

United Nations Development Programme

Sustainable human development



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To: All Internationally recruited professional staff

From: Robin Kinloch
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Subject: **Introduction of the Mission Approach**

The mission approach will be implemented as of 1 October 1996 for internationally recruited professional staff assigned to non-family duty stations. This circular provides a summary of the mission approach.

1. The increase in critical emergency situations in recent years has had a significant impact on the capacity of all field-oriented organizations to mobilize their human resources. The normal approach of assigning staff has not always proven to be well suited in these situations. Therefore, and following extensive internal and inter-agency consultations, UNDP has decided to apply a “mission approach” which rationalizes the logic of placing staff in certain high-risk locations while providing a reasonable incentive for undertaking the hardships of mission service.
2. The principal criterion for designating assignments as being in “mission” status will be the non-family stations declared by the Office of the UN Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD), for security purposes. Duty stations declared non-family but expected to revert shortly to family status may not be designated as a mission area. UNDP Headquarters consults with the other organizations using the mission approach prior to making the designation. Presently, UNHCR, WFP and the UN are using the mission approach.
3. Assignments to mission areas generate difficult family separations whereby families must necessarily organize their lives around two households. Similarly difficult conditions are also imposed on single staff in such situations. Under the current assignment approach, entitlements and allowances are established according to the staff member’s duty station, and quite frequently the personal and family needs of the staff member are not adequately addressed.
4. Henceforth, under the mission approach, an Administrative Place of Assignment (APA) will be designated, following inter-agency consultation, for each mission area. Staff assigned to mission areas will have as their official duty station the designated APA. The APA is normally a nearby country where the hardship is not severe and adequate educational facilities and reliable transport connections to the mission area exist. In many cases, the families of staff assigned to mission areas will choose to move to the nearby

country APA. However, staff may elect to have their previous duty station as the APA when family members remain at the previous duty station. If a staff member's family chooses instead to go to the home country, spouse's home country or another location, then all entitlements and allowances will be established based on the nearby country APA.

5. The remuneration package is based on the selected APA (designated nearby country or previous duty station). In addition, the staff members will receive a Mission Subsistence Allowance (MSA). The MSA is similar to DSA, in that it covers the principal living expenses at the mission area, while including a component to reflect the hardships. UNDP's mission approach has been designed so that the combination of MSA plus the entitlements at the APA more accurately reflect the needs of the staff member and, where applicable, the family household.

6. Staff who are posted under the mission approach will continue to benefit from an increased amount of travel, which serves as a relief from the stress inherent in such assignments, and as an opportunity to reunite with family members.

7. It is also intended that UNDP's mission assignments, when there is the added burden of family separation involved, will be significantly shorter in duration than normal. Under these circumstances, the missions would normally be of a one to two year duration.

8. This new approach should provide managers with a better tool to mobilize human resources within our changing work environment and to meet the needs of staff who are forced to be separated from their families and/or significant others.

9. In the further, staff will be informed whether the duty station they are being considered for is a non-family duty station where the mission approach applies. OHR will endeavor to make available detailed information on entitlement options. Staff currently serving in non-family duty stations -- and who will be converted to mission status as of 1 October 1996 -- are being contacted directly.

10. The following duty stations will come under the mission approach as of 1 October 1996:

Algeria (pending)	Liberia
Afghanistan *	Somalia *
Bosnia	Tajikistan
Burundi	

* Only for staff who are actually residing and working in the mission area.