

# ICSC GLOBAL STAFF SURVEY ON CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

## 2023

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SUMMARY REPORT  
OF KEY RESULTS

## Overview

The ICSC secretariat conducted the 2023 Global Staff Survey on the on the United Nations Common System compensation package in the fall of 2023, pursuant to General Assembly in its Resolution A/RES/77/256 B in which the Assembly requested the Commission to conduct a system-wide survey to assess factors affecting workplace retention and to submit the results and analysis of the survey to the Assembly at its seventy-ninth session. The key results were presented to the Commission at its ninety-seventh session in March 2024.

The survey was built upon the 2019 survey, developed in consultation with the organizations and staff representatives and updated, as appropriate, to reflect the elements of the current compensation package, which has allowed for a comparative analysis to be undertaken of the perspectives of the staff on the basis of the results of the 2023 and the previous survey.

The survey, available in English, French and Spanish, was open for a period of five weeks, from 4 October to 5 November 2023. Great attention was paid to confidentiality and anonymity in conducting the survey, which is hosted on the external company's platform. The survey was open to all staff members of the 29 United Nations common system organizations. The total survey population was estimated at 130,275, hence the response rate should be taken as a general guide only. A total of 34,261 staff members responded to the survey out of a possible estimated total of 130,275, resulting in a response rate of 27%, which represented an increase from the 21% response rate in the last system-wide global staff survey in 2019.

The ICSC secretariat took a proactive approach by establishing a robust communication and outreach strategy, collaborating closely with the external company and the designated focal points from organizations. The strategy was designed with a view to guiding organizations and staff federations and communicating the progress of the survey to them. A variety of communication and engagement tools were used to encourage participation. Building upon lessons learned from the previous survey, the secretariat significantly heightened the level of engagement and collaboration with organizations and staff federations. That strategic initiative played a pivotal role in the success of the survey, especially in surpassing the target of 30,000 respondents set by the Commission for the 2023 survey.

The survey was a partnership between the ICSC, the focal points in participating organizations, the three staff federations (CCISUA, FICSA and UNISERV), and the external company.

## Participating organizations

- United Nations (UN)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
- International Trade Centre (ITC)
- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

- World Health Organization (WHO)
- International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
- Universal Postal Union (UPU)
- International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
- World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
- International Maritime Organization (IMO)
- World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
- World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
- UN Women (UNWomen)
- International Seabed Authority (ISA)
- United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS)
- The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)
- The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

## Survey design

The survey included questions related to the following:

- (a) Engagement;
- (b) Overall views about current compensation;
- (c) Joining and recruitment;
- (d) Retention;
- (e) Mobility;
- (f) Allowances and benefits;
- (g) Career progression and performance.

The survey also included two open-ended questions in which respondents could provide their comments, opinions and suggestions about the current compensation system.

Survey results are presented as whole numbers for ease of reading, therefore, in some instances, they may not total 100 per cent as a result of rounding. Many questions were statements for which respondents were invited to select from the following five options: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree. A traffic light scoring system was applied, where appropriate, and, for some questions, the results are presented graphically. Whenever possible, a comparison between the results from the 2023 and 2019 surveys are presented, as well as the difference from the benchmark median.

As part of the 2023 survey, the ICSC secretariat incorporated the element of multilingualism, with a view to gaining some insight into multilingualism among the workforce. Results show that 44 per cent of all respondents can confidently use two languages, 43 per cent can use three or more confidently and 13 per cent can use only one language confidently. The respondents collectively know more than 375 languages. The 10 most frequently used languages, as indicated by the respondents, include English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Italian, German, Russian, Kiswahili, Portuguese and Hindi. English is predominant, with 94 per cent of respondents selecting it, followed by French (37 per cent), Spanish (22 per cent) and Arabic (12 per cent).

## Key findings from the survey

### A. Engagement

The survey included questions related to engagement and overall views about the current compensation system (see figures 1 and 2). The survey generated a rich amount of data, offering insight into the perceptions of staff members about the United Nations compensation system. Three questions were chosen to calculate the engagement index which is shown in the first row in **figure 1**.

Employee engagement is a measure of the employees' commitment to the organization, together with their willingness to put in extra effort. Research shows that employee engagement correlates strongly with performance. Research also suggests that engagement with the work conducted in not-for-profit organizations is often very high, but engagement with the organization itself is more variable. The statement "I would wholeheartedly recommend my organization as a good place to work" (third statement in figure 1) could therefore be seen as the most insightful measure of engagement in the not-for-profit sector.

**Figure 1**



The engagement index was calculated by averaging the per centage responses to the three engagement questions, as follows:

- (a) Engaged employees: strongly agreeing plus agreeing with the statements;
- (b) Neutral employees: neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statements;
- (c) Disengaged employees: strongly disagreeing plus disagreeing with the statements.

The overall level of engagement was high, with 86% of respondents feeling engaged, which is similar to the results from the 2019 survey (+1)<sup>1</sup> but below the benchmark median (-6). Ten per cent of respondents were neutral, and 4% were disengaged. Ninety-three per cent would willingly put in extra effort to help their organization to succeed, which is similar to the results from 2019 (-1) and the benchmark median (-3). Ninety per cent of respondents indicated that they were proud to tell people that they worked for their organization, which is similar to the results from 2019 (+2) and the benchmark median (-3). Around three quarters (76%) of respondents would wholeheartedly recommend their organization as a good place to

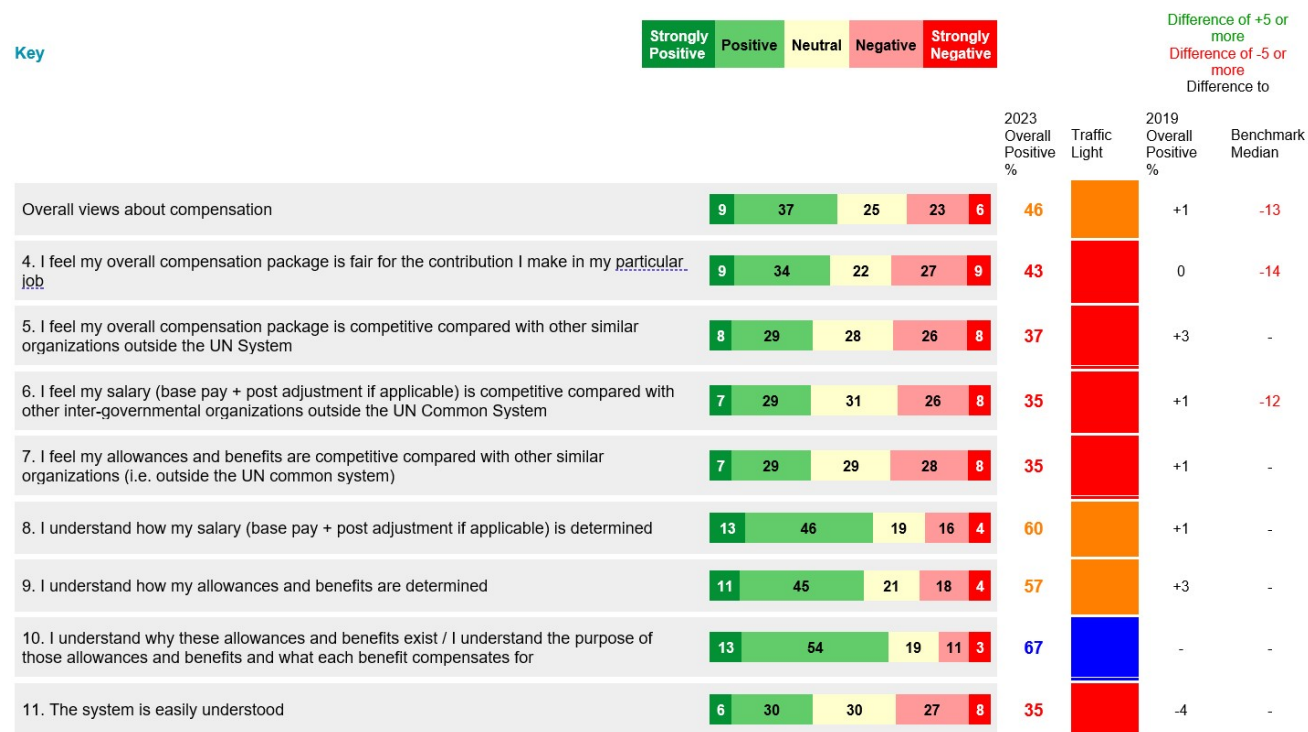
<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the numbers in brackets refer to the increase or decrease in per centage points compared with the result from the previous survey.

work. This has increased by four per centage points since 2019, but it is substantially behind the benchmark median (-11).

## B. Overall views about the current compensation package health

The respondents were asked about their perceptions concerning their overall compensation package, meaning salary (base pay plus post adjustment, where applicable), allowances and benefits. A new question was included in the 2023 survey, “I understand why these allowances and benefits exist/I understand the purpose of those allowances and benefits and what each benefit compensates for”, so no comparison with previous surveys is available for this question. The results are set out in **figure 2**.

**Figure 2**



Sixty-seven per cent of respondents felt that they understood why these allowances and benefits existed or understood the purpose of those allowances and benefits and what each benefit compensated for, in response to the new question in the 2023 survey. Sixty per cent of respondents felt that they understood how their salary (base pay plus post adjustment, where applicable) was determined, which is similar to the results from previous surveys. Twenty per cent of respondents felt that they did not understand. Fifty-seven per cent of respondents felt that they understood how their allowances and benefits were determined, which is also similar to results from previous surveys. Twenty-two per cent of respondents felt that they did not understand. Fewer than half (43%) of respondents felt that their overall compensation package was fair for the contribution that they made in their particular job. This is the same as in 2019 and is substantially below the benchmark median (-14).

Thirty-seven per cent of respondents felt that their overall compensation package was competitive compared with other similar organizations outside the United Nations common system. This is similar to the results from the 2019 survey. Thirty-five per cent of respondents felt that their salary (base pay plus post adjustment, where applicable) was competitive compared with other intergovernmental organizations outside the common system. This is substantially behind the benchmark median (-12).

Thirty-five per cent of respondents felt that their allowances and benefits were competitive compared with other similar organizations outside the common system. Thirty-five per cent of respondents felt that the system was easily understood, while 35% felt that it was not easily understood.

### C. Relationship between overall compensation and engagement

One of the key aims of the global staff survey is to gain a better understanding of the role that compensation plays in staff decisions and behaviours. The external company carrying out the survey found it helpful to consider the motivator-hygiene theory of job satisfaction as proposed by Frederick Herzberg. Herzberg proposed that there were two types of factors that affected job satisfaction:

- (a) Motivating factors, which, if present, increased job satisfaction;
- (b) Hygiene factors, which, if absent, decreased job satisfaction.

Levels of engagement are affected by a wide range of motivating factors. For the survey, a correlation analysis was undertaken to explore whether compensation was an important motivating factor influencing employee engagement. Correlation indicates the strength of a linear relationship between two variables. In social research, a correlation of 0.4 or more can be considered a reasonable association. The correlation analysis was undertaken between the item “I feel my overall compensation package is fair for the contribution I make in my particular job” and the average score for the three questions in the engagement index. The resulting correlation coefficient score for that item and the engagement index overall was 0.29 (0.32 in 2019). This suggests a weak association, that is, that compensation does not have a strong influence on engagement. The correlation coefficient indicates that the association between compensation and engagement has slightly decreased between 2019 and 2023. This finding resonates with other research carried out by the consulting firm in the not-for-profit sector, where the relationship between reward and engagement is usually weak.

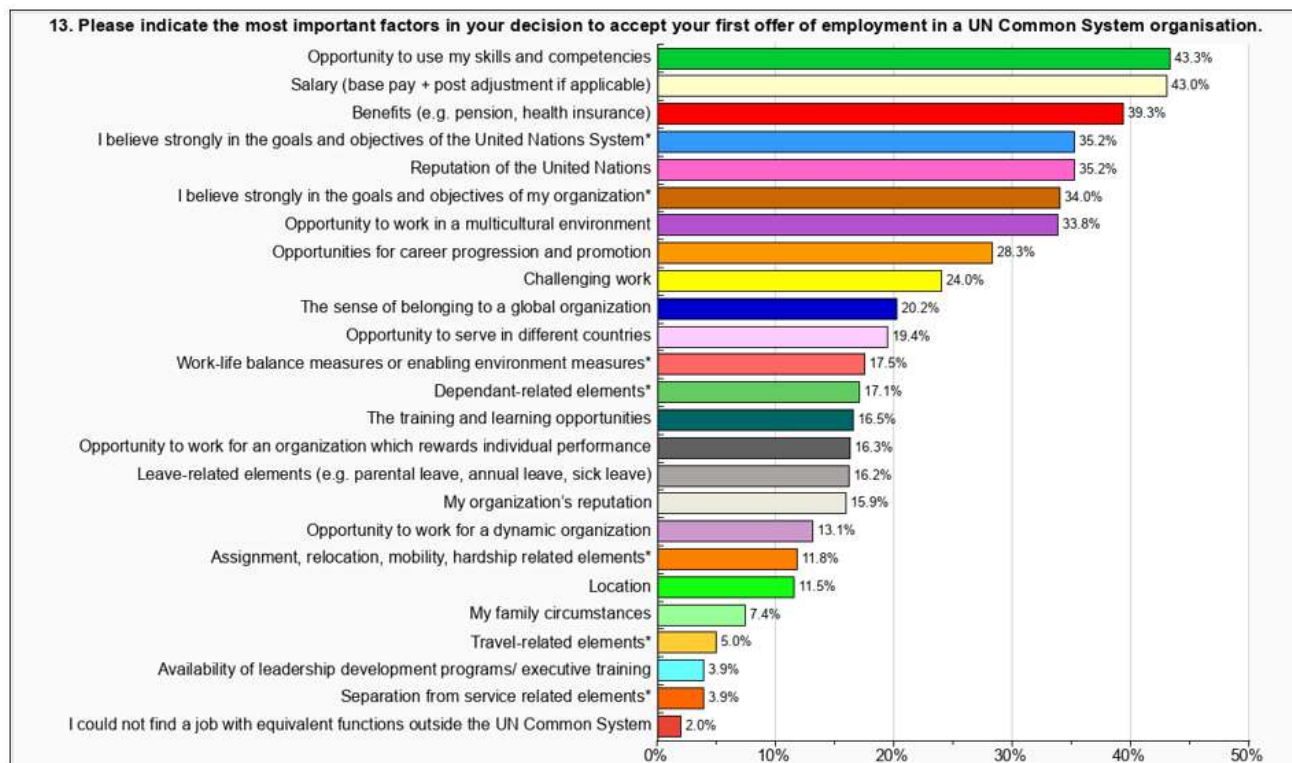
Another approach taken to explore this relationship was looking at the levels of engagement among those who responded positively, neutrally or negatively to the statement “I feel my overall compensation package is fair for the contribution I make in my particular job”. There was a 13 per centage point difference in the engagement index between those who felt positively about their overall compensation (92% engaged) and those who felt negatively (79% engaged). Even among those who responded negatively to this statement, over three quarters were engaged, which is similar to the results from previous surveys. This supports the conclusion that compensation is not a strong motivating factor for engagement.

### D. Recruitment

Respondents were asked to indicate the most important factors in their decision to accept the first offer of employment in a United Nations common system organization (see **figure 3**). They were invited to choose up to six factors in the 2023 survey, whereas, in 2019, they were invited to choose up to four factors.



**Figure 3**



Note: The asterisks refer to the following, respectively: I believe strongly in the goals and objectives of the United Nations system and wish to contribute to them; I believe strongly in the goals and objectives of my organization and wish to contribute to them; work-life balance or enabling environment measures (i.e. flexible hours, flexible working arrangements, teleworking, parental leave, special leave, spousal employment, elder care, psychological support services, etc., if applicable); dependant-related elements (e.g. dependent spouse allowance, single parent allowance, dependent children's allowance, secondary dependant's allowance, education grant); assignment-, relocation-, mobility- and hardship-related elements (e.g. mobility incentive, hardship allowance, non-family service allowance, pilot payment in D and E duty stations, settling-in grant, relocation grant, removal and shipment costs, danger pay, security evacuation allowance, rest and recuperation); travel-related elements (e.g. home leave travel, accelerated home leave travel, family visit travel, education grant travel); and separation from service-related elements (e.g. termination indemnity, repatriation grant, death grant).

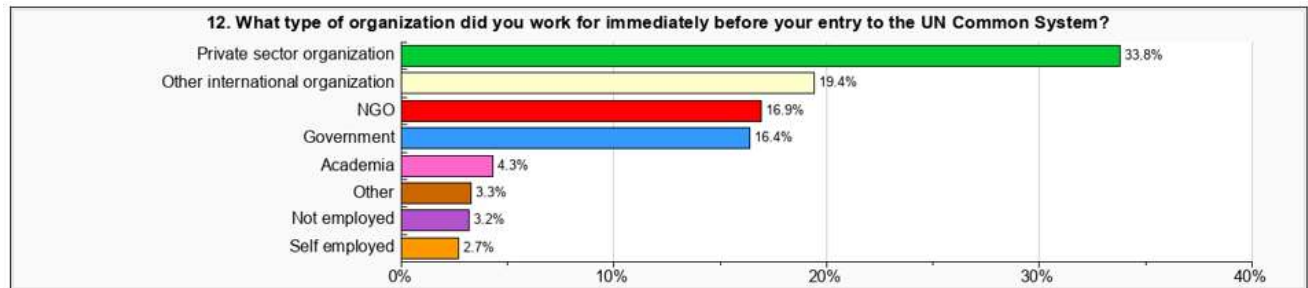
The six most common factors influencing respondents' decisions to join the United Nations common system were: (a) opportunity to use their skills and competencies (43%), an increase of 7% compared with the 2019 survey results (36%); (b) salary (43%), an increase of 5% compared with 2019 (38%); (c) benefits (39%), an increase of 13% compared with 2019 (28%); (d) strong belief in the goals and objectives of the United Nations system (35%), the same result as in 2019; (e) reputation of the United Nations (35%), an increase of 8% compared with 2019 (27%); and (f) strong belief in the goals and objectives of their organization (34%), a similar result as in 2019 (33%).

In 2019, the order of the most common factors was slightly different: (a) salary (38%); (b) opportunity to use their skills and competencies (36%); (c) strong belief in the goals and objectives of the United Nations system (33%); (d) opportunity to work in a multicultural environment (29%); (e) strong belief in the goals and objectives of their organization (33%); and (f) reputation of the United Nations (27%). The fourth most common factor in 2019, the opportunity to work in a multicultural environment, was the seventh most common in 2023. The fifth most common factor in 2019 was a strong belief in the goals and objectives in their organization. In 2019, allowances was the twelfth most common factor. In 2023, the category of allowances was divided up into: (a)

dependant-related elements, which was the thirteenth most common factor; (b) leave-related elements, which ranked sixteenth; (c) assignment-, relocation-, mobility- and hardship-related elements, which ranked nineteenth; (d) travel-related elements, which ranked twenty-second; and (e) separation from service-related elements, which ranked twenty-fourth. The disaggregation of this category in the 2023 survey resulted in respondents having a total of 25 factors to choose from, whereas there were 20 in 2019.

To determine what sector staff were coming from, respondents were asked what type of organization they had worked for before joining the United Nations common system (see **figure 4**).

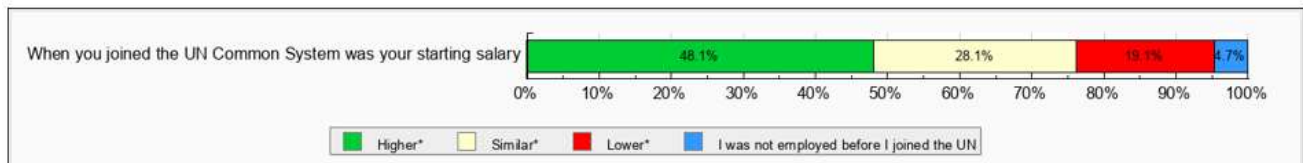
**Figure 4**



Around a third (34%) of respondents came from a private sector organization when they joined the United Nations common system. This is the most common response by some measure, as it was in 2019. The next most common responses were other international organizations (19%, similar to the results from previous surveys), non-governmental organizations (17%, similar to the results from the 2019 survey) and government organizations (16%, similar to the results from 2019).

A question was asked whether, when joining the United Nations common system, the respondents' salary was higher, similar or lower than at their previous employer (see **figure 5**).

**Figure 5**



\* Higher than, similar to or lower than your salary at your previous employer.

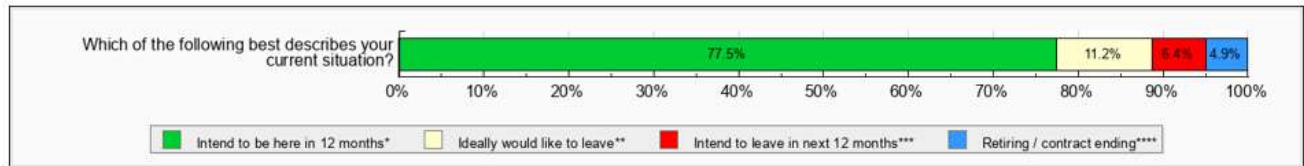
For almost half (48%) of all respondents, their starting salary when they joined the United Nations common system was higher than at their previous employer, which is similar to the results from the 2019 survey. For over a quarter (28%) of respondents, their salary was similar, which is the same as in 2019. For 19% of respondents, their starting salary was lower, which is the same as in 2019. Five per cent indicated that they were not employed before they joined, which is the same as in 2019.

#### D. Retention

Respondents were asked about their intentions for the future (i.e. coming 12 months), namely, whether they intended to be working for their organization, ideally would like to leave or intended to leave. An option to indicate retirement or contract expiration was also provided (see **figure 6**).



Figure 6



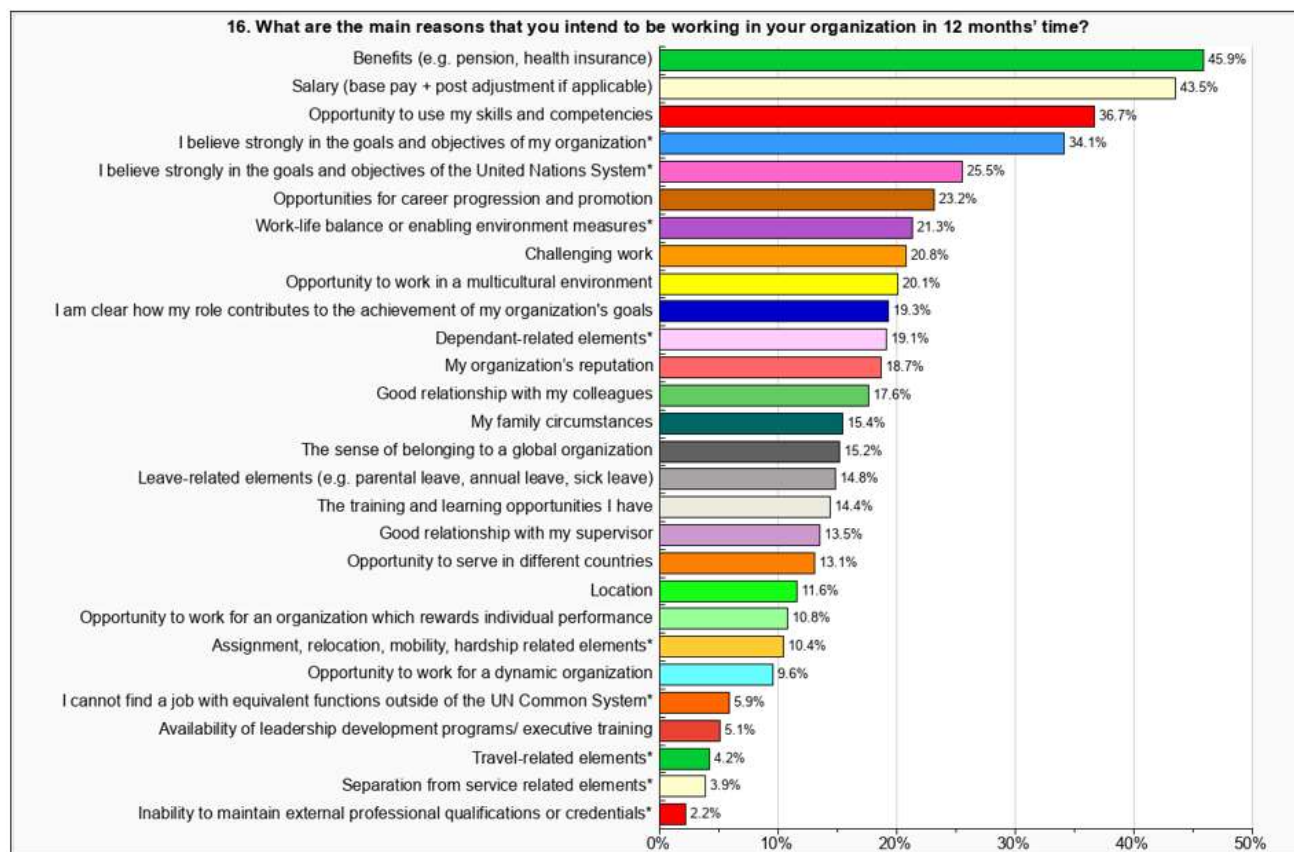
- \* I intend to be working in my organization in 12 months' time.
- \*\* Ideally, I would like to leave but I am unable to leave within the next 12 months.
- \*\*\* I intend to leave my organization within the next 12 months.
- \*\*\*\* I am retiring or my contract is ending (for whatever reason) within the next 12 months.

More than three quarters (78%) of respondents intended to be working for their organization in 12 months' time, which is similar to the results from the 2019 survey. Eleven per cent of respondents would have liked to leave in the coming 12 months but felt unable to do so, which is similar to the results from previous surveys. Six per cent intended to leave their organization in the coming 12 months, which is also similar to the results from previous surveys. Five per cent of respondents were retiring or their contract was ending, which was the same result as in 2019. There was little variation in the results for this question, except for by age. There was a general trend for the intention to leave to decrease as the age of the respondent increased: 10% of respondents 18 to 35 years of age intended to leave their organization in the coming 12 months, compared with 8% among those 36 to 45 years of age, 5 per cent among those 46 to 55 and 4% of those 56 and older. Older respondents were also more likely to be retiring or to have their contract ending.

The engagement index was calculated for the questions on retention in the same way as was done for the whole sample (see para. 19 and figure 1 above), to explore whether there was any variation in levels of engagement based on how respondents responded. The results indicated that 90% of respondents who intended to be working in their organization in 12 months' time were engaged and only 2% were disengaged. Among those who would have liked to leave but felt unable to do so, only 68% were engaged, which is significantly lower than for the whole sample (-18). Among those who intended to leave, only 69% were engaged, which was also significantly lower than for the whole sample (-17). Levels of disengagement were also higher among these latter two groups (12% for both). For those who were retiring or whose contracts were ending, 88% were engaged. Across all groups, there has been little change in the results compared with those from the 2019 survey.

To explore in greater depth the issue of retention, the question about the main reasons for staying was asked only of those indicating that they intended to be working in their organizations in 12 months' time (see **figure 7**). They were invited to choose up to six factors, whereas, in the 2019 survey, they were invited to choose up to four factors.

Figure 7

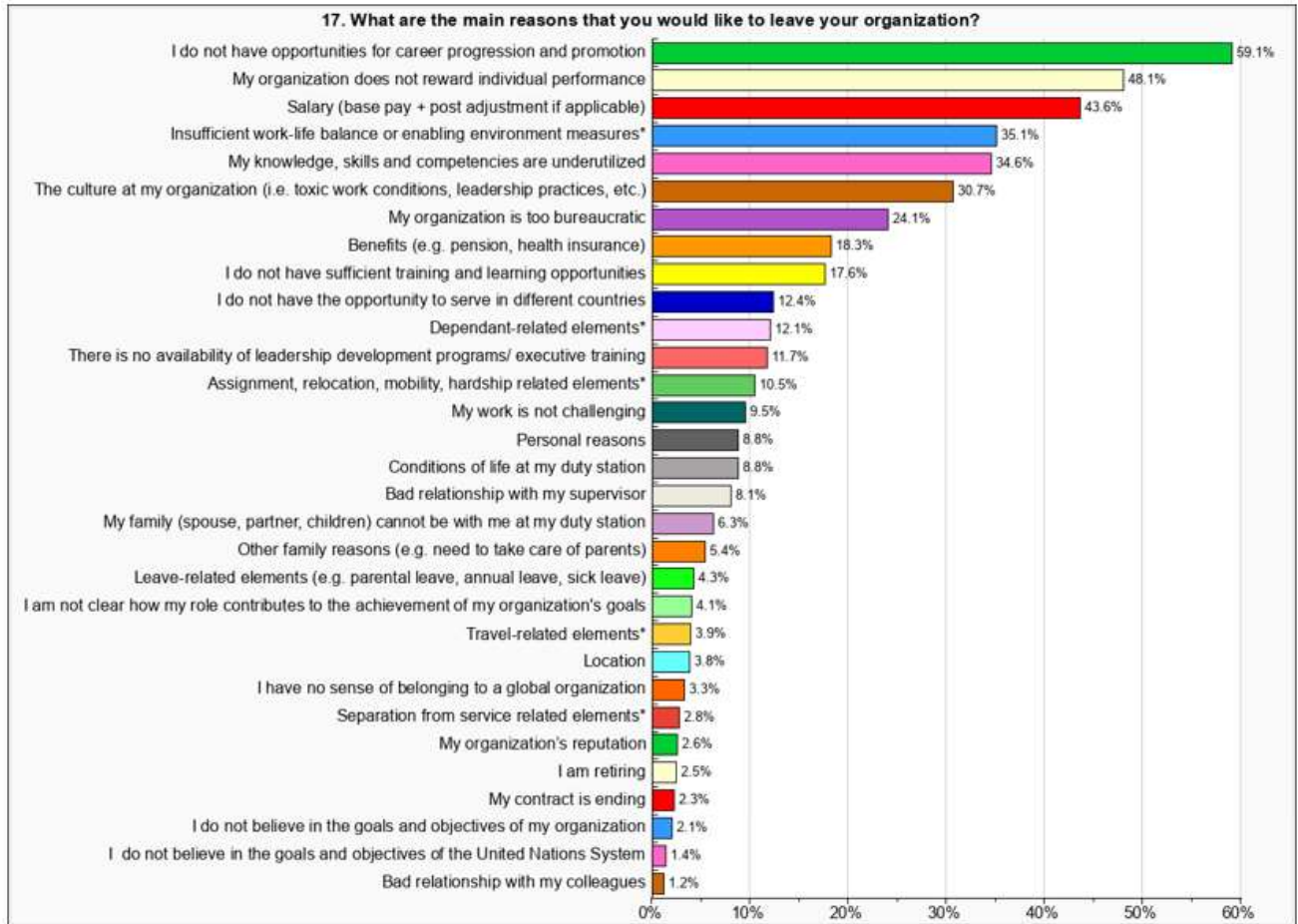


Note: The asterisks refer to the following, respectively: I believe strongly in the goals and objectives of my organization and wish to contribute to them; I believe strongly in the goals and objectives of the United Nations system and wish to contribute to them; work-life balance or enabling environment measures (i.e. flexible working arrangements, teleworking, remote work options, flexible hours, parental leave, special leave, spousal employment, elder care, psychological support services, etc., if applicable); dependant-related elements (e.g. dependent spouse allowance, single parent allowance, dependent children's allowance, secondary dependant's allowance, education grant); assignment-, relocation-, mobility- and hardship-related elements (e.g. mobility incentive, hardship allowance, non-family service allowance, pilot payment in D and E duty stations, settling-in grant, relocation grant, removal and shipment costs, danger pay, security evacuation allowance, rest and recuperation); I cannot find a job with equivalent functions outside of the United Nations common system, particularly in the private sector, having spent a significant amount of time in the public sector; travel-related elements (e.g. home leave travel, accelerated home leave travel, family visit travel, education grant travel); separation from service-related elements (e.g. termination indemnity, repatriation grant, death grant); and inability to maintain external professional qualifications or credentials since joining the organization.

Among those who intended to be working for their organization in 12 months' time, the five most commonly chosen reasons were: (a) benefits (46%), which had ranked second in the 2019 survey (33%); (b) salary (44%), which had ranked first in 2019 (38%); (c) opportunity to use their skills and competencies (37%), which had also ranked third in 2019 (32%); (d) strong belief in the goals and objectives of their organization and wish to contribute to them (26%), which had also ranked fourth in 2019; (e) strong belief in the goals and objectives of the United Nations common system and wish to contribute to them (25%), which had also ranked fifth in 2019; and (f) opportunities for career progression and promotion (23%), which had ranked eighth in 2019 (18%).

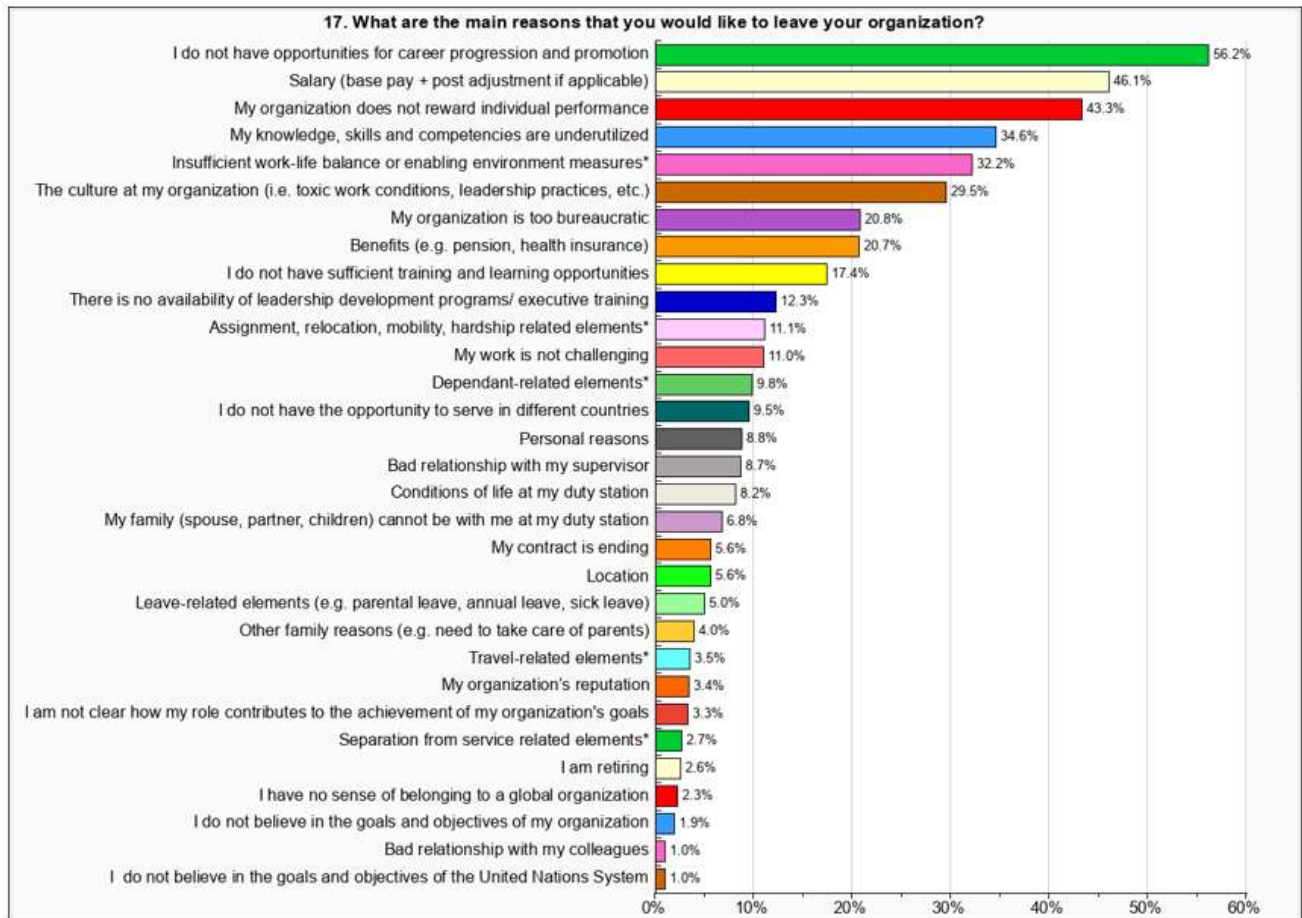
Respondents who would ideally have liked to leave in the coming 12 months but were unable to do so (11%) or who intended to leave their organization in the coming 12 months (6%) were asked to indicate the main reasons for wanting to leave (see **figure 8** for results among the former group and **figure 9** for the latter).

**Figure 8**



Note: The asterisks refer to the following, respectively: insufficient work-life balance or enabling environment measures (i.e. flexible hours, flexible working arrangements, teleworking, parental leave, special leave, spousal employment, elder care, psychological support services, etc., if applicable); dependant-related elements (e.g. dependent spouse allowance, single parent allowance, dependant children's allowance, secondary dependant's allowance, education grant); assignment-, relocation-, mobility- and hardship-related elements (e.g. mobility incentive, hardship allowance, non-family service allowance, pilot payment in D and E duty stations, settling-in grant, relocation grant, removal and shipment costs, danger pay, security evacuation allowance, rest and recuperation); travel-related elements (e.g. home leave travel, accelerated home leave travel, family visit travel, education grant travel); and separation from service-related elements (e.g. termination indemnity, repatriation grant, death grant).

Figure 9



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Among the 11% of respondents who would ideally have liked to leave their organization in the coming 12 months but felt unable to do so, the four most commonly chosen reasons were: (a) lack of opportunities for career progression and promotion (59%), which had also ranked first in the 2019 survey; (b) organization does not reward individual performance (48%), which had also ranked second in 2019; (c) salary (44%), which had also ranked third in 2019; and (d) insufficient work-life balance or enabling environment measures (35%), which had ranked fifth in 2019. Those four were followed by knowledge, skills and competencies being underutilized (35%), which ranked fifth, and the culture at the organization (i.e. toxic work conditions leadership practices, etc.) (31%), ranked sixth. In the 2019 survey, the fourth most common reason was that the organization was too bureaucratic, which was ranked as the seventh most common reason in the 2023 survey.

Among the 6% of respondents who intended to leave in the coming 12 months, the four most chosen reasons that they wished to leave their organization were: (a) lack of opportunities for career progression or promotion (56%), which had also ranked first in 2019; (b) salary (46%), which had ranked third in 2019; (c) organization does not reward individual performance (43%), which

had ranked second in 2019; and (d) their knowledge, skills and competencies being underutilized (35%), which had ranked sixth in 2019. Those four were followed by insufficient work-life balance or enabling environment measures (32%), which ranked fifth, and the culture at the organization (30%), ranked sixth. In the 2019 survey, the fourth most commonly chosen reason was insufficient work-life balance measures, which is now the fifth most common reason.

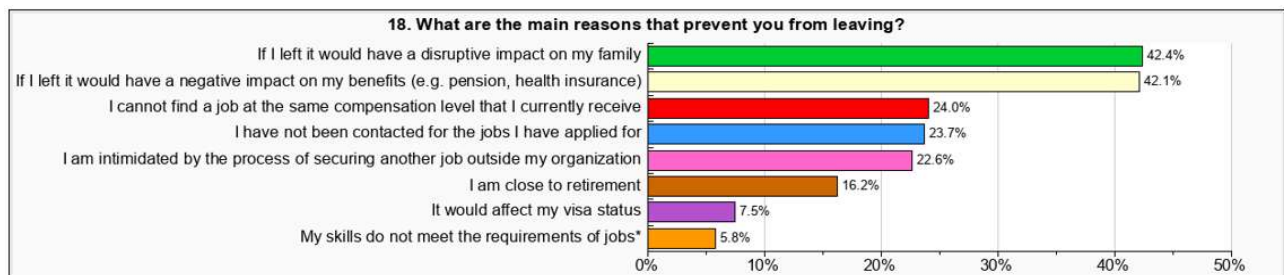
Salary was chosen as one of the reasons for leaving by 46% of those who intended to leave and 44% of those who would have liked to leave but were unable to do so. Over the course of the previous three surveys, salary has increased from the fourth to the third to the second most chosen reason. Benefits were chosen as one of the reasons for leaving by 21% among respondents who intended to leave and 18% among those who would have liked to leave but were unable to do so. In the 2019 survey, the figures were 14% and 16%, respectively. For those who either intended to leave or would have liked to leave but were unable to do so, dependant-related elements were the twelfth most chosen reason, assignment-, relocation-, mobility- and hardship-related elements were the thirteenth, leave-related elements the twentieth, travel-related elements the twenty-third and separation from service-related elements the twenty-seventh. In 2019, allowances was the sixth most common factor (20%). These findings indicate that the influence of salary and benefits on respondents’ desire to leave has generally increased.

The findings suggest that a lack of promotion opportunities, cited by almost two thirds of respondents, and a perceived absence of reward for individual performance, cited by nearly half, were the strongest motivating factors in people’s desire to leave. Salary was cited as a motivating factor by 44% of respondents. Those figures are very similar to those noted for the decision to join and the decision to stay (see figures 3 and 7 above), where respondents indicated that salary was one of the most common factors for joining and staying.

For both those who intended to leave and those who would have liked to leave but were unable to do so, there were differences of 5% or more between the demographic groups. Analysis by grade showed that more internationally recruited staff selected the culture at the organization (+12), insufficient work-life balance or enabling environment measures (+11), their family cannot be with them at their duty station (+8) and the organization is too bureaucratic (+7). More locally recruited staff selected salary (+19), lack of an opportunity to serve in different countries (+13), benefits (+11), insufficient training and learning opportunities (+9) and a lack of opportunities for career progression and promotion (+7).

The respondents who indicated that they would ideally have liked to leave in the coming 12 months but were unable to do so were asked to indicate the main reasons that prevented them from leaving (see figure 10).

**Figure 10**



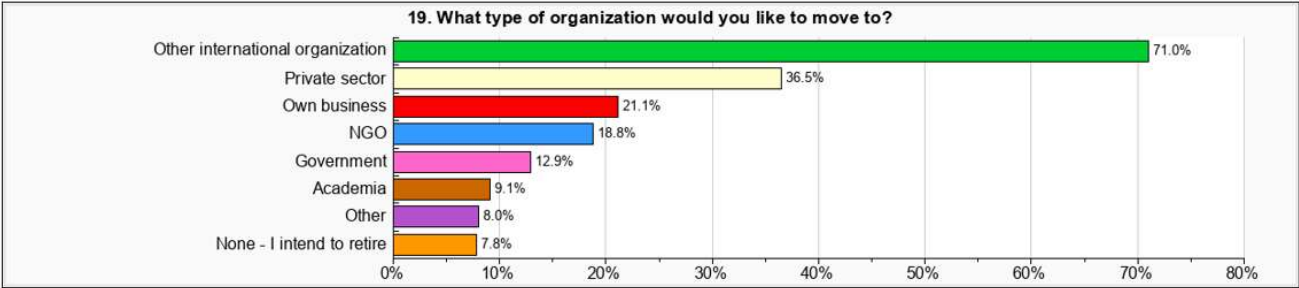
\* My skills do not meet the requirements of jobs at the same compensation level that I currently receive.



Among those who would ideally have liked to leave in the coming 12 months but felt unable to do so, the four most commonly chosen reasons that prevented them from leaving were: (a) disruptive impact on their family (42%), which had also ranked first in 2019 and is similar to the figure from previous surveys; (b) negative impact on benefits (42%), which had also ranked second in 2019 and is the same figure as in 2019; (c) cannot find a job at the same compensation level (24%), which had ranked fifth and been chosen by a similar number of respondents in 2019; and (d) have not been contacted for jobs they applied for (24%), which had ranked third and is similar to the figure from 2019. Being intimidated by the process of securing another job outside their organization was also seen as a barrier for over a fifth (23%) of respondents, which is a similar number to that in the 2019 survey.

Those respondents indicating that they would ideally have liked to leave in the coming 12 months but were unable to do so or that they intended to leave in the coming 12 months were asked to what type of organization they would like to move (see **figure 11**).

**Figure 11**

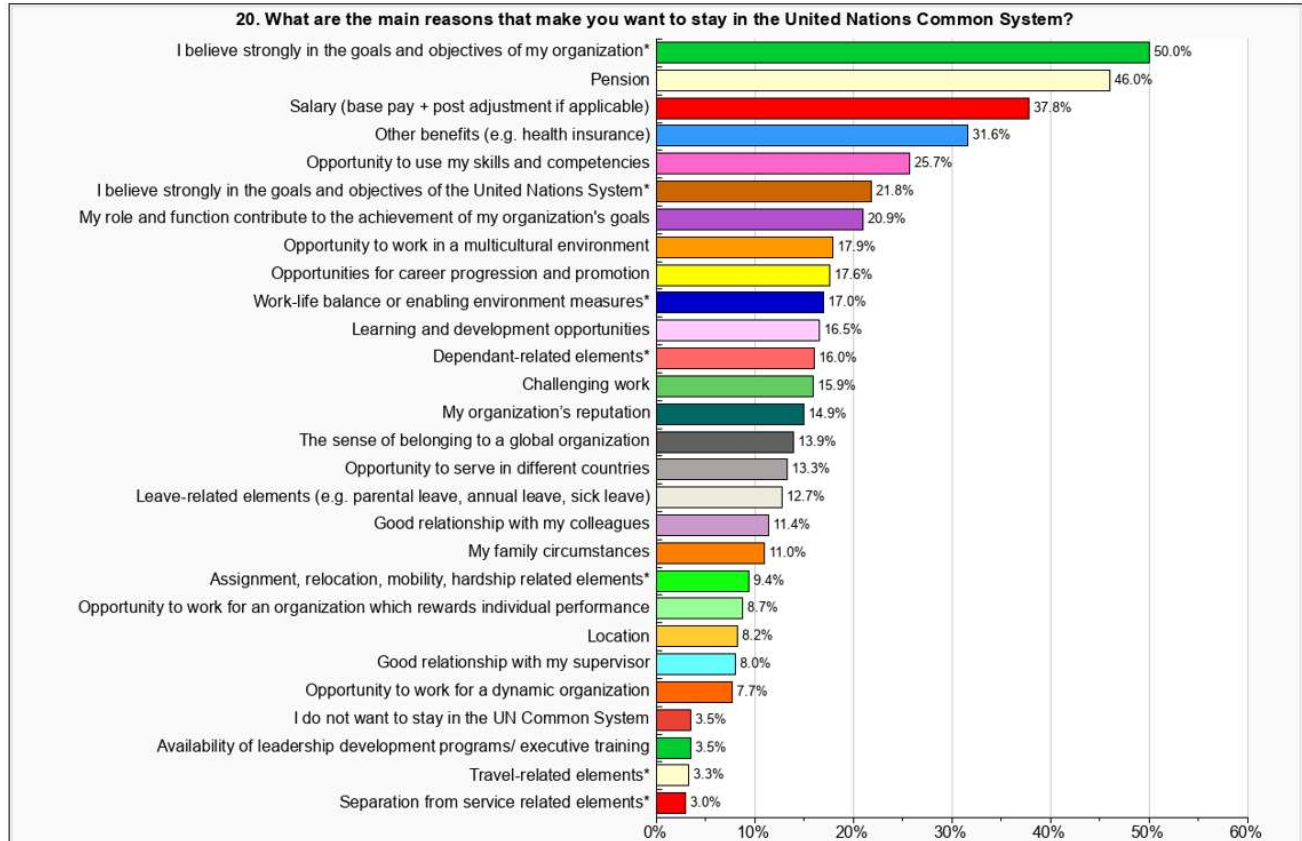


Seventy-one per cent of those respondents would like to move to another international organization, which was the most common response by some measure and is similar to the results from the 2019 survey. The next most common responses were the private sector (37%), own business (21%) and non-governmental organization (19%). The rankings of the types of organization are the same as in the 2019 survey, and the proportion choosing each option has increased, with the exception of those choosing other. This indicates that respondents are selecting more types of organization that they would like to move to.

To further explore the topic of retention, two additional questions were included in the 2023 survey, on the main reasons that made respondents want to stay in the United Nations common system (choosing up to six reasons) and on the most important factor in respondents’ decision to continue working in the common system (choosing only one) (see **figure 12** for results of the former question and **figure 13** for the latter).



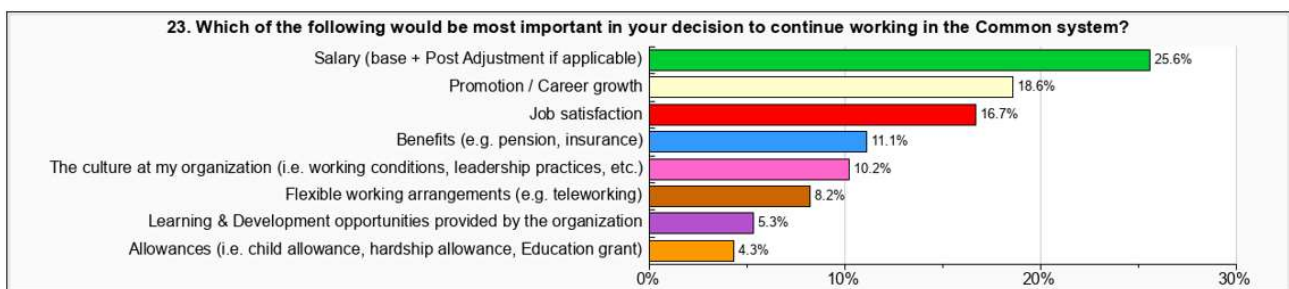
**Figure 12**



Note: The asterisks refer to the following, respectively: I believe strongly in the goals and objectives of my organization and wish to contribute to them; I believe strongly in the goals and objectives of the United Nations system and wish to contribute to them; work-life balance or enabling environment measures (i.e. flexible hours, flexible working arrangements, teleworking, parental leave, special leave, spousal employment, elder care, psychological support services, etc., if applicable); dependant-related elements (e.g. dependent spouse allowance, single parent allowance, dependent children's allowance, secondary dependant's allowance, education grant); assignment-, relocation-, mobility- and hardship-related elements (e.g. mobility incentive, hardship allowance, non-family service allowance, pilot payment in D and E duty stations, settling-in grant, relocation grant, removal and shipment costs, danger pay, security evacuation allowance, rest and recuperation); travel-related elements (e.g. home leave travel, accelerated home leave travel, family visit travel, education grant travel); and separation from service-related elements (e.g. termination indemnity, repatriation grant, death grant).

The four most commonly chosen reasons for which respondents would want to stay in the United Nations common system were a strong belief in the goals and objectives of their organization (50%), pension (46%), salary (38%) and other benefits (32%).

**Figure 13**



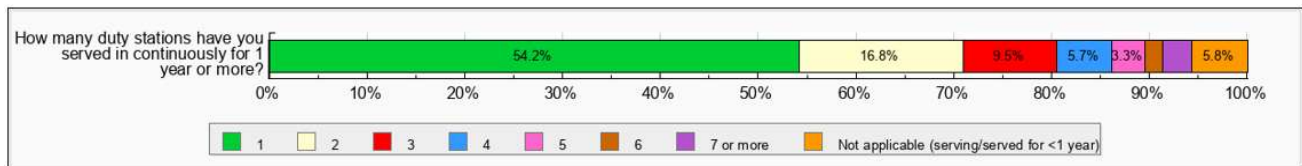
The four most common factors that would be most important in respondents' decision to continue working in the United Nations common system were salary (26%), promotion and career growth (19%), job satisfaction (17%) and benefits (11%).

Under retention, the following two yes or no questions were also asked: (a) "if you were offered a job in another organization with a similar overall compensation package, would you be likely to take the job"; and (b) "I have looked for jobs in other organizations in the last 12 months". Forty-four per cent of all respondents indicated that they would be likely to accept a job in another organization with a similar compensation package. Thirty-four per cent indicated that they had looked for jobs in other organizations in the preceding year, a decrease by 14% compared with the results from the 2019 survey (48%).

## F. Mobility

Staff who had served in two or more duty stations continuously for one year or more were considered to be mobile (see figure 14).

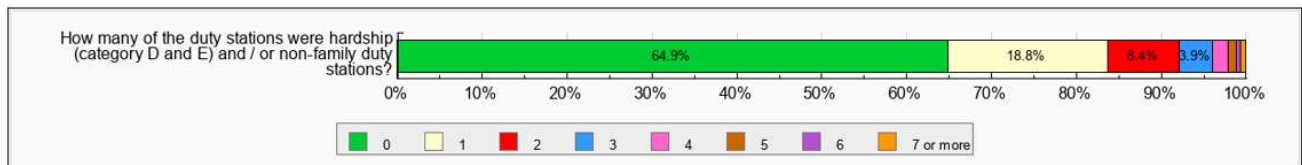
**Figure 14**



Overall, 40% of all respondents are mobile (i.e. they had served in two or more duty stations continuously for 1 year or more). This is similar to 2019. These findings suggest that there is appetite for mobility, which is supported by the fact that only 10% of respondents offered a post in another duty station have turned the offer down. Over half (54%) of all respondents have only served in one duty station continuously for one year or more.

Respondents who indicated that they have served in one or more duty stations for one year or longer were asked how many of the duty stations were hardship category D or E and/or non-family duty stations (see figure 15).

**Figure 15**

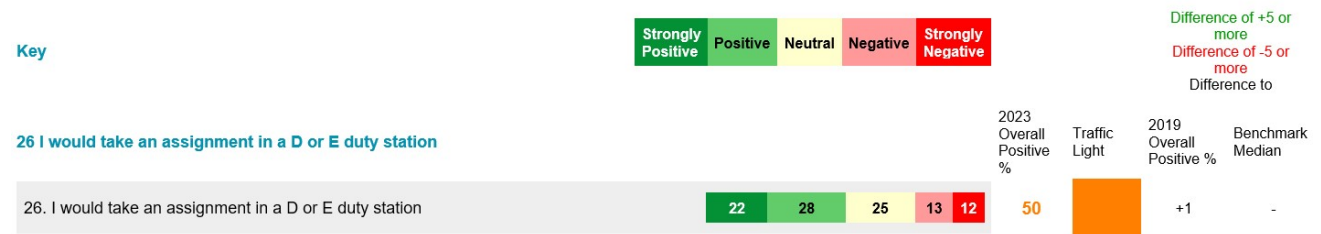


Sixty-five per cent have never served in a duty station with a hardship classification D or E or a non-family duty station. This is similar to 2019. The remaining 35% have served in one or more duty station with a hardship classification D or E or a non-family duty station.

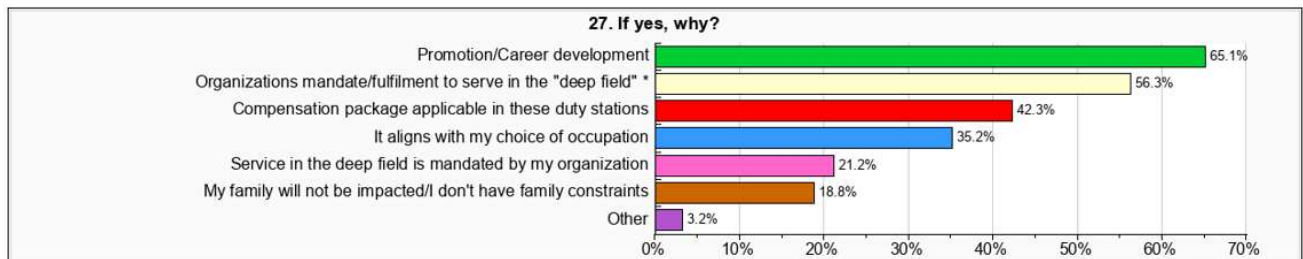
Respondents were asked whether they would take an assignment in a D or E duty station (see figure 16). Fifty per cent stated that they would take an assignment in a D or E duty station, while 25% said that they would not take an assignment in a D or E duty station. The remaining 25% were neutral. The respondents who indicated that they would take up such an assignment (i.e. 50% who responded with strongly agree or agree) were asked to provide the reasons why they would do so indicating all reasons that applied; while the respondents who indicated that they would not take up such an assignment (i.e. 25% who

responded with strongly disagree or disagree) were asked to provide the reasons why they would not do so. In both cases, respondent were asked to indicate all reasons that applied (see **figure 17** and **figure 18**).

**Figure 16**

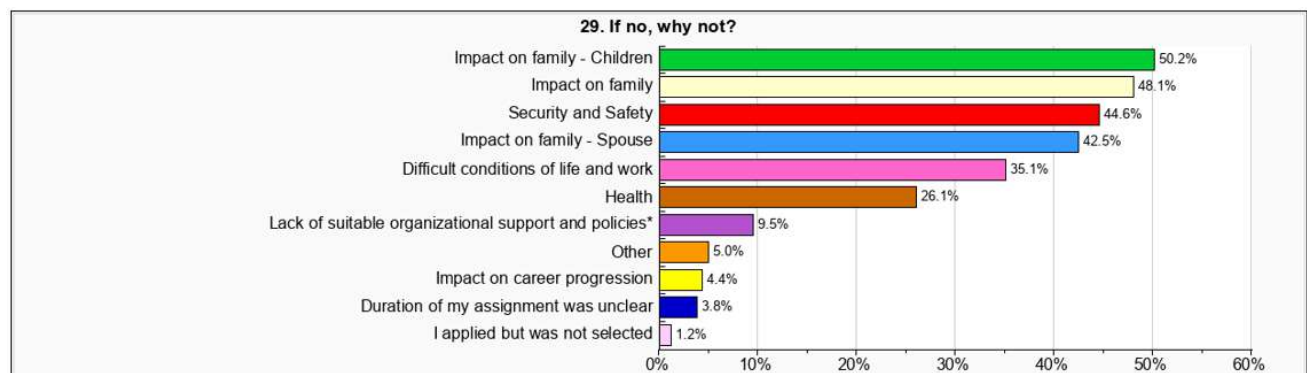


**Figure 17**



Fifty per cent said they would take an assignment in a D or E duty station which was similar to 2019 (49%). The most three common reasons were: (a) Promotion/career development (65%), (b) the organization's mandate/fulfilment to serve in the "deep field" or humanitarian operations (56%), and (c) the compensation package applicable in these duty stations (42%). This question was new in the 2019 survey and therefore there can be no comparison with 2019 results.

**Figure 18**



Among the 25% who indicated that they would not take an assignment in a D or E duty station (similar to 2019), the four most common reasons were: (i) 50% said because of the impact on their children; (ii) 48% said because of the impact on their family; (iii) 45% said for security and safety reasons; and (iv) 43% said because of the impact on their spouse. These are the same reasons that were most common in 2019, although impact on spouse was ranked third and security and safety was ranked fourth.

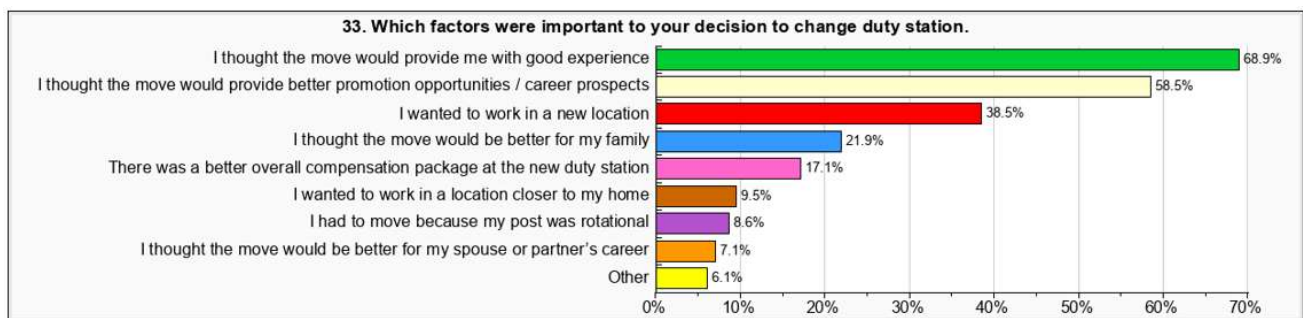
Respondents who had indicated that they had served in two or more duty stations continuously for one year or more were asked if any of their moves to different duty stations had been voluntary (i.e. outside

of a managed rotation or reassignment exercise). Among the 41% who were mobile (i.e. had served in two or more duty stations continuously for one year or more), 72% had made at least one voluntary move, which is the similar to 2019.

Respondents who had indicated that they had served in two or more duty stations continuously for one year or more were asked whether they considered their compensation package sufficient (taking into account all applicable elements such as mobility incentive, settling-in grant, shipment, etc.). Fifty-four per cent considered their compensation insufficient.

Respondents who indicated two or more duty stations continuously served in for one year or more and who indicated that one or more of these moves was voluntary were asked to choose up to three factors that were important to their decision to change duty station (see **figure 19**).

**Figure 19**

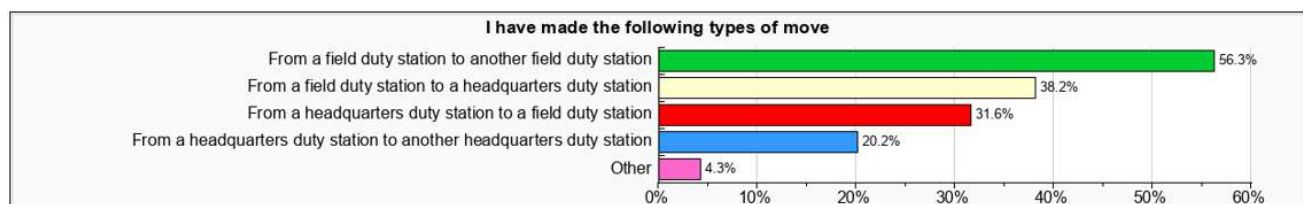


The three most commonly selected factors influencing respondents' decisions to change duty station were the same as in 2019: (a) the belief that the move would provide good experience (69%), (a) a belief that the move would provide better promotion opportunities/career prospects (59%), and (c) the desire to work in a new location (39%). A better overall compensation package at the new duty station was only cited by 17% of respondents suggesting that compensation may not be an important factor in decisions to change duty station. This is similar to 2019 responses.

According to the external company, it could be concluded that the overwhelming important motivating factors for moving to a different duty station were centered around gaining further experience and improving career prospects. For most people, compensation did not appear to have been a motivating factor. However, it may well be the case that the allowances associated with mobility were important in enabling staff to move between duty stations. If this is the case, it would imply that compensation was an important hygiene factor for mobility for most staff.

Respondents who indicated two or more duty stations continuously served in for one year or more and indicated that one or more of these moves was voluntary (i.e., outside of a managed rotation/reassignment exercise) were asked which type of moves they had made (see **figure 20**).

**Figure 20**



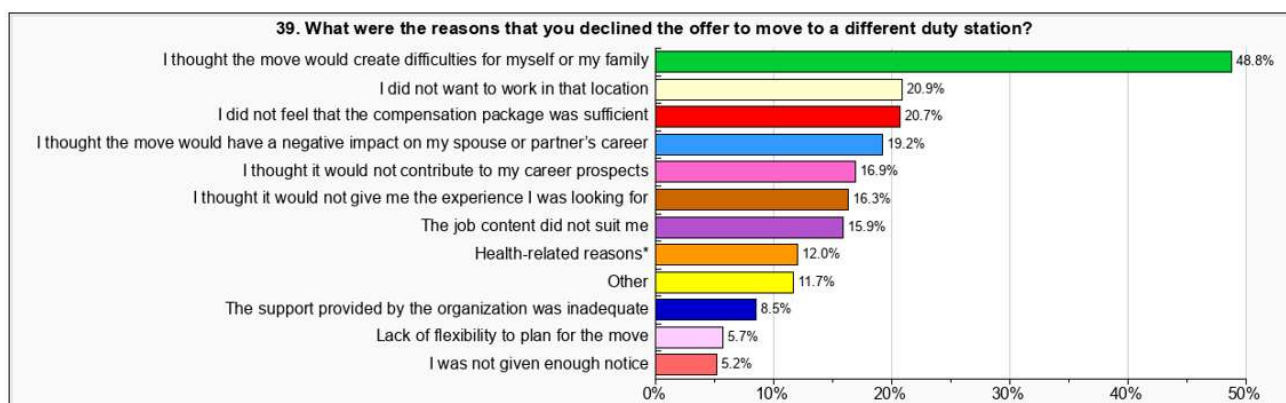
The most common type of voluntary move is from one field duty station to another – reported by 56%. This is similar to previous years. This is followed by 38% who have moved voluntarily from a field duty station to a headquarters duty station. This is similar to 2019. Thirty-two per cent have moved voluntarily from headquarters to the field. This is similar to previous years. Twenty per cent had moved from headquarters to another headquarters duty station. This is the same as 2019.

Survey participants were asked whether they would like to transfer to another duty station at some point within the next two years. Sixty-five per cent of all respondents responded positively, which is similar to 2019. This figure was higher amongst respondents who were mobile (i.e., had served in two or more duty stations continuously for one year or more) at 70%. This is the same as in 2019. For those who had only served in one duty station continuously for one year or more the figure was lower at (61%), which is the same as in 2019.

Respondents were also asked if they had ever declined an offer to move to a different duty station, to which only 10% responded positively. This is the same as in 2019. Those who were mobile (i.e. had served in 2 or more duty stations continuously for one year or more) were more likely to have declined an offer to move: 17% of those who were mobile had declined an offer to move. This figure was the same in 2019. Five per cent of those who had served in only one duty station continuously for one year or more had declined an offer to move. This figure was the same in 2019.

Respondents who had indicated that they had declined an offer to move to a different duty station, were asked to choose up to three reasons for declining the offer (see **figure 21**).

**Figure 21**



The most commonly selected reasons for declining an offer were: (a) they believed that the move would create difficulties for them or their families (49%), which was also the most common factor in previous years; (b) they did not want to work in the proposed location (21%), which was the third most common factor in 2019; and (c) they did not feel that the compensation package was sufficient (21%), which was the second most common factor in 2019. The new options included this time were chosen by fewer respondents: health-related reasons (12 per), inadequate support provided by the organization (9%) and lack of flexibility to plan for the move (6%).

## G. Allowances and benefits

All allowances and benefits were listed, even though not all of them applied to all staff. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they received the particular allowance or benefit, were aware of it but it was not applicable to them or were not aware of the allowance or benefit.

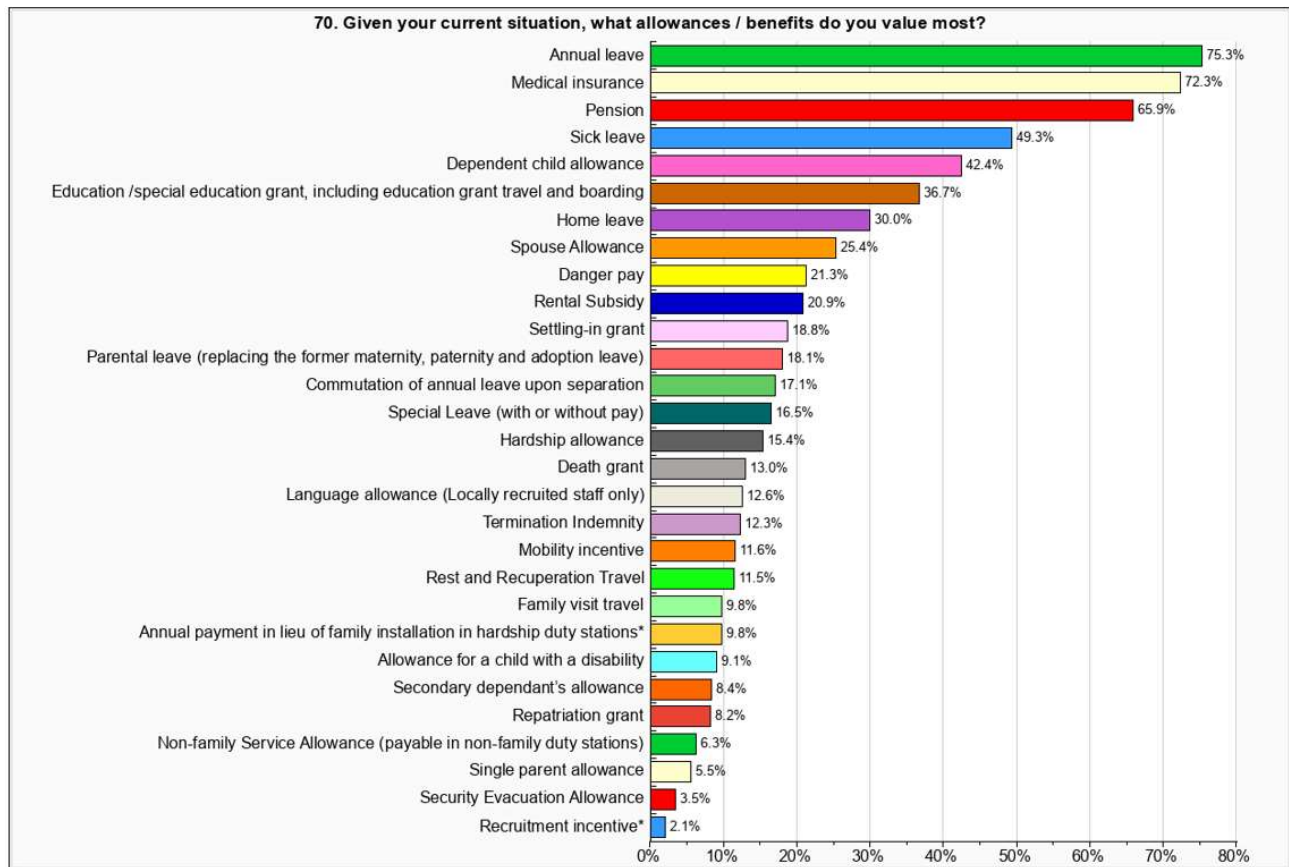


The findings indicate a wide variation in the receipt and awareness of the various allowances and benefits. The four allowances or benefits that were reported as being the most widely received and with the highest levels of awareness were: (a) medical insurance (97%), which is the same as in the results from the 2019 survey; (b) dependent child allowance (93%), similar to 2019 (+1); (c) sick leave (93%), the same as in 2019; and (d) pension (93%), the same as in 2019. Those four allowances or benefits were also reported as being the most widely received and with the highest levels of awareness in the 2019 survey.

The four allowances and benefits with the highest levels of respondents reporting that they were not aware of them were: (a) recruitment incentive (71%), which is similar to the results from the 2019 survey (-2%); (b) security evacuation allowance (55%), which is similar to the results from 2019 (+2%); (c) death grant (54%), which increased compared with the results from 2019 (+6%); and (d) termination indemnity (49%), which is similar to the results from 2019 (+1%). In 2019, the recruitment incentive and the security evacuation allowance were also among the four allowances and benefits with the highest level of unawareness, with the other two being the annual payment in lieu of family installation in duty stations with hardship classification E and the transitional allowance. More details are provided in the annex.

A new question in the section on allowances and benefits was introduced in the 2023 survey, asking the respondents, given their current situation, what allowances or benefits they valued the most, selecting up to 10 (see figure 22).

**Figure 22**



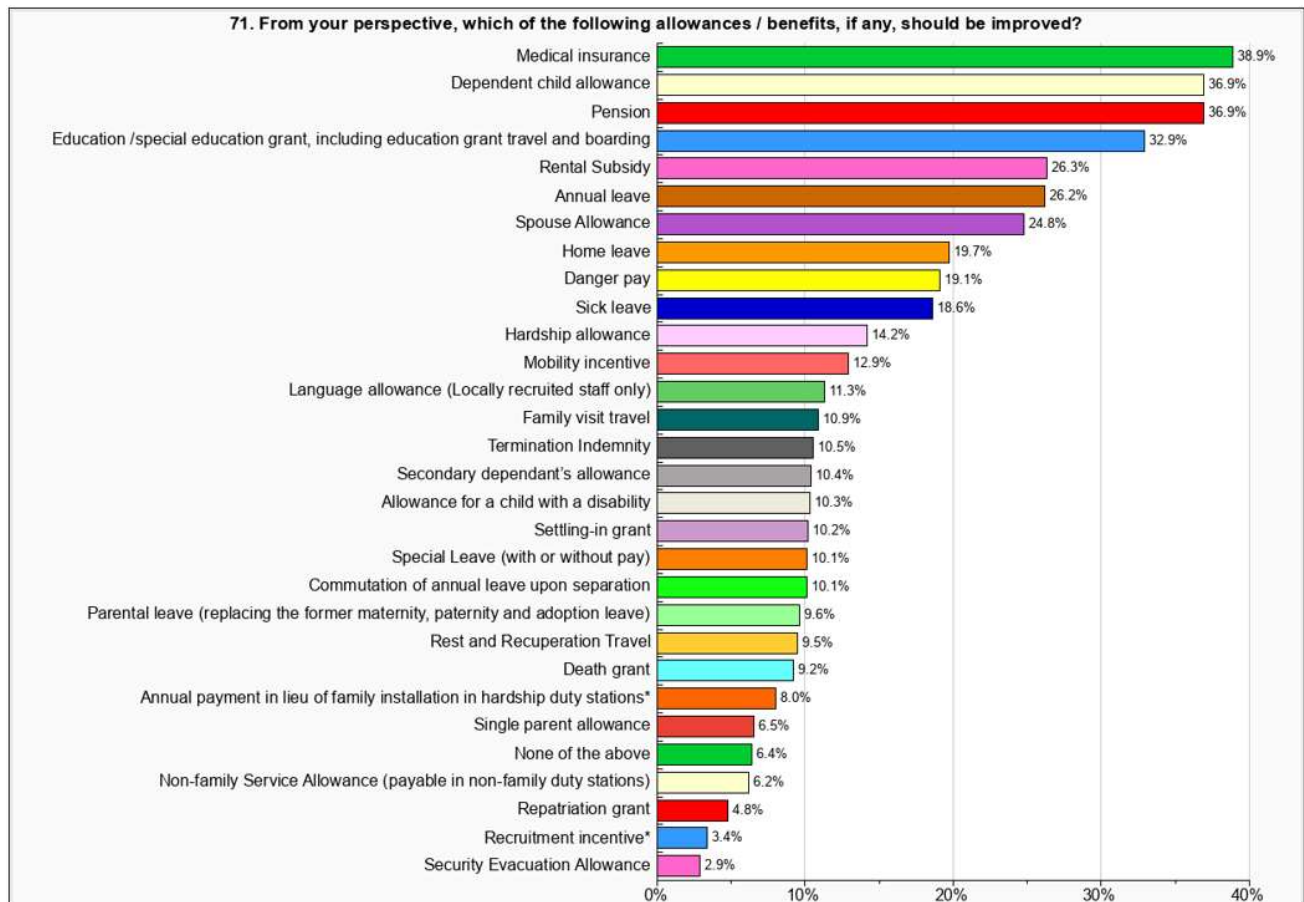
Note: The asterisks refer to the following, respectively: annual payment in lieu of family installation in duty stations with hardship classification D (\$15,000 annual payment) or hardship classification E (\$15,000 annual payment), which are not designated as non-family; and recruitment incentive (payment for the recruitment of experts in highly specialized fields in instances where the organization had failed to attract suitably qualified personnel).



The allowances or benefits that were most valued by the most respondents were annual leave (75%), medical insurance (72%), pension (66%), sick leave (49%) and the dependent child allowance (42%). The allowances or benefits that were most valued by the fewest respondents were the non family service allowance (6%), the single parent allowance (6%), the security evacuation allowance (4%) and the recruitment incentive (2%).

Another new question added to the 2023 survey asked respondents to indicate, from their perspective, which allowance and benefits, if any, should be improved, selecting up to 10 (see figure 23).

**Figure 23**

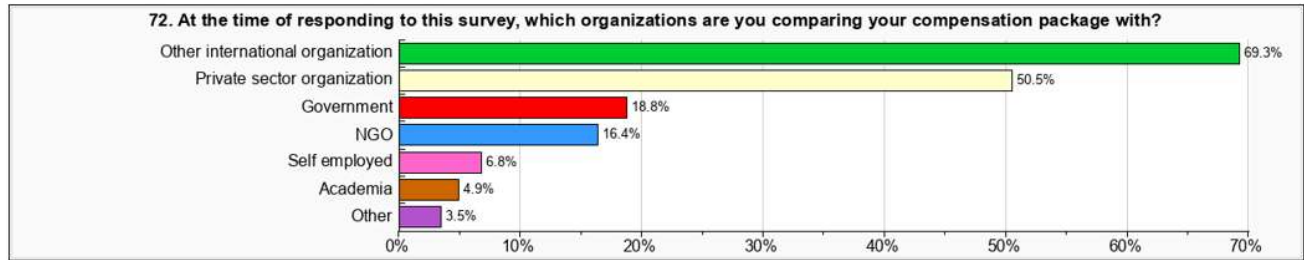


Note: The asterisks refer to the following, respectively: annual payment in lieu of family installation in duty stations with hardship classification D (\$15,000 annual payment) or hardship classification E (\$15,000 annual payment), which are not designated as non-family; and recruitment incentive (payment for the recruitment of experts in highly specialized fields in instances where the organization had failed to attract suitably qualified personnel).

The allowances and benefits that the fewest respondents indicated should be improved were the non-family service allowance (6%), the repatriation grant (5%), the recruitment incentive (3%) and the security evacuation allowance (3%). Each of those allowances or benefits were among the five least valued.

Respondents were asked with which organizations they were comparing their compensation package (see figure 24).

**Figure 24**

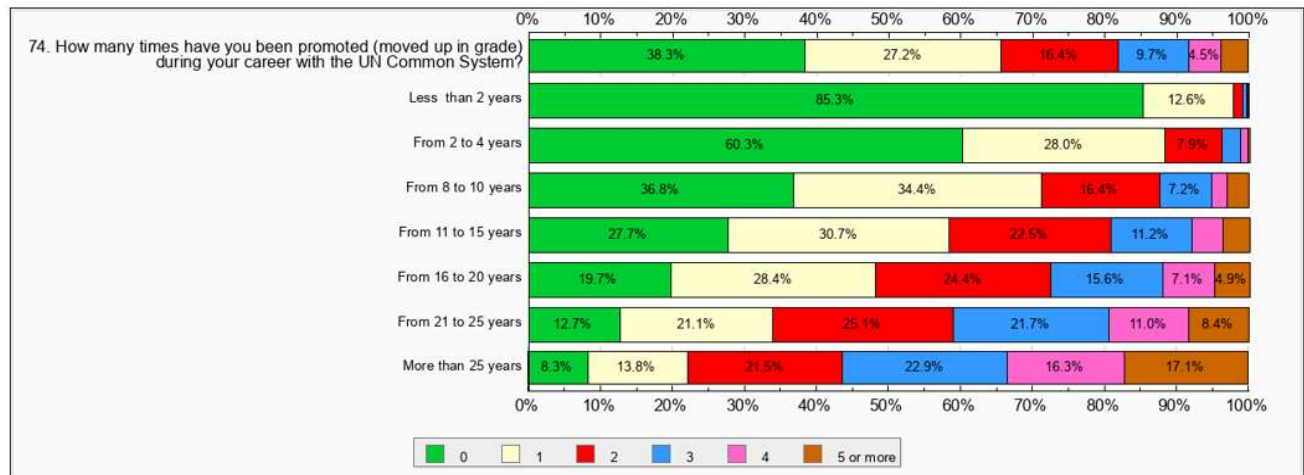


The top three types of organizations whose compensation packages respondents were comparing theirs with were: (a) other international organizations (69%), a decrease of 4% compared with the result in the 2019 survey (73%); (b) private sector organizations (51%), which is a similar result to the result in 2019 (54%); and (c) government organizations (19%), a decrease of 6% compared with the result in 2019 (25%).

### H. Career progression and performance

Respondents were asked how many times they had been promoted (i.e. moved up in grade) during their career in the common system. Figure 24 shows the results for the whole sample and then by length of service in the common system.

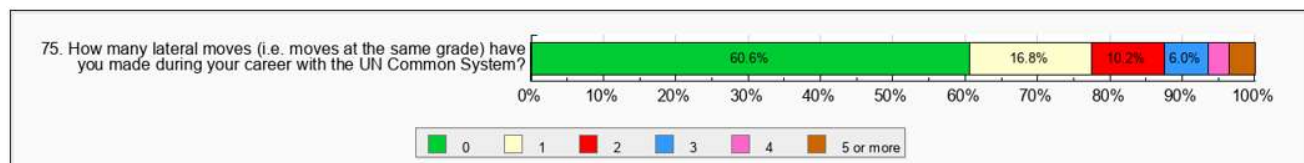
**Figure 25**



For respondents overall, 38% had not been promoted during their career with the UN Common System. This is the same as in 2019. Around a quarter (27%) had been promoted once. This is the same as 2019. Around a quarter (26%) had been promoted two to three times. This is the same as 2019. Eight per cent have been promoted four times or more. This is similar to 2019 (9%).

Respondents were asked how many lateral moves they had made during their career with the common system (see figure 26).

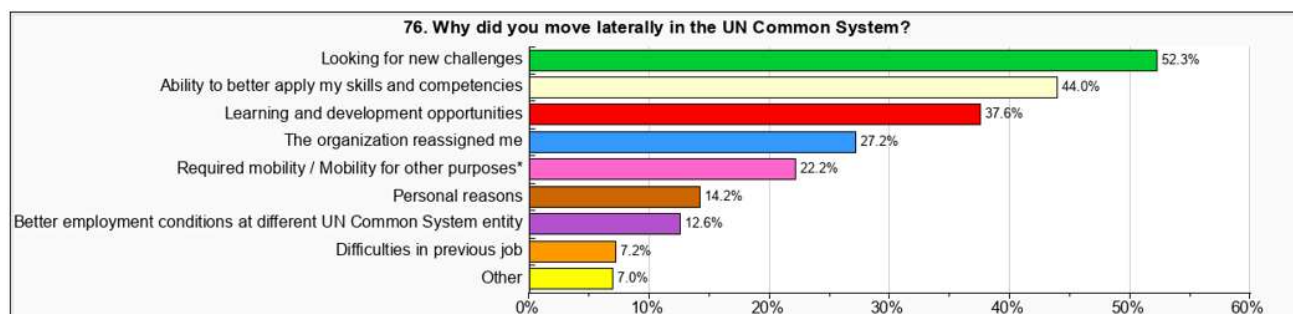
**Figure 26**



Sixty-one per cent indicated they had not made any lateral moves during their career with the United Nations Common System. Twenty-seven per cent indicated that they have made one to two lateral moves. Twelve per cent indicated that they have made three or more lateral moves. These figures are the same as in 2019.

Those who had moved laterally (39%) were asked to select all the choices that applied as to why they had done so (see **figure 27**).

**Figure 27**

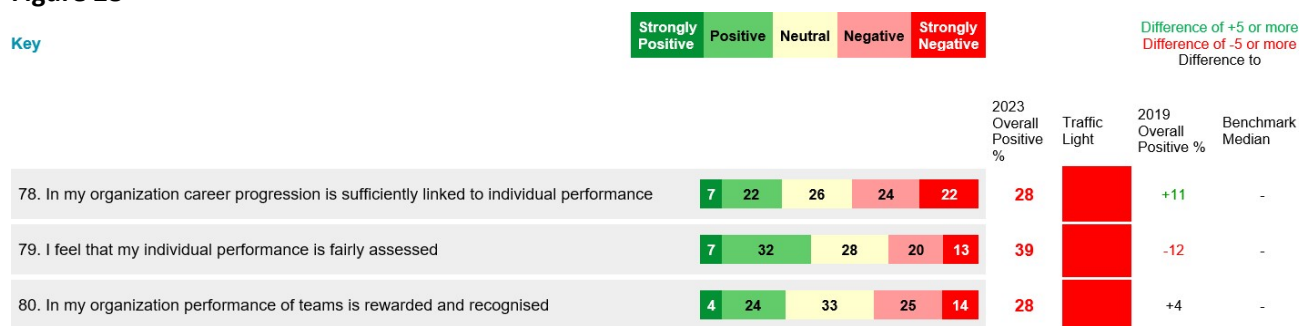


The three most common reasons respondents moved laterally were the same as they were in 2019, although the proportion of respondents choosing these options decreased: (a) new challenges (52%, decreased from 61%); (b) ability to better apply skills and competencies (44%, decreased from 50%); and (c) learning and development opportunities (38%, decreased from 45%). This was followed by 27% of respondents indicating that the organization had reassigned them, which was an option added this year. Around a fifth (22%) indicated required mobility, which was the same as in 2019.

### Links between pay progression and performance

The following three questions were asked regarding individual performance and link with pay, rewards and recognition (see **figure 28**).

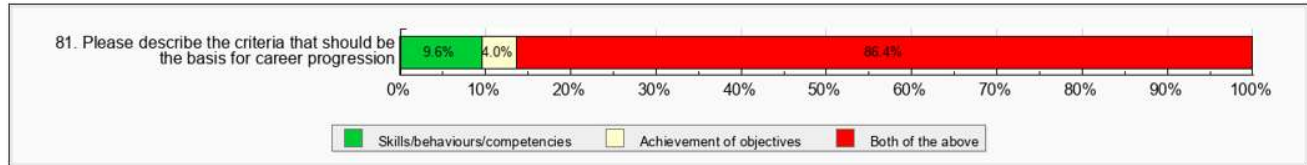
**Figure 28**



Thirty-nine per cent felt that their individual performance was fairly assessed, which has substantially decreased since 2019 (-12). Twenty-eight per cent feel that career progression was sufficiently linked to individual performance in their organization, which has substantially increased since 2019 (+11). Twenty-eight per cent felt that the performance of teams was rewarded and recognised in their organization, which has increased since 2019 (+4).

Respondents were asked to describe the criteria that should be the basis for career progression (see **figure 29**).

**Figure 29**



The vast majority (86%) would like to see the career progression based on both (a) skills/behaviours/competencies and (b) achievement of objectives. This is similar to in previous years. Ten per cent indicated skills/behaviours/competencies only. This is an increase of 4% since 2019. Four per cent indicated achievement of objectives only. This is similar to 2019. In previous surveys, the question referred to ‘pay progression’ rather than career progression.

Respondents were asked how exceptional individual performance in their organization should be recognized (see figure 30). This was a new question in the survey thus no comparison with previous surveys is available.

**Figure 30**



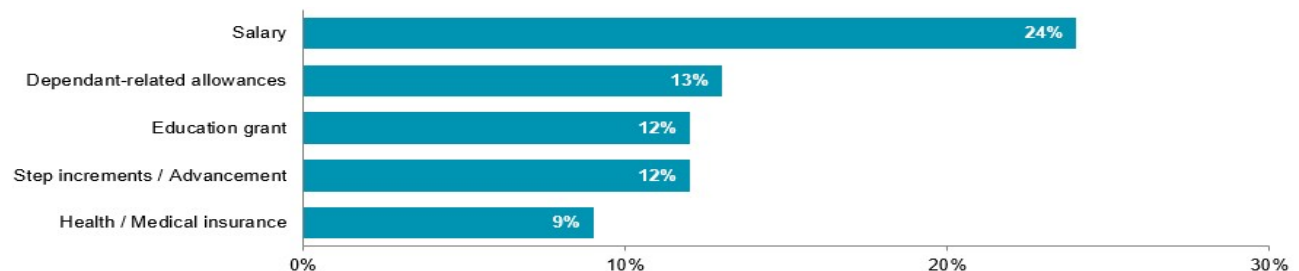
The methods of recognition selected by the most respondents were: (a) promotion to a higher grade (73%); (b) extra step increments at the current grade (61%); and (c) recognition such as verbal and written praise (40%).

**I. Analysis of responses to the open-ended questions**

The survey also contained two questions in which respondents were invited to respond in their own words. From the open-ended questions, 100 responses were randomly selected and organized by theme. It was considered that the results would be interesting for further analysis. Below is a summary of the five most frequent themes emerging from the qualitative analysis of the 100 randomly selected responses, with the per centage of respondents mentioning each theme (see figures 31 and 32).

**Figure 31**

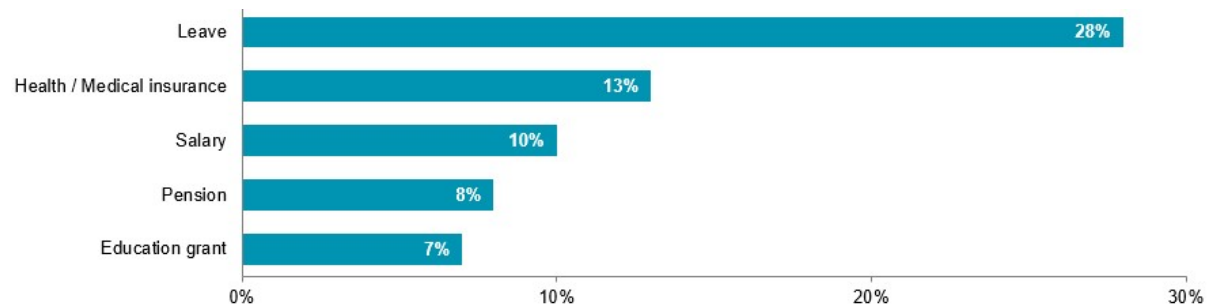
**If you could change just one thing about the compensation system as a whole, what would it be?**



The five most frequent themes emerging from qualitative analysis were salary (24%), dependant-related allowances (13%), the education grant (12%), step increments and advancement (12%) and health and medical insurance (9%).

**Figure 32**

**What one thing would you not change about the compensation system as a whole?**



Below is a summary of the five most frequent themes emerging from the qualitative analysis of those 100 randomly selected responses, with the per centage of respondents mentioning the theme. Some example comments which were representative of the theme were provided, where appropriate.

With reference to the question “If you could change just one thing about the compensation system as a whole, what would it be”, the five most frequent themes emerging from qualitative analysis were:

- a) Salary (24%): around a quarter of respondents mentioned aspects relating to their salary (both base pay and post-adjustment). Many reflected that the sum was not sufficient or competitive given high inflation rates or cost-of-living in some countries, and a number mentioned the currency in which salaries were paid. A number of respondents feel that salary could be made more equal across different staff types. In 2019, Salary was the third most common theme, mentioned by 18% of respondents.
- b) Dependant-related allowances (13%): many respondents mentioned that allowances related to dependants (in general terms and in regard to specific allowances) could be improved and increased. They most frequently mentioned the dependant children’s allowance and the dependant spouse allowance. Several commented that they should be able to declare elderly parents as dependants.
- c) Education grant (12%): the education grant was mentioned specifically by a number of respondents. They felt the education grant could be increased to allow staff further personal development. Some felt that the scope of the grant should be increased, to other staff types or to a wider range of dependants. The education grant was also frequently mentioned in 2019.
- d) Step increments/Advancement (12%): many respondents reflected on their lack of opportunity for progression within a grade, and therefore lack of access to increased compensation. Some stated the insufficient opportunities for advancement hold staff at a particular grade for many years. Some comments requested incremental

compensation increases based on length of service, while others suggested a performance-based approach.

- e) Health/Medical insurance (9%): some respondents felt that the medical insurance coverage should be improved. Several suggested that medical insurance could be expanded to cover dependants such as children and elderly parents.

With reference to the question “What one thing would you not change about the compensation system as a whole”, the five most frequent themes were:

- f) Leave (28%): The most common aspects of the compensation package mentioned by respondents were leave-related elements. More than half of these respondents mentioned annual leave, while home leave and sick leave were mentioned by a smaller number of respondents. In 2019, Leave was the 5th most common theme, mentioned by 8% of respondents.
- g) Health/Medical insurance (13%): Many staff indicated that they would not change the provision of health or medical insurance. This was also the 2nd most common theme in 2019, mentioned by 10% of respondents.
- h) Salary (10%): One in ten respondents reflected that they are satisfied with salary and the way that it is determined and reviewed.
- i) Pension (8%): Several staff indicated that they would keep the pension the same. This was the most common theme in 2019, mentioned by 21% of respondents.
- j) Education grant (7%): Several respondents indicated that they would not change the education grant. This was the 4th most common theme in 2019, mentioned by 8% of respondents.

It should be noted that 7% of respondents said that there was nothing they would change; they would keep the compensation package the same.



## Annex

For each of the allowances / benefits listed below the respondents were asked to select the option that best describes their situation

Key	Received Aware Not aware			Difference of +5 or more Difference of -5 or more		
	2023 % Received + Aware	2019 % Received + Aware	2013 % Received + Aware	2023 % Received + Aware	2019 % Received + Aware	2013 % Received + Aware
41. Allowance for a child with a disability	7	69	25	75	+7	+5
42. Annual leave	74	12	14	86	-6	-7
43. Annual payment in lieu of family installation in hardship duty stations "D" (\$15,000 annual payment) or "E" (\$15,000 annual payment), which are not designated as non-family	6	49	45	55	+20	-
44. Commutation of annual leave upon separation	11	55	34	66	+5	+2
45. Danger pay	24	57	19	81	+7	+10
46. Death grant	46	54		46	-7	-11
47. Dependent child allowance	60	34	7	93	+1	-1
48. Education /special education grant, including education grant travel and boarding	23	54	23	77	-3	-4
49. Family Visit	7	51	42	58	0	-3
50. Hardship allowance	19	55	27	73	+2	0
51. Home leave	33	48	19	81	+1	-3
52. Language allowance (Locally recruited staff only)	11	61	28	72	-2	+2
53. Medical insurance	92	5	3	97	0	0
54. Mobility incentive	16	38	46	54	-9	-10
55. Non-family Service Allowance (payable in non-family duty stations)	10	45	45	55	+1	0
56. Parental leave (replacing the former maternity, paternity and adoption leave)	24	62	14	86	-5	-
57. Pension	44	49	7	93	0	-1
58. Recruitment incentive (Payment for the recruitment of experts in highly specialised fields in instances where the organisation had failed to attract suitably qualified personnel)	1	28	71	29	+2	-
59. Rental Subsidy	20	51	29	71	-4	-5
60. Repatriation grant	9	57	34	66	+6	-2
61. Rest and Recuperation Travel	16	54	30	70	-1	+3
62. Secondary dependant's allowance	10	47	43	57	-4	-12
63. Security Evacuation Allowance	3	42	55	45	-2	-2
64. Settling-in grant	32	33	35	65	-1	-3
65. Sick leave	75	18	7	93	0	-1
66. Single parent allowance	4	53	43	57	-6	-
67. Special Leave (with or without pay)	15	62	24	76	-4	-3
68. Spouse Allowance	33	43	24	76	-9	-
69. Termination Indemnity	2	49	49	51	0	-10

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