

EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE

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To: Global Management Team
Representatives, Deputy Representatives
Global Management Team
Human Resources Network

From: Anthony Lake
Executive Director

Recruitment and staffing in emergency situations

The international community is faced with increasingly complex humanitarian crises. The overall aim of UNICEF's humanitarian response is to save lives, alleviate suffering and protect the rights of children. The recruitment and staffing process for emergency situation, while based on the same general principles as UNICEF's selection process for regular appointments, takes into account the need, first and foremost, to deploy experienced personnel to emergency situations as fast as possible and to provide support to staff working under challenging conditions.

Section 1

Applicability

1.1 This directive applies to the recruitment and staffing process for emergency situations. It does not apply to selection cases that would entail a promotion or change of category of staff members serving at the same duty station, as such cases are subject to the regular staff selection process as stipulated in CF/EXD/2009-008 on Staff Selection.

1.2 An emergency situation, for the purpose of this directive, is normally characterised by a rapid onset and is temporary in nature, however, longer-term emergencies may also qualify, especially if warranted by the context and severity of the emergency situation. It depends on the nature and extent of the natural event or crisis. Non-family status and hardship conditions, even if severe, are not sufficient factors by themselves for declaring an emergency situation for the purpose of this directive. Similarly, an emergency situation can occur in the absence of prior non-family or hardship conditions.

1.3 The Executive Director, on advice from the Director, Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS), shall pronounce an "emergency situation" for a country, region or subject-matter area¹, for up to six months at a time, which he/she can extend if the situation so requires. Normally, all posts in the affected country, region or subject-matter area will be included in the emergency provisions under this directive, unless specified otherwise by the Executive Director.

¹ An example of a "subject matter area" is a potential avian influenza pandemic, which may affect certain technical functions across all UNICEF offices globally.

Section 2

Immediate response

2.1 Our emergency response system provides an immediate, consistent and predictable staffing response in case of an emergency. UNICEF's organizational emergency response system is under review and will, therefore, evolve further². The current emergency response system provides several staffing options, depending on the level of the response. These options are further explained in the remainder of this section.

Emergency Response Team (ERT)

2.2 The Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) in New York has staff members on standby that may be deployed as emergency coordinators within 48-72 hours for surge capacity needs. ERT members are deployed for a maximum period of four to six weeks.

2.3 To request a deployment, the head of the office receiving ERT members ("the receiving office") shall formally request an ERT deployment with a Terms of Reference to the Director, EMOPS.

2.4 A receiving office shall fund the ERT members' travel from New York to the emergency duty station, including DSA, terminal expenses and hazard pay if applicable.

Temporary internal redeployment of staff

2.5 Suitable and pre-screened staff members are identified for emergency deployment on mission status for up to three continuous months, usually through regional rosters of pre-screened candidates.

2.6 Staff members on the rosters are expected to deploy immediately in the event of an emergency, and their supervisors are expected to release them immediately. These staff members must ensure that their travel documents and periodic medical clearance are valid during the entire stand-by period.

2.7 The regional response system also constitutes the basis for cross-regional deployment of staff members, coordinated by the Division of Human Resources (DHR) at Headquarters.

2.8 Staff in all categories on temporary internal redeployment to a duty station in an emergency situation will be on official travel status to the emergency duty station and receive travel allowances accordingly. They will continue to receive salary, benefits and entitlements based on their regular duty station. The receiving office is responsible for covering the following costs:

- (a) travel costs from the regular duty station to the emergency duty station, including DSA, terminal expenses and excess baggage, in accordance with the provisions of the Human Resources Policy and Procedure Manual, chapter 12;
- (b) payment of hazard pay, if applicable, and any other differences in salary and entitlements at the receiving office;
- (c) costs for hiring a replacement on a temporary basis, if needed, at the regular duty station³.

Engagement of consultants and individual contractors

2.9 Contracting of consultants and individual contractors shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the HR Policy and Procedure Manual, chapter 6, section 2⁴, and this directive (see section 4).

²Future changes in the UNICEF emergency response system, including clarifications of accountabilities and specific guidance to regional and country offices, are currently under review and will be issued as and when appropriate.

³ Receiving offices in emergency situations may apply for centrally administered funds, e.g., the Emergency Programme Fund, in order to alleviate financial strains and/or manage short-term financial bottlenecks in connection with rapid onset emergencies.

⁴ This chapter will be replaced by a forthcoming administrative instruction.

Offices are invited to request the DHR business partner for emergencies to source candidates via the emergency roster.

Recruitment of external candidates on temporary appointment (TA)

2.10 The selection process leading to temporary appointments shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of CF/EXD/2009-008 on Staff Selection, section 11, and this directive; however, the approving authority for appointing temporary staff members shall be the same as stipulated in paragraph 3.7 of this directive.

Standby partners (SBP)

2.11 UNICEF has entered into Standby Arrangements with a number of external partners, who maintain a roster of emergency surge capacity personnel, who can be deployed upon request to enhance UNICEF's response to humanitarian crises. The group of Standby Partners comprises NGOs, governmental agencies and private companies. The main purpose of a Standby Arrangement is to ensure rapid and flexible deployment of resources to provide additional temporary support to UNICEF.

2.12 When requesting standby personnel, the following criteria should be met:

- (a) the technical capacities of existing staff are inadequate to respond to the emergency;
- (b) the services of Standby Personnel are only required for a short period of time (three to six months, although in some instances this can be extended up to a year).

2.13 Standby personnel have a formal contract with the Standby Partner, not UNICEF. When deployed, they are required by the Standby Partner to sign an Undertaking outlining their responsibilities towards UNICEF, and binding them to follow the same rules and regulations as regular UNICEF staff members.

2.14 In the deployment process, the Standby Partner handles most formalities and practical arrangements, including screening (interview, reference check etc.), induction training, pre-deployment briefing, contracts, transport to and from the country of deployment, insurance and vaccinations. All related costs are covered by the Standby Partner (salary, travel, DSA, etc.).

2.15 Standby personnel should be fully integrated in the UNICEF operation. UNICEF is responsible for providing office, logistic and security support for the standby personnel. While standby personnel are provided free of charge, there are a number of cost implications for which the receiving office has to prepare and budget:

- (a) internal travel within the country and region of the operation;
- (b) travel to and from duty station upon arrival/departure, if duty station is other than closest port of entry;
- (c) travel to Rest and Recuperation (R&R) destination;
- (d) office space and equipment (mobile phones, laptops etc.);
- (e) car insurance, if driving in an official capacity is required.

2.16 Standby personnel are regarded as gratis personnel, and are accorded the status of "Experts on Mission" within the meaning of Article VI of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. They shall be included in all UNICEF/ UNDSS security arrangements. The country office shall, for security purposes, ensure that the standby personnel are reflected on personnel lists and charts.

2.17 Requests for standby personnel should be forwarded to EMOPS Geneva, Inter-Agency and Humanitarian Partnership Unit, Standby Team. The requesting office should fill the formal request form and send it together with the Terms of Reference.

Section 3

Medium to long-term response: emergency recruitment

3.1 In addition to the short-term measures detailed in section 2, longer term appointments may be necessary in emergency situations. The selection of staff in emergency situations shall follow the UNICEF selection principles as stipulated in CF/EXD/2009-008 on Staff Selection, paragraph 2.6.

Direct selection through talent groups

3.2 To the extent possible, candidates for both temporary and fixed-term appointments should be sourced from talent groups through the “direct selection” mechanism, as described in CF/EXD/2009-008, paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7⁵, in order to expedite the process.

3.3 The hiring unit’s recommendation of a candidate sourced from a talent group should be submitted, through the HR unit and the Head of Office, to the approving authority for final selection decision (see paragraph 3.7).

Fast-track selection process

3.4 When direct selection from talent groups is not feasible, sourcing through other means should commence. Such selection should be conducted through a competitive process from a pool of qualified candidates, using transparent and objective assessment methods, so as to ensure the selection of the most competent candidate.

3.5 The selection process follows the steps stipulated in CF/EXD/2009-008 on Staff Selection, however with the following exceptions and guiding principles:

- (a) The selection process may commence prior to the formal establishment of the post, but no Letter of Appointment may be issued, or commitment vis-à-vis the candidate be made, until the post or function has been formally established.
- (b) The use of generic job profiles (GJPs) is strongly encouraged and when GJPs are used, no further classification or approval from DHR is required. Where a specific job description is deemed necessary, classification shall follow the established process. However, offices may initiate the selection process on the basis of a temporary classification as submitted by the office.
- (c) Vacancy announcements for seven to 14 days are encouraged, but they are not mandatory, provided that applications or profiles of at least three qualified candidates are available (for example through the global web roster of qualified candidates maintained by the DHR emergency recruitment unit, and/or similar rosters maintained by regional offices⁶).
- (d) Candidates, including former staff members and retirees, are required to fill out a personal history form (or electronic equivalent) and submit their two latest performance appraisals.

⁵ DHR and local HR units maintain talent groups of pre-assessed candidates, who have already been reviewed by Central Review Boards (CRBs) and who are ready to be selected for regular positions in a very short timeframe. Profiles retained in talent groups normally include an indication on whether the person is willing to work in an emergency and on short notice.

⁶ To the extent possible, candidates in emergency rosters should be continuously assessed and selected through the regular selection process stipulated in CF/EXD/2008-009 (see paragraph 1.10) and thus – if successful – be placed in regular talent groups, which would facilitate their quick direct selection as per paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3.

- (e) External candidates must meet all minimum requirements as stipulated in the vacancy announcement or job description / generic job profile.
- (f) The eligibility criteria for internal candidates as established in CF/EXD/2009-008, paragraph 5.2 (relating to tour of duty and minimum time-in-post) may be waived by the approving authority (see paragraph 3.7), however only if no unreasonable impact on other UNICEF offices (including offices that are also in emergency situations) results from it, as deemed appropriate by the approving authority (see paragraph 3.7).
- (g) The Head of Office establishes a selection panel, which should, to the extent feasible, be composed as stipulated in CF/EXD/2009-008, paragraph 6.9, while exceptions may be made by the Head of Office if required by the circumstances. The selection panel shall conduct interviews or desk reviews, as appropriate, and, optionally, any other assessments that are deemed to increase the validity of the process.
- (h) Reference checks, including a verification of academic degrees, as well as a check with the most recent employer, shall be conducted for all recommended external candidates, including former staff members. Only candidates with satisfactory references shall be included in the list of recommended candidates.
- (i) CRB review is not mandatory⁷. However CRB review through a fast-track mechanism is recommended (e.g., through remote CRB communication, see CF/EXD/2009-009, paragraph 3.6; and within three calendar days, see the same directive, paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2). Where no CRB review takes place, selected candidates who would have been required under CF/EXD/2009-008 to be reviewed by a CRB (i.e., internal candidates on promotion, internal candidates on change of staff category and external candidates who were not sourced from a talent group), but were not reviewed, will have to undergo such review prior to their next regular assignment in UNICEF.
- (j) The chair of the selection panel shall transmit the selection record and recommendation of one or more candidates, through his/her Head of Office, to the appropriate decision making authority, pursuant to paragraph 3.7.

Single source selection of external candidates

3.6 In cases where it is in the best interest of UNICEF not to undertake a competitive selection process, but to conduct a single source selection, the Head of Office may request the Director, DHR, to authorize an exception to the competitive selection process. Such a request, its justification and the authorization by the Director, DHR, if any, shall be documented and attached to the respective recruitment file.

Decision

3.7 Selection decisions shall be taken by the approving authority, as follows:

- (a) by the Executive Director for posts at the levels of D-1, D-2 and posts of UNICEF representative / Head of Office;
- (b) by the Director, DHR, for post in the International Professional category except for those mentioned under (a) above;
- (c) by the responsible Regional Director for posts in the National Professional Officer category in the respective region, and General Service category in the Regional Office;

⁷ Selected candidates who do not require CRB review under the regular staff selection process (CF/EXD/2009-008) (i.e., staff members on lateral move and internal or external candidates from talent groups who have already received CRB clearance in the preceding 24 months) will be recruited as regular staff members and are not subject to the restrictions stipulated in (i) above. The same provision applies for cases where the office chose to submit the process to a CRB for a review in accordance with established policy.

(d) by the Head of Office for posts in the General Service category at the respective country office.

3.8 The approving authority shall normally select the highest-ranking candidate from the selection panel's list of recommended candidates; however, he/she may select another person from the list of recommended candidates if this, in his/her opinion, is in UNICEF's best interest and follows the organization's selection principles more appropriately.

Implementation of selection decision

3.9 The decision to select a candidate shall be implemented upon its official communication to the individual concerned.

3.10 Offers of employment are contingent on the usual clearances and any other pre-employment conditions or criteria which may be established by UNICEF, including a reporting period of normally not more than four weeks. The candidate should be informed that the offer can be withdrawn at any time if any of the preconditions for employment are not met.

3.11 Selected staff members shall be released from their current function, and take up their new functions, normally no later than four weeks from the date the offer letter was sent.

3.12 If the selected candidate fails to take up the functions within the stipulated reporting period, or when it is foreseeable that he/she will fail to do so, the offer may be withdrawn by the approving authority, and the approving authority may select another candidate from the list of recommended candidates.

Section 4

Break in service requirements

4.1 Breaks in service mandated in connection with the recruitment of staff on temporary and fixed-term appointments, as well as consultants and individual contractors, shall be observed, either according to the provisions of CF/AI/2009-005 on Types of Appointment and Categories of Staff, paragraph 5.2 and 5.3, or at 31 calendar days, whichever is shorter.

4.2 Further reductions of break in service requirements up to a minimum of 14 calendar days may be approved by the Director, DHR, on a case-by-case basis.

Section 5

Final provisions

5.1 This executive directive enters into force on 31 December 2010.

5.2 CF/AI/1993-07 on Staffing of UNICEF Offices in Duty Stations under Complex Emergencies, CF/AI/2001-004 on Emergency Response Loans of Staff, as well as any previously established ad-hoc procedures for specific circumstances, are hereby abolished.

(signed) Anthony Lake
Executive Director