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To: All UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Staff Members

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Subject: **Relocation Grant (RLG)**

As you know, the lump sum pilot option in lieu of the existing unaccompanied shipment entitlement was introduced on 19 January 2001 as the Relocation Grant (RLG) in response to UNDP's commitment to: create flexible tools that facilitate the cost effective mobilization of staff members; support diverse family situations; *and* attain administrative simplicity and enhance personal choices for staff with minimal organizational involvement.

During the two years of implementation, we have been closely monitoring its functioning. We have examined UNDP's actual experience with the scheme, taking into account administrative simplicity, cost-effectiveness, and enhanced personal choices for staff. In addition, we have had a number of discussions with other UN organizations applying the RLG, not only to share experiences but, with a view to adopting a unified lump sum rate structure.

Our conclusion is that the main objectives and principles for introducing the RLG pilot have been fully met, but the amounts initially established need to be revised to take into consideration the current global average costs for unaccompanied shipments. Consequently, the new revised rates are:

- a) ***Assignments of one year or more:***
- i) *All eligible staff members except Resident Coordinators and Junior Professional Officers (JPOs):*
- single rate, US\$10,000
 - family rate, US\$15,000

- ii) *Junior Professional Officers (JPOs):*
 - single rate, US\$6,000
 - family rate, US\$9,000
 - iii) *Resident Coordinators:* irrespective of their family status, US\$20,000.
- b) ***Assignments of less than one year:*** US\$1,200.

The above rates apply with immediate effect. The old rates will apply to any initial assignment, reassignment or separation process initiated before the issuance date of this circular.

I am pleased to attach guidelines containing up-dated policies and procedures governing the RLG, which are the result of the comprehensive internal review and close inter-agency collaboration, and reflect the experience and lessons learned.

Should you require any clarification or additional information on this subject, please contact the OHR Service Centre serving your duty station or organizational unit.

Thank you.



United Nations Development Programme

RLG

Relocation Grant

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Office of Human Resources
Bureau of Management

Relocation Grant (RLG)

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I. Introduction

1. The Relocation Grant (RLG) was introduced in UNDP on 19 January 2001 as a pilot in response to UNDP's commitment to:
 - a) create flexible tools that facilitate the cost effective mobilization of staff members;
 - b) support diverse family situations; *and*
 - c) attain administrative simplicity and enhance personal choices for staff, with minimal organizational involvement.

2. When launching the RLG, the objectives were to:
 - a) utilize the current entitlements structure more purposefully and practically;
 - b) reduce unnecessary shipments;
 - c) achieve greater cost-effectiveness;
 - d) provide staff members with financial means and a range of options so that they may more effectively manage their lives in the context of mobility; *and*
 - e) facilitate reassignments by providing staff members with choices as to how best to re-establish their household.

3. In addition, the following were the principles taken into consideration when establishing the RLG:
 - a) it had to be cost effective for the Organization but sufficiently attractive for staff members;
 - b) it had to exchange absolute control and precision for freedom and simplicity; *and*
 - c) it had to be simple for the Organization to administer and maintain, and simple to understand and request by the staff member

II. General

Definition

4. The RLG is a lump sum payment for which an eligible staff member can opt as an alternative to his/her existing unaccompanied shipment entitlement.

Eligibility

5. The RLG option is open to all internationally-recruited staff members governed under the 100 and 200 Series of the United Nations (UN) Staff Rules.
6. Eligible staff members, who do not wish to opt for the RLG, continue to be entitled to their normal unaccompanied shipment entitlement ¹.
7. Internationally-recruited ALD staff members governed under the 300 Series of the UN Staff Rules are not eligible for the RLG. When an ALD staff member is converted to the 100 or 200 Series of the UN Staff Rules:
 - a) *in the same duty station*, he/she will only be eligible to opt for the RLG for himself/herself upon his/her next official move to another duty station. However, the difference between the single rate and the family rate may be paid if an eligible family member travels at UNDP's expense to the duty station and the staff member is expected to continue for more than six months beyond the date on which the RLG difference is requested; *and*
 - b) *involving a change in duty station and country*, he/she is eligible to opt for the RLG.

Applicability

8. The RLG option applies to movements involving a change in country upon:
 - a) initial appointment;
 - b) reassignment/transfer; *and*
 - c) separation from service.

¹ As set out in UN Staff Rule 107.21(i) or 207.20(j) as appropriate.

9. The RLG option does not apply to movements within countries. In these cases, staff members retain their rights to unaccompanied shipments.

Conditions

10. When the RLG is selected, the staff member is required to agree that he/she:
 - a) will manage his/her own relocation, without the direct administrative assistance (or involvement) of the Organization;
 - b) accepts full responsibility for re-establishing his/her household, including any and all shipping of personal effects;
 - c) accepts full responsibility for the costs related to such shipments, including insurance for loss or damage to personal effects, or customs fees; *and*
 - d) waives his/her normal entitlement for unaccompanied shipment of personal effects as established in the UN Staff Rules.
11. If the staff member should, at any stage in the process, require the direct involvement or administrative assistance of UNDP, he/she may not opt for the RLG.
12. UNDP will not be responsible for any delays in the arrival of personal effects or additional expenses that may be incurred, or liabilities that may arise, as a result of the exercise of the RLG.

Use of the Relocation Grant

13. The RLG may be used, at the staff member's discretion, in any manner deemed best to facilitate his/her relocation (e.g. through storage of personal effects, total or partial shipment, or disposal and replacement at the duty station, et c.).
14. No proof will be required on how the lump sum was spent.

UNDP's support

15. When the RLG is selected, the staff member is responsible for making all arrangements concerning the movement of his/her personal effects and household goods, and to deal directly with the packers/transporters/storage companies, etc., of their choice.

16. UNDP offices will **only** assist staff in facilitating customs clearance and import/export procedures.
17. For shipments:
 - a) **departing from New York**, a list of New York-based local reputable international shipping and storage firms is available on BOM's website (<http://intra.undp.org/bom>);
and
 - b) **departing from outside New York**, Operations Managers may provide, upon request, a list of local reputable international moving and storage companies.

UNDP will not be responsible for soliciting bids, nor for the performance of the listed moving and storage companies.

Special Operations Approach (SOA)

18. Staff members assigned to a Special Operations Approach (SOA) location are entitled to the RLG under the same terms and conditions as other eligible staff members, i.e. at the full rates indicated in paragraphs 25, 29, 31 and 32.
19. The RLG will not be paid upon conversion to normal status of an SOA location. In this case, staff members may exercise their right to unaccompanied shipment, provided that their services at the SOA location converted to normal status are expected to continue for six months or more beyond the date on which the shipment begins.

Full Removal

20. The RLG is an option exclusively in lieu of the existing unaccompanied shipment arrangements. Consequently, it is not an option in lieu of full removal of personal effects and household goods as set out in UN Staff Rule 107.27. However, a staff member who may have acquired the entitlement to full removal², may be exceptionally authorized to opt for the RLG provided that he/she agrees, in writing, to waive the full removal entitlement.

² Full removal is not applicable for new appointments to UNDP. Staff members on transfer, loan or secondment from other UN agencies to UNDP, who already have full removal entitlement with the other UN agencies, will not be able to carry such an entitlement over to UN DP service.

21. A staff member who has a full removal entitlement and is reassigned to another duty station, may opt for the RLG in lieu of his/her unaccompanied shipment entitlement, to or from that duty station, as a portion of the full removal entitlement.

III. Amount

Global Rates

22. The RLG does not reimburse actual costs (i.e. does not equate dollar for dollar with the unaccompanied shipment entitlement) because its intent is to:
 - a) facilitate choice; *and*
 - b) exchange absolute control and precision for freedom and simplicity.
23. The RLG is structured on the basis of global rates for assignments of one year or more, and less than one year.
24. The global rates are established taking into consideration the global average costs for unaccompanied shipments. Furthermore, the rates are reviewed periodically, at least every two years and, if necessary, revised as appropriate.

Assignments of One Year or More

25. **All Eligible Staff Members except Resident Coordinators and Junior Professional Officers (JPOs).** There are two global rates for all eligible staff members, except Resident Coordinators and JPOs (see paragraphs 29 to 31), single and family ³. As of the date of issuance of this circular, the rates are:
 - a) *single rate*: US\$10,000; *and*
 - b) *family rate*: US\$15,000.
26. In order for the RLG to be payable at the family rate, on initial travel or reassignment, at least one eligible family member must travel at UNDP's expense to the duty station ⁴. If no eligible family member travels at UNDP's expense to the duty station, the RLG will be paid at the single rate. The difference between the single rate and the family rate may be paid if an eligible family member subsequently travels at UNDP's expense to the duty station and the staff member is expected to continue for more than six months beyond the date on which the RLG difference is requested.

³ These rates also apply to SOA locations.

⁴ For staff members assigned to SOA locations, the family rate may only be authorized if at least one eligible family member travels at the Organization's expense to the approved APA duty station or elsewhere. If no family member travels, the RLG is paid at the single rate.

27. The lump sum amount is based on the staff member's recognized status at the time of the relocation. Consequently, a change in the staff member's status (e.g. marriage, divorce, new child, children who cease to be dependants, etc.) after the RLG has been paid, will not give rise to an additional payment at the duty station. Any new entitlement may only be paid on the next relocation.
28. **Example.** If a single staff member marries during his/her assignment, the organization will not provide additional monies to relocate the spouse in mid-assignment. However, upon the next official move of duty station and country, the family rate may be paid.
29. **Junior Professional Officers (JPOs).** There are two rates for JPOs, single and family, which are 60 % of the amounts in paragraph 25⁵. As of the date of issuance of this circular, the rates are:
- a) *single rate:* US\$6,000; and
 - b) *family rate:* US\$9,000.
30. Paragraphs 26 to 28 also apply to JPOs.
31. **Resident Coordinators.** There is only one rate for Resident Coordinators, irrespective of their family status, which is double the single rate under paragraph 25⁶. Therefore, as of the date of issuance of this circular, the rate is US\$ 20,000.

Assignments of Less than One Year

32. There is only one rate for assignments of less than one year and an unaccompanied shipment entitlement of 100 kilos, irrespective of the staff member's family status⁷. As of the date of issuance of this circular, the rate is US\$1,200.
33. If an assignment of less than one year is subsequently extended so that the total period is one year or more, the staff member is entitled to the amounts reflected in paragraphs 25, 29 or 31, as appropriate, less the amount already exercised under paragraph 32. The staff member is expected to continue for more than six months beyond the date on which the RLG difference is requested.

5 These rates also apply to SOA locations.

6 This rate also applies to SOA locations.

7 This rate also applies to SOA locations.

Both Spouses are UNDP/UN Staff Members

34. **Upon Initial Appointment or Change of Duty Station** . Where both spouses are staff members of UNDP or another organization of the UN common system applying the RLG, and:
- a) ***travelling to the same duty station*** :
 - i) *at the same time* , they may only receive one combined RLG payment at the family rate;
 - ii) *at different times and without dependant children* , both spouses may each receive the RLG at the single rate; *and*
 - iii) *at different times and with dependant children* , one staff member receives the RLG at the single rate and the other at the family rate provided at least one of the dependant children travels and is installed at the duty station at the Organization's expense.
 - b) ***travelling to different duty stations*** : each staff member may receive RLG at the single rate. If they have dependant children, one of the spouses may receive RLG at the family rate provided at least one child travels and is installed at his/her duty station at the Organization's expense.
35. **Upon Separation from Service** . The spouse who separates first is entitled to expenses for shipment of unaccompanied personal effects; his/her entitlement does not cease until two years after the date of separation of the other spouse. He/she may opt to receive RLG in lieu of unaccompanied shipment of personal effects.

IV. Procedure

Request

36. Staff members who wish to opt for the RLG must complete the Form “Request for Relocation Grant (Lump Sum in Lieu of Unaccompanied Shipment)”⁸ and submit it for approval:
- a) *on initial appointment*, to the Human Resources Associate serving the arriving office;
 - b) *on reassignment/transfer*, to the local Human Resources Associate serving the arriving office; *and*
 - c) *upon separation from service*, to the local Human Resources Associate serving the departing office.
37. In the form, staff members agree to:
- a) manage their own relocation, without the direct administrative assistance (or involvement) of the organization;
 - b) accept full responsibility for re-establishing their households, including any and all shipping of personal effects;
 - c) accept full responsibility for the costs related to such shipments, including insurance, recovery for loss or damage, or customs fees; *and*
 - d) waive their normal entitlement for unaccompanied shipment of personal effects as established in the UN Staff Rules.
38. If the RLG option is selected, it will not be possible to revert to the normal shipment entitlement. The Organization will not be responsible for any delays or additional expense that may be incurred, or liabilities that may arise, as a result of the exercise of the lump sum option.
39. The travel authorization will indicate that the staff member has opted for the RLG (lump sum) in lieu of his/her unaccompanied shipment of personal effects entitlement.

⁸ The form may be downloaded from OHR’s intranet site (<http://intra.undp.org/ohr>) or UNDP’s portal (<http://portal.undp.org>).

Payment

40. **Movements administered by New York Headquarters** . The OHR Service Centre will authorize payments. These will be made by electronic fund transfer directly to a staff member's bank account. Payments will not be made in alternate currencies or to the staff member at the place of relocation.
41. **Movements administered by Country Offices** . Representatives are authorized to make RLG payments in the appropriate amounts upon notice from the OHR Service Centre.
42. **Advance**. The RLG may be paid in advance of travel upon receipt and approval of the duly completed request form (see paragraph 36) as follows:
 - a) **on initial appointment** , before the estimated departure date of the candidate to the duty station, provided he/she has been medically cleared for initial appointment and, in the case of a Resident Representative/Coordinator, government clearance has been received.
 - b) **on reassignment/transfer** , up to two months before the estimated departure date of the staff member to the new duty station, provided he/she has been medically cleared for reassignment/travel and, in the case of a Resident Representative/Coordinator, government clearance has been received; *and*
 - c) **upon separation from service** , up to one year before separation from service, provided the staff member indicates, in writing, the exact date of separation/retirement, including early retirement. Appropriate recoveries will be made from staff members who receive an advance of the RLG and do not separate on the date previously certified. In such a case, the staff member may also lose his/her right to exercise the RLG option on a subsequent transfer or upon actual separation.
43. **Currency**. The RLG is paid in US Dollars.
44. **Funding Source**. The RLG is charged to the same funding source against which the staff member's salary is charged.

Claim

45. The staff member is not required to submit a voucher of expenses or evidence of the manner in which it is used, when taking the lump sum option.

V. Other

Responsibility and Accountability

46. UNDP's obligation under the UN Staff Rules is to assist staff members with the shipment of their personal and household goods in accordance with the governing provisions. With due regard for the principles and objectives set forth in this circular, UNDP has chosen to provide staff with a wider range of shipment options.
47. Staff members are expected to use the RLG option responsibly and in accordance with the principles and standards set forth in this circular. They should not expect additional administrative assistance beyond that which has been specified in this policy.
48. Heads of Offices and Operations Managers have the responsibility and accountability to ensure that the principles, standards and requirements set forth in this document are respected and properly applied.

Relation to Other Entitlements

49. Payment of the RLG does not affect the staff member's entitlement to assignment grant (both lump sum and DSA portions) or repatriation grant.
50. The RLG is non-pensionable.