

**BRITISH ASSOCIATION
OF FORMER
UNITED NATIONS
CIVIL SERVANTS
(BAFUNCS)**



Information Note No 1.
A GUIDE TO BAFUNCS

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1. Aims of the Association

BAFUNCS was founded on 21 July 1977 as an association for all those who had worked for the United Nations System (the Secretariat, the Voluntary Funds and the Specialized Agencies) who live in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, who intend to live there, or who wish to maintain links with the United Kingdom.

The Constitution of the Association defines its purposes as being:

- To encourage and help members to keep in touch with former colleagues through social, cultural and leisure activities

- To ensure that members are kept aware of changes in pensions and health insurance matters
- To help members and their families moving to the United Kingdom on their retirement
- To extend welfare support and advice to its members and other former employees of the United Nations and its Organizations and Bodies and their spouses in need
- To represent members' interests in their relations with the United Nations and its Organizations and Bodies and the United Kingdom Government Authorities
- To support the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) and maintain liaison with such other bodies as are concerned with protecting and improving retirement conditions;
- To co-operate with organizations engaged in mobilizing public support for the United Nations and its Organizations and Bodies and national organizations concerned with support for the elderly.

2. Membership of BAFUNCS

Full membership of the Association is open to any past or present staff members of the organizations or agencies of the United Nations System, as well as their spouses. Widows and widowers of staff members can belong in their own right. Members of the Association do not need to have British citizenship or even to reside in the United Kingdom; all nationalities are eligible and welcome.

Associate membership is open to all persons who support the objectives of the Association. They may participate fully in its activities, but they do not have the right to vote or hold office.

Serving staff members of United Nations organizations are encouraged to join the Association. Membership can be of particular value to them and to the Association in their last few years of service, especially if they intend to retire to the United Kingdom.

Those interested in joining should complete a **Membership Application Form**, which can be downloaded from the web site, or requested from the Membership Secretary (membership@bafuncs.org). Since BAFUNCS welcomes active participation by its members, attention is drawn to the second page of the Membership Application Form, which invites prospective members to indicate experience or skills that they feel might be useful to the Association. Signature of the Application Form is understood to confirm support for the aims of the Association and agreement to abide by its Constitution.

New members will be assigned to one of the ten BAFUNCS regions (see Section 6 of this note) and will receive the latest Membership List, the Constitution, the most recent issue of the

BAFUNCS Newsletter, the Guide to the BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund, and copies of the Information Notes produced by the Association (see Section 7 of this note). New members are also provided with a list of regional officers, which includes the name of their Regional Representative. All this information can also be obtained from the members' area of the BAFUNCS web site.

Although a cheque is acceptable in payment of the annual subscription, payment by Banker's Standing Order is preferred as this greatly reduces the work of the Subscriptions Secretary and assists the Association in the preparation of its annual budget. A Banker's Standing Order form is provided at the foot of the Application Form. The Subscriptions Secretary will send the completed form to the bank who will follow its instructions, and thereafter there is no need for reminders for subscriptions every year. Payment by Standing Order can be cancelled (or changed) at any time by a written request to the bank.

The Association is financed entirely by subscriptions. The annual standard subscription is £14 for an individual member and £21 for a couple. These are the minimum subscription rates. New members are encouraged to be as generous as possible, bearing in mind that if they can pay more it helps to keep the basic subscription as low as possible. This in turn helps the Association's less well-placed members.

There are provisions for paying for life membership by a lump sum, which is open to members over the age of 60. Life membership currently costs £210 for an individual member, or £315 for a couple.

3. How is BAFUNCS organized?

The Association consists of several principal elements:

- **A General Assembly** of its members, which is held once a year as part of the Annual Reunion (AR) and is effectively the Association's Annual General Meeting. It is presided over by the President of the Association
- **An Executive Committee**, members of which are elected at the General Assembly and serve for the following year. It comprises four national office holders and six general members and can co-opt additional members as necessary. It meets at least four times each year
- **Ten regions**, which are geographically defined and self-administering, with their own elected committees and regional activities. They receive a modest annual subvention from the Executive Committee
- **The BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund**, a charity registered with the Charity Commission, which runs independently of the main Association but whose Trustees are appointed by the Executive Committee

It also supports two other activities:

- **The United Nations Career Records Project (UNCRP)**, a longstanding partnership with the Bodleian Library of Oxford University which encourages former United Nations

System staff to reflect on their careers and to contribute to an archive of documents and recollections for the use of students and researchers.

- **Membership of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS)**, which links BAFUNCS to its sister associations around the world and makes common cause in terms of United Nations pensions, medical insurance, etc.

The Association does not maintain a central office, although it is able to use the offices of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London for committee meetings and its mailing address: 4 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7SR. Otherwise, its officers work on a voluntary basis from their own homes. Contact with the Association is best made to individual members of the Committee (please see Section 10 of this Information Note for details). They will undertake to ensure that the most appropriate person on the Committee will follow up such contacts.

Each of these elements is summarised below. More details may be found on the Association's web site: <http://www.bafuncs.org>

4. The General Assembly/Annual Reunion

The annual General Assembly, effectively the association's Annual General Meeting, takes place during the Annual Reunion, which is normally held in mid-May. Recent locations have included Edinburgh, Hollingbourne, Bournemouth and King's Lynn.

The Reunion takes place over a weekend, from Friday afternoon to Sunday lunch-time, and is held in a different region each year. In addition to conducting the routine business of the Association, eminent speakers –who normally have had a close association with the United Nations System – are invited to address the meeting and to answer questions afterwards. Recent speakers have included Sir John Holmes, Sir Mark Lyall Grant, The Rt. Hon. Clare Short, and Baroness Valerie Amos.

The business sessions are held in the mornings, leaving time for informal meetings, excursions and social activities. Attendance is normally 80–100 members and their guests.

5. The Executive Committee (ExCo)

The elected officers of the Association are: the President, several Vice-Presidents, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee, and the Secretary and Treasurer. In addition, six ordinary members are elected to the Committee, and other members may be co-opted for specific functions, with full voting powers. A full list of current office holders is provided in the **BAFUNCS Newsletter**.

The Executive Committee is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Association. It usually holds four regular meetings each year. Vice-Presidents and Regional Representatives may also attend these sessions. In general, each member of the Committee is responsible for one of the aims or central activities of the Association, under the general policy guidance of ExCo and the Chair.

The Executive Committee convenes, prepares for, and reports on the General Assembly. It issues information and reports on matters of interest to members and coordinates welfare support activities at the national level. It advises members on pension and staff health insurance issues, and maintains direct contact with the European Office of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. It also maintains relations with other organizations, especially United Nations organizations, the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS), the United Kingdom United Nations Association (UNA-UK), and Age UK. In addition close relations are maintained with the International Maritime Organisation, which hosts the meetings of the Executive Committee.

The BAFUNCS Newsletter is published twice a year, in March and September. This publication, which is in a magazine format, is the main channel of communication between the Association and its members. In addition to articles and other items of interest to members, the March issue contains the Annual Report of the Executive Committee and other papers for the next General Assembly. The September issue reports on the Annual Reunion and General Assembly. Members with access to the internet can find additional information, including updated details of regional activities and the Annual Reunion, on the Association's website (www.bafuncs.org). Copies of the newsletter may be downloaded from the members' area of the web site.

A register of members is maintained by the Membership Secretary, and a Membership List is published annually in September, with an update included in the March issue of *The BAFUNCS Newsletter*. The BAFUNCS Membership List is for the exclusive use of the officers and members of the Association and may also be downloaded from the members' area of the web site.

The Executive Committee currently issues a series of ten Information Notes on issues of interest to members, of which this Note is No.1. They are as follows:

1. A Guide to BAFUNCS
2. What to do when a pensioner dies
3. Accommodation for older people
4. Planning for retirement in the United Kingdom
5. Taxation in the United Kingdom
6. Personal information checklists
7. Guide to welfare support that BAFUNCS can provide
8. Wills and succession
9. The United Nations Career Records Project
10. A Guide to the BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund

No. 1 is provided to anyone contemplating joining the Association, while No. 4 is available to anyone contemplating retirement in the United Kingdom; the others are available only to members of the Association. They are regularly updated and can be requested directly from the Membership Secretary, or downloaded from the web site.

6. The regions

The Association is divided into ten regions, nine in the United Kingdom and one for overseas members. These regions are: Cambridge; Kent and Sussex; London; Northern (covering Scotland, Northern England, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man); Oxford; South Central (including The Channel Islands); South West, West Midlands and Wales; Surrey; and Overseas (for members not living in the UK).

On joining the Association, members are assigned to a region according to their address. Should they wish to be assigned to a different one, they may ask the Membership Secretary to transfer them. All members can participate in the activities of other regions if they wish. In fact, the Association encourages members to join in the activities of other regions as well as their own.

The regions may organize themselves as they wish, provided only that they elect a Regional Representative to report on their activities and to liaise with the Executive Committee, one of whose members acts as Regional Coordinator for this purpose. Regions receive an allocation from central funds to cover administrative expenses.

The regions are responsible for local social and membership support activities, and by rotation undertake the organization of the annual reunion, which is overseen by the Executive Committee. Personal contact with their members is, however, their main function, which includes recruiting and welcoming newcomers, helping them to settle in, organizing a suitable programme of meetings and activities, and keeping members informed of them through regional circulars, and through the BAFUNCS website

The nature and number of regional meetings depends on members' interests and other factors, such as the area of the region and the distribution of members within it. Where regions are very large or there is a concentration of members, local meetings of like-minded people may be organized. Most meetings are intended for social purposes, but this includes their own annual general meeting for the election of officers. Regional meetings may be held in restaurants, pubs or members' homes; they often include visits to places of interest, country houses, exhibitions or the theatre.

The regions are also in the frontline of the Association's members' support activities, which are overseen by a Welfare Coordinator on the Executive Committee (welfare@bafuncs.org). Activities include visits to sick, elderly or housebound members, and they are the channels through which deserving cases are brought to the attention of the BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund. The regions also provide a means of coordination with other local associations concerned with welfare, retirees and international cooperation. Many BAFUNCS members also belong to the UNA and some speak at its local meetings.

7. The United Nations Career Records Project (UNCRP)

The UNCRP is a longstanding collaboration between BAFUNCS and the Bodleian Library of Oxford University. It began in 1989 and over the years has garnered numerous career histories

and recollections as well as professional papers from a wide range of former United Nations System staff and UK officials involved with the UN. Not all of the contributors are British, although the majority are. The objective is to provide for future researchers as much insight into the careers, experiences and writings of former United Nations staff, as well as into the internal workings of the United Nations System, and thus to complement the United Nations' archives of official documents.

In addition, the UNCRP has organised a number of Witness Seminars so as to collect oral contributions from "witnesses" of their experiences in or with the United Nations. The most recent were the three witness seminars on development cooperation, humanitarian action and peace and security, organised in 2015-16 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the United Nations. A selection of the contributions from these seminars were included in an **Evidence Report** of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Sussex University, a copy of which can be downloaded from the web site (<http://www.bafuncs.org/UNat70OnlineReport.pdf>). It has also compiled a **Researcher's Guide to the UNCRP**, which contains potted biographies of all the contributors up to 2016 and is also available on the web site (<http://www.bafuncs.org/UNCRP%20Guide%202017.pdf>).

The UNCRP's work is ongoing and contributions are sought from all former United Nations System staff and their partners, irrespective of grade level attained. All contributions are lodged with the Bodleian Library and especially sensitive elements can be time-embargoed to avoid embarrassment.

More information on the UNCRP is available on the web site (<http://www.bafuncs.org/uncrp.html>) and in Information Note 7 (see Section 5 above). The Project's Coordinator may be contacted at career.records@bafuncs.org

8. The BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund (BBF)

The Benevolent Fund is administratively entirely separate from BAFUNCS, but it is managed by a Board of Trustees drawn from, and appointed by the Association. The BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund (BBF) is registered with the United Kingdom Charity Commissioners (Registered Number 297524).

The Fund seeks to relieve members and their dependants in cases of need, hardship and distress. Other former United Nations or United Nations Specialized Agency staff and dependants can be considered provided they are ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom.

The latest BBF Guidelines, together with a flyer providing information on the type of requests that can be considered, as well as an Application Form are available on the BAFUNCS web site (www.bafuncs.org). A booklet "Where to find information and advice in dealing with physical frailty, dementia and associated long-term health care" has been prepared by the Benevolent Fund is also available on the web site.

Further information about the BBF can be obtained from the Clerk/Treasurer to the Trustees (benevolent.fund@bafuncs.org), the BAFUNCS Regional Representatives or Regional Welfare Officers.

9. Membership of FAFICS

BAFUNCS became a member of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) in June 1981; as of 2016 FAFICS had a membership of 59 similar associations throughout the world.

FAFICS is headquartered in Geneva (<http://www.fafics.org>) and has consultative status with the United Nations, as a non-governmental organization. The FAFICS Council meets at least once a year, usually in the place and at the time when the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board, on which it has two non-voting seats, is meeting. Whenever possible, BAFUNCS is represented at Council meetings, which affords an opportunity to meet with senior United Nations System management as well as to coordinate approaches to any issues relating to United Nations pensions and after-service health insurance (ASHI).

The largest member associations of FAFICS are in Geneva and New York and many BAFUNCS members who served at these duty stations are members of these as well. Being situated near the headquarters of the United Nations, these associations are well placed to follow closely all matters of relevance to former staff members, particularly the Pension Fund.

BAFUNCS relies to a great extent on FAFICS where policy action concerning pensions is needed and through its membership of FAFICS it is part of the network that the United Nations organizations use to brief their retirees. The Chair of the Executive Committee is the focal point for liaison with FAFICS.

10. Contact us

- **Membership** membership@bafuncs.org
- **Subscriptions** subscriptions@bafuncs.org
- **Pensions, Tax and Medical** pensions@bafuncs.org
- **Welfare and Member Support** welfare@bafuncs.org
- **Secretariat** secretary@bafuncs.org
- **Finance** treasurer@bafuncs.org
- **The BAFUNCS Newsletter** editor@bafuncs.org
- **Website** website@bafuncs.org
- **United Nations Career Records Project** career.records@bafuncs.org
- **BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund** benevolent.fund@bafuncs.org