire Polo shirts operation break-even. At its 30th Board meeting, held on 4 March 2022, the Executive Board was informed of some remaining stock of Polo shirts. It therefore decided to distribute those remaining Polo shirts to the AFICS-T members who would participate in person at the 2022 AGA. The distribution of those Polo shirts had been made on first-come-first-serve, at one Polo shirt for each member, until the remaining stock is exhausted. The President was told that the distribution of the entire remaining Polo shirt had been completed.

3.9 Report of the Committee on Foreigners Living in Thailand (FLiT)

40. The Committee on FLiT continued to provide advisory services to active and retired foreign UN staff members in- and outside of Thailand regarding retirement in the country. Here follow some of the dominant issues encountered during the reporting period.

41. Beginning of 2022 the Government of Thailand had announced a new set of rules for the renewal of Non-OA retirement visa. The amendment stipulates that as of 1 October 2022, for those with foreign health insurance, it will no longer be required to buy local health insurance for visa renewal. However, it is required that proof of foreign insurance of US\$100,000 would be accepted only upon presentation of a Foreign Insurance Certificate, endorsed by the respective embassy from which depends the foreign retiree. It remains uncertain whether this requirement had been coordinated with embassies concerned and that whether they will be willing to provide such endorsement.

42. There were some planned changes to conditions for retirement visa in Thailand. This new proposed formula would be added to the already existing Elite-Card scheme and eventually extended to interested “wealthy retirees”. To benefit from the offer, interested retirees would be required to either invest the equivalent of US\$250,000 in selected estate property or in government bonds. In return, an up to ten-year visa and a relaxation of the 90-day reporting requirement would be granted. However, detailed instructions on how to apply and how the scheme would be operated had not yet been circulated and it remains to be seen to what extent it would be affordable for UN retirees.

43. The option of doing 90-day reporting online was closed for renovation in 2021 to become operational under a new formula requiring initial registration and official issuance of password. After some initial failure when the system became officially operational in January 2022 and thus necessitated in-person visits to the Immigration Bureau (IB), more recent experience in April 2022 were more encouraging when attention was given to repeating the exact entries as in previous submissions. Similarly, the pre-booking of appointment facility, which encountered some problems at early stage of implementation seemed to function satisfactorily now.

44. Based on recent experiences with deceased colleagues with no next-of-kin in Thailand, it is advised to establish a “power-of-attorney” arrangement to facilitate the reclaim of the body. The issue was raised in the Info Letter No. 8 dated 11 November 2021.

45. The continuing Covid-19 and the concomitant work-from-home arrangements at most UN offices have rendered consultations with ESCAP Administration, in particular, next to impossible and had slowed down progress in matters like the NON-OA visa renewal and medical insurance issues. However, in April 2022 representatives of the AFICS-T Executive Board paid a courtesy call on Ms. Soomi Ro, Director of ESCAP Division of Administration. At that meeting the need of resumption of regular consultations was addressed and AFICS-T was advised to work with the ESCAP Administration staff on various specific areas of concern, such as immigration matters and ESCAP-initiated “Letter of Affirmation” concerning the health insurance status. The Committee on FLiT will follow-up with the ESCAP Division of Administration as suggested.

46. Although, the matter of pension taxation in Thailand has long been a “grey area”, in the recent discussion of attracting “wealthy” foreigners (investor, digital nomads and retirees) to Thailand, the Ministry of Finance mentioned in the debate that income tax exemption to these groups would be one of the incentives offered. However, this would mean no loss for state coffers since these groups “did not pay income tax anyway”. This, to our impression, constituted the first statement from a relevant official source that our pensions are not taxed.

Agenda item 5. Presentation by Dr. Surachai Vichankaiyakij, AFICS-T Medical Adviser, on Covid-19 current situation

47. The President welcomed Dr. Surachai Vichankaiyakij, AFICS-T Medical Adviser, and thanked him for having kindly accepted AFICS-T invitation to make a presentation on Covid-19 current situation.

48. In introducing his presentation, Dr. Surachai briefly recalled the history of the Covid-19 variants of concern and the subsequent pandemic. The original virus was first detected in Wuhan, China, then several variants surfaced around the world: Alpha (UK), Beta (South Africa), Gamma (Brazil) and Delta (India). Delta spreads about twice as easily from one person to another compared to previous variants. As of 2 August 2021, Delta variant accounted for 69.1 % of cases in Thailand while the rest was Alpha variant. However, by the end of 2021, a new variant emerged (Omicron) and was first detected in Botswana and South Africa in November 2021. Then by 15 December 2021 the Omicron variant was reported to have spread over to 80 countries worldwide including Thailand.

49. It was then reported that the Omicron variant infected and multiplied 70 times faster than the Delta variant in human bronchus, which might explain why Omicron may transmit faster. At the same time, Omicron infection in the lung was significantly lower than the original virus, which might be an indicator of lower disease severity. While Thailand was gradually recovering from lockdown and other restrictive measures, from June 2022 the spread of the newly emerged BA.5 Omicron subvariant had yet again put Thailand on high alert for another Covid-19 outbreak. The BA.5 subvariant has the ability to elude protection produced after vaccinations and infections. As such it can infect those who are already vaccinated or previously have recovered from a Covid-19 infection. The BA.5 Omicron subvariant generally causes mild sickness among healthy people, however, there is some evidence that repeated infection could result in developing long-term side effects or “Long Covid”. On the other hand, if this strain could cause severe symptoms among vulnerable groups (so-called 608 group), these people are advised to go to the hospital for appropriate treatment and provided with adequate medication.

50. To curb the spread of the BA.5 Omicron subvariant, officials from the Ministry of Public Health have issued a set of guidelines dated 24 June 2022 along the following general principles. First, people should get their vaccination up to date, including the initial two doses followed by a booster shot dose. Vulnerable group are advised to get an additional fourth booster shot dose. Since Covid-19 pandemic is far from being eradicated, it is therefore strongly recommended to continue to observe social distancing in crowded areas, mask wearing and frequent hand washing. It is also recommended that those high-risk patients

with mild symptoms be advised to contact their hospitals to get an appropriate antiviral medication such as Molnupiravir, Remdesivir or Paxlovid.

51. On behalf of the Meeting, the President expressed his appreciation and sincere thanks to Dr. Surachai for his very informative and concise presentation on the Covid-19 current situation in Thailand.

**Agenda item 6. Brief presentation by Mr. Brian Casatelli, UNJSPF
Bangkok Liaison Officer, on some issues of interest to AFICS-T members**

52. The President welcomed Mr. Brian Casatelli, Benefits Officer, UNJSPF Bangkok Liaison Office and thanked him for having accepted the invitation of AFICS-T to make a presentation on some issues of interest to AFICS-T members.

53. As an introduction to his presentation, Mr. Casatelli informed the meeting that on 8 March 2021 Ms. Rosemarie McClean announced the establishment of a small liaison office in Bangkok, hosted by ESCAP. This Bangkok Liaison Office, would expand the Fund global presence and would enable direct access to the UNJSPF services to a significant client base in the Asia-Oceania region. Some 9,000 UNJSPF retirees/beneficiaries are based in the region. The BLO is to be staffed by two persons. For the time being, Mr. Casatelli is alone manning the Office while an assistant support staff is in the process of recruitment.

54. The main duties and functions of the BLO are to provide pension briefings, training, consultations and support to staff and beneficiaries with their pension-related queries. However, Mr. Casatelli underlined that back-office functions and payroll processing would continue to be handled by the relevant business units in the Fund's offices in New York and Geneva. He also pleased to report that since the establishment of the UNJSPF Bangkok Liaison Office, both AFICS-T and BLO have developed complementary collaboration and provided support to each other's activities on all pension issues.

55. In this context, Mr. Casatelli was pleased to note the successful implementation and completion of the 2021 Certificates of Entitlement (CE) exercise. In particular, the commendable efforts made by AFICS-T in locating whereabouts of 27 beneficiaries living in Thailand who were slated for benefit suspension due to non-receipt by the UNJSPF of their 2021 CEs. Regarding the 2022 CEs exercise, the first mailing has started since beginning of July 2022. In this connection, he reminded that soft-copy of 2022 CEs could be downloaded and uploaded under the document tab in the Member Self-Service (MSS) account of retirees who are on US Dollar-Track. For those members who are on Two-Track system, their soft-copy of their 2022 CEs are not available on MSS account but they could upload their (scan) paper-based 2022 CEs on their MSS account, as an advance copy. The original duly signed paper-based CE should be postal mailed to the Fund.

56. As indicated in the Annual Report of the Executive Board, for 2022 an upward adjustment of 8.6 per cent has been made on pension benefits for retirees/beneficiaries on the US Dollar-Track. But for those on the local Baht Track, there was no increase for 2022. Mr. Casatelli reiterated the rule that pensions on local Baht Track could not be less than 80 per cent of the level of pension benefits of retirees/beneficiaries on US Dollar-Track.

57. Mr. Casatelli confirmed the statement included in the Report of the Committee on Pension and Group life Insurance regarding the strong financial situation with regard to asset value and income investment. He also thanked Mr. Chingchai for his updated information with respect to results from two recent studies monitoring the Fund financial situation. As a final remark, he informed the Meeting that the level of contribution is greater than the level of payment of benefits for retirees/beneficiaries.

58. On behalf of the Meeting, the President expressed his appreciation and sincere thanks to Mr. Casatelli for his very informative presentation on UNJSPF issues. He also added that AFICS-T was looking forward to fostering continuous cooperation with BLO.

Agenda item 7. Questions and Answers

59. The President opened the floor for participants to intervene on any issues of concern. One question was addressed to Mr. Casatelli as follows: whether there was any plan to facilitate the process of registering again with Digital CE App. when changing smartphone device. Mr. Casatelli responded that Digital CE App. is outsourced operated and as it stands now all information regarding the retiree's data are stored on each individual phone. The UNJSPF does not have access to these data. However, Mr. Casatelli will inform UNJSPF of this concern.

Agenda item 8. Executive Board 2019-2021 – Extension of term of office

60. In introducing this agenda item, the President recalled the situation in which the Executive Board had to operate during the period 2019-todate due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the difficulty to organize timely election of Executive Board in 2021. In this connection, the President recalled that according to Article V, para 3. of the Bylaws stating that "Elections will be conducted at the Assembly meetings in odd numbered years". It is understood that the process of conducting elections of Executive Boards should be held with the physical and personal participation of AFICS-T membership at Annual General Assemblies. Not being in a position to convene a physical AGA in 2021, the Executive Board took the decision to extend its term of office in 2021until further notice. Now, as AFICS-T was able to convene the 2022 AGA, the Executive Board wished to seek the approval of an additional extension of its term of office until the convening of 2023 AGA, time for conducting election of a new Executive Board.

61. In addition, the Executive Board kindly request the 2022 AGA to entrust also the Executive Board to revise the Bylaws in order to provide the Executive Board with a legal framework for extending its term of office and carry out its function in caretaker capacity in case of any unexpected and external factors beyond its control.If agreeable to the 2022 AGA, the Executive Board would draft proposed amendments to the Bylaws accordingly, through the establishment of anad hoc working group, and then would submit them to the 2023 Annual General Assembly for due consideration.The 2023 AGA would also be requested to conduct the election of a new Executive Board for the period 2023-2025, according to the

term of Article V, para 3. stipulating “the election will be conducted at the Assembly Meetings in odd numbered years”.

62. The Meeting considered the Executive Board request and agreed on the proposals as follows: the term of office of the current Executive Board is hereby extended until July 2023; the election of a new Executive Board for 2023-2025 will be conducted at the next Annual General Assembly to be held in July 2023; and the current Executive Board was entrusted with the drafting of relevant amendments to Bylaws providing a legal framework to the Executive Board to take any necessary decision in case of disruption of normal conduct of affairs. To assist in this task an ad hoc working group should be established and its drafted amendments would be submitted to the 2023 AGA for due consideration.

Agenda item 9. Recommendation of activities to be undertaken by AFICS-T

63. There were no recommendations.

Agenda item 10. Other matters

64. In concluding, the President expressed once again his deep appreciation and gratitude to all participants who attended in person this annual session of AFICS-T. He was also particularly pleased to see that 63 participants followed the proceedings of the 2022 AGA online. In this connection, the President would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the staff from the Conference Management Unit for their support and technical assistance in ensuring that online connections were optimal.

65. As there was no further business for discussion, the 2022 Annual General Assembly was adjourned at 11.30 hours.

Suraphon Songweera
President, AFICS-T 2019-todate