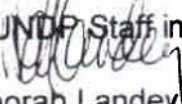


UNDP/ADM/00/10
21 March 2000

To: All UNDP Staff in Country Offices and at Headquarters

From: 
Deborah Landey
Director
Office of Human Resources
Bureau of Management

Subject: United Nations Peace-Keeping Missions

The Secretary-General attaches great importance to the quick deployment of staff to serve with any one of the United Nations peace-keeping missions and has called upon the cooperation of organizations in the Common System to assist in facilitating these missions. (UN circular – Release of Staff for UN Field Missions - dated 2 July 1999 refers). In this regard, UNDP continues to support the release of its staff to serve on short-term peace-keeping mission assignments and encourages them to take the opportunity to acquire additional experience and skills. Managers are therefore strongly urged to facilitate the release of staff members for short term mission assignments, bearing in mind the Organization's needs.

Since the issuance of circular UNDP/ADM/95/1 of 3 January 1995 on the subject of mission assignments, there has been an increase in the number of staff wanting to extend their mission assignment. These extended missions have made human resources planning difficult, sometimes ending in staff having to be placed on special leave without pay upon completion of their UN assignment, pending placement against a post. However, as UNDP's budget constraints continue, it is now critical that we adhere strictly to the guidelines on mission assignments.

This circular therefore details the process of releasing staff for UN mission assignments and defines the responsibilities of staff members and managers in the process. These provisions are effective immediately.

1. Criteria regarding UN mission assignments

Eligibility – international and locally recruited staff under the 100 and 200 Series of Staff Rules with at least four years of service, both at headquarters and in country offices are eligible for mission assignments.

SSA, ALD contract holders, staff on limited appointments and staff on 100 series fixed-term appointments who have been employed by UNDP for less than four years will not be eligible.

In addition, staff whose date of retirement falls due within the period of a potential mission assignment will only be granted an extension beyond retirement age to the end of the mission's mandate.

Duration – the maximum period of a mission assignment will be two years. During the period of assignment, seniority in grade for international staff for promotion purposes will continue to apply. For locally recruited staff, the period spent on mission will count towards UNDP's one year promotion requirement of encumbering and fully performing the functions of a higher level post at UNDP, if their position on mission is at the higher level.

Lien on Post

First year – for locally recruited staff at headquarters and in country offices, (i.e., support service staff and national professional officers), supervisors and bureau management will be required to maintain a specific lien against that staff member's post, for a minimum period of one year. The lien will be effective the date of release of the staff member and will include extensions, provided the total period does not exceed one year.

Second year – managers will have the option, based on the work demands of their units, to either agree to the extension of the mission assignee and continue to maintain the specific lien, or, request the staff member's return to UNDP in which case s/he will be obligated to return, without exception, to the post against which s/he retains a lien.

A specific lien will not be required for internationally recruited staff who are subject to rotation through ad-hoc or reassignment exercises, unless mission assignments are expected to be less than one year. However, a specific lien will be maintained for international non-rotational staff.

2. Applying for a mission assignment

Prior to presenting an application for rostering purposes with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Administration and Logistics Division (DPKO/FALD), staff members should discuss their interest with their immediate supervisor and their respective bureau management/heads of offices to ascertain the feasibility of their undertaking a mission assignment. Subsequently, and once the staff member has received DPKO/FALD's request for release, the following steps will apply:

- staff member advises immediate supervisor and bureau management, or head of office, of DPKO/FALD's request and, upon bureau management/head of office approval, all parties agree to a mutually convenient release date;
- for local and national staff, as well as for non-rotational international staff, management indicates its agreement to maintain a lien against the staff member's

post for an initial period of one year, on the attached 'Release for UN Peace-Keeping Mission Assignment' form (Annex I);

- prior to departure, the staff member prepares hand-over notes and ensures that leave records are updated. In addition, should the release date fall before the mid point of the PAR cycle, performance should be documented and signed by the staff member and supervisor. Staff leaving after the mid point of the PAR cycle should complete their PAR through section 9, in consultation with the supervisor.

3. Extension of assignment

As outlined above, a lien will be maintained for locally recruited and international staff for their initial release and extensions that do not exceed a period of one year. However, subsequent extensions, that would extend the assignment into the second year of mission duty will require approval by the bureau management or head of office and agreement to maintaining a specific lien in the case of locally recruited and international non-rotational staff. Absolutely no extension can be approved without the continued lien against the staff member's post.

4. Completion of assignment

Staff should inform their releasing units at least two months in advance of their completion of the mission assignment to allow for adequate work planning. Prior to returning to UNDP, the staff member must utilise any leave earned during the mission assignment. Management should also take this into account for planning purposes. Therefore, the lien against post will continue to be in effect for the duration of the staff member's leave, regardless of whether this is beyond the two-year maximum period. It is incumbent upon staff to ensure that their leave records and UN Mission Assignment Performance Report are forwarded to their bureau management upon their return to duty to UNDP.

Mission returnees are expected to return to the post against which a lien was maintained during their absence, and will not be eligible to apply to vacancies elsewhere for a period of a year, unless agreed to by their supervisor.

The minimum period between mission assignments, irrespective of the length of the previous assignment, will be two years.

5. Temporary Personnel

Replacements for staff on mission will be through internal redeployment and/or temporary personnel. When using an SSA as a replacement for a mission assignee, the term of employment of the SSA will be exceptionally extended, if necessary, to a maximum of 27 months (cumulative) and will be strictly limited for this purpose only.

