

## **Mobility**

### **I. Objective**

1. Staff mobility is a critical part of an integrated talent management system. Given that UNDP's workforce is its greatest asset, it is vital for the organization to ensure that we have the right person in the right place at the right time. By doing so, each staff member will be able to contribute their full capacity and potential to the achievement of UNDP's crucial mission. The implementation of the Mobility Policy will enable staff to develop and enhance knowledge and expertise and build new professional experiences in different operating environments and contexts. It will also enhance the general quality of the talent available in UNDP, as well as facilitate individual development and career progression. The latter is critical, as the ability to have diverse and fulfilling career journeys is one of the key expectations of UNDP personnel and an important prerequisite for attracting, developing and retaining high quality talent. For this reason, staff mobility is a key component of People for 2030 and is essential if UNDP is to capitalize on the human resources on which we rely. It is part of a fundamental overhaul of the talent management system and is designed to leverage maximum results full integration with new approaches on career management, leadership development, performance management, and learning and development.
2. The Policy sets out provisions governing staff mobility and, as such, aims to:
  - Enable more effective and efficient staff mobility within UNDP.
  - Ensure that staff moves are managed strategically and that each established position is continuously filled.
  - Create opportunities for career development and continuous learning, as part of an integrated employee experience, through multi-directional moves driven both by business needs and staff aspirations.
  - Strengthen UNDP's ability to attract and retain a diverse and dynamic world-class global workforce that will effectively meet the Organization's current and future operational needs.

### **II. Applicability**

3. The Policy applies to all International Professional (IP) staff members holding a UNDP Letter of Appointment and hired on Fixed-Term Appointments (FTA) and Permanent Appointments (PA).
4. The Policy does not apply to staff members holding UNDP Letters of Appointment for service limited to another UN entity. It also does not apply to staff in locally recruited positions (National Officers and General Service categories), staff hired on Temporary Appointments (TA) and other personnel on any other contractual modality.

5. The Policy supersedes UNDP/ADM/00/29 of 16 November 2000 on UNDP Reassignment Policy and the Personnel Manual section on Reassignment (Section 20303) revised on 2 November 2000.

### III. Key Definitions

6. **Mobility** is defined as periodic moves of staff to new or re-classified positions within the same or different occupational group/functional area, laterally or to a different level, within the same or different duty station.
7. **Types of mobility** include:
  - *Geographic mobility* is movement of staff between different duty stations, in most situations requiring movement to a different country.
  - *Functional mobility* is movement of staff between positions in the same or different occupational group/functional area, whether geographically or not.
  - *Inter-agency mobility* is movement of staff to another Fund, Programme or Agency in the United Nations Common System, through a secondment, loan or transfer.
8. **Mobility requirement** is a requirement to periodically move to a new position.
9. **Duration of assignment (tour of duty)** is the period of time, during which a staff member is expected to be in the position s/he has been selected for and accepted. Minimum duration of assignment (tour of duty) is the minimum period of time a staff member must stay in a position. Maximum duration of assignment (tour of duty) is the maximum period of time a staff member is allowed to stay in a position.
10. All IP positions are designated as **rotational or non-rotational**.
  - **Rotational positions** are positions subject to rotation. They include positions that exist in multiple country offices, HQs Bureaux/offices and in global and regional offices/centres. Their profiles, in terms of functions, qualifications, experience, competencies, expected contribution, level of responsibility and outputs are generally similar to those of multiple positions across UNDP. All rotational positions are subject to an Annual Rotation Exercise (ARE), though rotational positions may also be filled outside of the ARE when vacant or when it is in the interest of UNDP to do so.
  - **Non-rotational positions** are positions not subject to rotation and include the majority of other IP positions which still have a mobility requirement. There is also a small number of highly specialized positions whose incumbents do not have a mobility requirement (e.g. Comptroller, Treasurer, certain positions in the Executive Office etc.).

11. **Rotation** is a **centrally managed** process of assigning staff to rotational positions. Staff can participate in a rotation exercise whether or not they encumber a rotational position.
12. **A Candidate Pool** is a group of staff who are confirmed to meet qualifications and competency requirements established for certain positions<sup>1</sup>.

#### IV. Key Provisions

##### A. General Provisions

13. UNDP expects all International Professional staff to be mobile. Entry into the International Professional service entails a commitment to serve in any professional-level UNDP position in any duty station, anywhere in the world, where it is considered, by the Administrator, that the staff member can make their greatest contribution to the objectives of the Organization.
14. Most of the International Professional staff will have to meet a mobility requirement, i.e. be required to periodically move to new or reclassified positions. UNDP local staff (National Officers and General Service categories) do not have a mobility requirement, however, they are still strongly encouraged to periodically move, as much as feasible, within their duty stations. They can also apply to move to a different staff category, e.g. from local to International Professional positions.
15. To enable mobility, all UNDP IP positions must be advertised internally first. Any exceptions (including concurrent advertisement internally and externally) will require first an approval by the respective Bureau Director and then by the Director, Office of Human Resources.

##### B. Mobility Mechanisms

16. Several mechanisms are available to enable effective staff mobility. These include:
  - Rotation, a centrally managed process to be used for reassignments to rotational positions;
  - A regular recruitment/selection process to be used for reassignments to non-rotational positions;
  - Other selection processes (lateral moves, placement of unassigned staff, strategic placement, etc.).
17. Regular recruitment processes as well as lateral moves, placement of unassigned staff and strategic placement are governed by the [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#) and other relevant administrative issuances.

---

<sup>1</sup> As of May 2020, candidate pools exist for Resident Representative and Deputy Resident Representative positions

### C. Designation of Positions as Rotational and Non-rotational

18. The Director, Office of Human Resources, in consultation with the respective Bureau Directors, is responsible for designating international professional positions as either rotational or non-rotational. Procedures and criteria for the designation of positions as rotational or non-rotational will be issued separately.
19. All job descriptions and vacancy announcements for international professional positions will indicate whether the position is rotational or non-rotational.

### D. Duration of Assignment (Tour of Duty) for Rotational Positions

20. The duration of assignment (tour of duty) in a rotational position is determined based on the mobility and hardship classification of the duty station, which is established by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) according to the prevailing living conditions.
21. The following standard tours of duty are established for UNDP:
  - For NY **Headquarters and other H locations**, the duration is six **(6) years**. Staff can serve in multiple assignments at the same H locations.
  - For A, B and C duty stations the duration is four **(4) years**. Staff can serve in multiple assignments at the same A, B and C locations, where suitable positions exist.
  - For **D and E duty stations**, the maximum duration is two **(2) years**, which also applies to project staff in these duty stations. The number of consecutive assignments in D and E duty stations is limited to **two (2)**.
22. Rotational moves can occur within the same duty stations if staff move between different positions or if the position they encumbered was reclassified and if they are successfully confirmed in the reclassified position.
23. It is expected that IP staff members will complete the full standard tour of duty determined for their position. To respond to UNDP operational needs or for compelling personal reasons the tour of duty may be extended or shortened. Extension or foreshortening of a tour of duty in a rotational position may occur upon approval by the Director, Office of Human Resources at the request of the respective Bureau Director in the case of operational need. Staff members may request an extension or foreshortening of the tour of duty in the case of compelling personal reasons by first obtaining approval by the respective Bureau Director, and then obtaining approval by the Director, OHR.
24. Staff members in positions subject to rotation are expected to start applying to other positions during the last year of their tour of duty.

25. IP staff members may be considered for positions after they have served in their current position for one (1) year for D and E duty stations and two (2) years for all other duty stations (considered the “minimum duration of assignment”).
26. Restrictions related to the tour of duty for rotational positions will not apply to staff who encumber positions which are abolished or reclassified, and staff close to retirement (staff within two years of reaching the normal retirement age as defined under the applicable Staff Rules).
27. By the time of completion of the tour of duty, staff members need to secure a new position, otherwise they will become unassigned and could be separated. Offers of positions to unassigned staff members, who would otherwise be separated from the Organization, must comply with Staff Rule 9.6 as well as UNDP’s relevant administrative issuances, including the Recruitment and Selection policy and the Standard Operating Procedures for Unassigned Permanent Appointment holders.
28. Any exceptions from the mobility requirement or other provisions of the Policy will require approval by the Director, Office of Human Resources. Such cases will be considered on a case by case basis.

#### **E. Duration of Assignment (Tour of Duty) for Non-Rotational Positions**

29. The moves of staff in non-rotational positions will primarily be managed through a regular recruitment/selection process. Unless an exception is obtained, the maximum duration of assignment for non-rotational positions is seven (7) years. In D and E duty stations the expected duration of assignment in a non-rotational position is two (2) years and the number of consecutive assignments in D and E duty stations is limited to two (2).
30. By the time a staff member completes the maximum duration of assignment (or sooner, based on business needs), they need to secure another position to move to. Otherwise, they may be without an assignment. UNDP may decide to offer to the staff member a reassignment to another position or relocate the position to another duty station in accordance with the mobility requirement. Failure to accept an assignment may result in separation.
31. For staff serving in development projects, the duration of assignment will be linked to the duration of a project, except for staff in D and E duty stations (see paragraph 29).
32. IP staff members may be considered for other positions after they have served in their current position for one (1) year for D and E duty stations and two (2) years for all other duty stations (considered the “minimum duration of assignment”).
33. Restrictions related to the duration of assignment for non-rotational positions will not apply to staff who encumber positions which are abolished or reclassified and staff close to retirement (staff within two years of reaching the normal retirement age as defined under

the applicable Staff Rules) as well as to the incumbents of the positions that do not have a mobility requirement (e.g. Comptroller, Treasurer, etc.).

34. Any exceptions from the duration of assignments beyond seven (7) years requires approval by the Director, Office of Human Resources at the request of the respective Bureau Director. Such cases will be considered on a case by case basis.

#### **F. Equitable Balance of Assignments**

35. In the course of a UNDP career, staff are encouraged to have different types of assignments and serve in duty stations with different degrees of hardship. Staff members with service in D and E duty stations who have reached the maximum tour of duty in D and E duty stations in the current tour will be given preference over equivalent staff members in other duty stations in accordance with the provisions of the Staff Regulations and Rules and applicable UNDP policies.

#### **V. Rotation**

##### **A. Rotation: General Provisions**

36. Staff members in rotational positions are expected to move once they complete the maximum tour of duty to another position in the same or different duty station.
37. Reassignment of staff subject to rotation will be done through an **Annual Rotation Exercise (ARE)**. There will be two types of AREs – for positions sourced from the Candidate Pools and for all other rotational positions.
38. Entry into a Candidate Pool is subject to passing an assessment. Staff member performance as reflected in their performance assessment may be considered in the context of allowing a staff member to enter or remain in the candidate pool. Staff will not be considered for positions in the ARE if they do not have satisfactory performance.
39. Candidate Pool membership will be reviewed every two years taking into account the following criteria: interests of UNDP, qualifications and competencies of staff members and how they align with UNDP's talent needs, performance, instances of refusal of assignments, and number of successful and unsuccessful "expressions of interest" as part of AREs.
40. A staff member will be automatically removed from a Candidate Pool in the following circumstances:
  - a. Staff member separates from UNDP;
  - b. Staff member requests to be removed from the Candidate Pool;
  - c. Staff member refuses twice an assignment offer without a compelling reason, as determined by the Director, Office of Human Resources;

- d. Staff member obtains an unsatisfactory performance rating in the applicable performance review;
- e. Staff member is imposed a disciplinary measure.

#### **B. Rotation: Annual Rotation Exercise for Positions Sourced from the Candidate Pools**

- 41. The Administrator has assigned the responsibility to facilitate and service the reassignment process to the Director, Office of Human Resources.
- 42. The Annual Rotation Exercise (ARE) is administered by OHR/BMS in accordance with the process outlined in Annex 2, part 1.
- 43. The objective of the ARE is to identify the most suitable candidates from the Candidate Pools for the positions advertised in the Annual Rotation Catalog (ARC) against the requirements of the positions, to ensure a corporate approach to decisions related to reassignments, and, to the extent possible, to provide the selected staff members with sufficient time to plan and implement their moves.

#### **C. Rotation: Annual Rotation Exercise for Other Rotational Positions**

- 44. The Administrator has assigned, the responsibility to facilitate and service the reassignment process to the Director, Office of Human Resources.
- 45. The Annual Rotation Exercise (ARE) is administered by OHR/BMS in accordance with the process outlined in Annex 2, part 2.
- 46. The objective of the ARE is to identify the most suitable UNDP internal candidates for positions advertised in the Annual Rotation Catalog (ARC) against the requirements of the positions, to ensure a corporate approach to decisions related to reassignments, and, to the extent possible, to provide the selected staff members with sufficient time to plan and implement their moves.

#### **D. Timing of Reassignments**

- 47. For rotational positions, reassignments to new positions will generally take place during the period of June through August in order to minimize disruption to the work of the offices involved and to the life of the staff member (e.g. leave and school calendars). Reassignment decisions are expected to be taken from February through May.

### **VI. Obligation to accept assignments**

48. At the time that any assignment decisions are taken, UNDP will take into account, to the extent possible, all relevant factors. Staff members should inform UNDP about special needs or conditions that may be considered.
49. Bureau Directors may request a waiver from the Director, Office of Human Resources, to delay the reassignment of the staff in critical functions, where a time-limited extension is in the best interest of UNDP.
50. Staff members may request a personal waiver to delay the reassignment or not to accept a particular assignment for medical or other compelling reasons. Personal waivers will be approved by the Director, Office of Human Resources, in consultation with the respective Bureau Directors.
51. The staff member who requests a personal waiver to delay the reassignment or declines an offer of a particular assignment, including a temporary assignment, may do so by providing the Director, Office of Human Resources, with a written justification for the request. The Director, Office of Human Resources, will review this request and, if it is found to be valid, will defer the reassignment or initiate that the reassignment be reconsidered on an exceptional basis.
52. Failure to rotate, or to accept a reassignment and to report for duty following the reassignment decision, may constitute non-compliance with the staff member's contractual obligations. Failure to rotate, or to accept an assignment and to report for duty following a reassignment, may constitute a basis for separation from service.
53. After two refusals of a reassignment offer without a compelling reason, staff members who are in the Candidate Pools will be removed from the respective Pools.

## **VII. Inter-Agency Mobility**

54. The Administrator will continue to support the exchange of staff within the United Nations system through a transfer, secondment or loan. The vacancy announcements of the various agencies give details of opportunities for inter-organization movements of this kind.
55. When an inter-organization move has been initiated by a staff member, UNDP will make reasonable effort to facilitate it. When such a move is in the interest of the Organization, UNDP will facilitate it.

## **VIII. Temporary Assignment**



56. In order to support mobility and help staff acquire requisite experiences across regions, functions and UNDP business units, to provide career development and exploratory opportunities to staff, as well as to support offices with interim and surge capacity, temporary assignments of up to 12 months can be used. Placement on a temporary assignment do not constitute the fulfilment of a mobility requirement.

## Annex 1. Roles and Responsibilities

### Corporate Selection Committee for Candidate Pools Positions

The Corporate Selection Committees will review all the Candidate Pool positions and develop the selection recommendations.

**The Corporate Selection Committee for RR positions** will consist of the Associate Administrator (Chairperson), Chief of Staff, all Bureau Directors, other members as needed and will be facilitated by the Director, Office of Human Resources. The Committee will have one or several meetings, as required to make decisions. Recommendations of the Corporate Selection Committee will be signed by the Chairperson and submitted to the Administrator for approval.

**The Corporate Selection Committee for DRR positions (and other pool positions if available)** will consist of the Director, Office of Human Resources (Chairperson), Chief of Staff, all Bureau Deputy Directors and other members as needed. The Committee will have one or several meetings as required to make decisions. Recommendations of the Corporate Selection Committee will be signed by the Chairperson and submitted to the Associate Administrator for approval.

The Corporate Selection Committees will convene annually and will:

- Ensure the selection recommendations are consistent with position requirements and reflect corporate priorities;
- Ensure that the proposed selection and placement action is in accordance with the UN Staff Regulations and Rules and UNDP's relevant administrative issuances, including the Recruitment and Selection Policy and the Mobility Policy;
- Ensure that the selection process is fair, objective, transparent and without bias;
- Review all relevant implications of the proposed selection;
- Review the candidate profile for competencies and potential and complementarity of the country team and recommend the most suitable candidate;
- Maintain discretion and confidentiality.

Meetings will generally be held in-person, but virtual meetings may be arranged and will leverage technology to ensure an e-Meeting space with requisite documentation on positions and staff members.

### Corporate Selection Panel for Other Rotational Positions

**The Corporate Selection Panel for P5 level positions and above** will consist of the Director, Office of Human Resources (Chairperson), and Bureau Deputy Directors or their representatives at D1 level and above, other members as needed. **The Corporate Selection Panel for P4 level positions and below** will consist of the Deputy Director, Talent and People Services, OHR/BMS or Deputy Director, Strategic People Management, OHR/BMS (Chairperson), Bureau representatives at P5-

D1 levels and other members as needed. The Panels will have one or several meetings as required to make decisions. Recommendations of the Corporate Selection Panels will be signed by the Chairperson and submitted to the Associate Administrator for approval of D1 and above positions and to the Director, BMS, for P5 and below positions.

The Corporate Selection Panel(s) will:

- Ensure that the proposed selection and placement action is in accordance with the UN Staff Regulations and Rules and UNDP's relevant administrative issuances, including the Recruitment and Selection Policy and the Mobility Policy;
- Conduct the Selection process and ensure that it is fair, objective, transparent and without bias;
- Review all relevant implications of the proposed selection;
- Review the candidate profiles and recommend the most suitable candidate;
- Maintain discretion and confidentiality.

### **Responsibilities of the Office of Human Resources**

In collaboration with the Bureaux, OHR/BMS will be responsible and accountable for the filling of vacant positions and placement of staff members as follows:

- Identify encumbered rotational positions and the respective staff members encumbering these positions who are due to rotate;
- Verify the eligibility of staff members who wish to participate in a reassignment through pools exercise;
- Prepare, in consultation with the hiring manager, vacancy announcements based on the database of generic job profiles, job descriptions of the positions for inclusion in the Annual Rotation Catalogue;
- Prepare lists of suitable staff members;
- Prepare submissions of lists of suitable staff members to the Corporate Selection Committees and Panels, as appropriate, for the development of selection recommendations;
- Inform the staff member of the placement decision;
- Provide advice on career paths;
- Provide advice on mobility and rotation to staff members.

### **Responsibilities of the Bureaux**

In the discharge of his or her corporate responsibility to deliver mandated programmes and activities, Bureau Directors and their designates are responsible for the following:

- Participate in the Corporate Shortlisting and Selection Committees and Panels adhering to a corporate priorities stance and ensuring that the selection process is fair, objective, transparent and without bias;
- Take part in the preparation of the assessments, the marking of the written assessments and the conduct of competency-based interviews and other assessments, as applicable, for the purposes of identifying suitable candidates to fill vacant positions;
- Provide inputs on the application of the evaluation criteria;
- Provide inputs to the suitability criteria, that are objective and related to the functions of the position and the required skills, knowledge and competencies as stipulated in the position announcements.

### **Responsibilities of Staff Members**

Staff members are expected to

- Review the job openings advertised in the annual mobility exercise, and consider applying to suitable positions;
- Apply to a job opening at any time before the deadline for applications expires in accordance with this policy;
- Adhere to the tour of duty of their positions.