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PERSONNEL QUESTIONS

Rotation of staff within the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, entitled "Rotation of staff within the United Nations" (JIU/REP/91/3).

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\* A/46/150.

# REPORT ON THE ROTATION OF STAFF WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS

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## Table of Contents

	<u>Paragraph</u>	<u>page</u>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>		ii
<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1 - 3	1
<b>II. THE NEED FOR STAFF ROTATION AND THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED</b> .....	4 - 23	2
A. Vacancy situation at the regional level	9 - 18	3
B. Hardship conditions at regional duty stations.....	19 - 22	5
<b>III. STAFF ROTATION BETWEEN DUTY STATIONS AND OCCUPATION GROUPS</b> .....	23 - 42	8
A. Staff rotation and career development	33 - 36	10
B. Rotation of the staff of the Regional Commissions.....	39 - 42	11
<b>IV. UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS WITH STAFF ROTATION SYSTEMS</b> .....	43 - 58	13
A. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)..	44 - 47	13
B. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).....	48 - 50	14
C. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).....	51 - 58	15
<b>V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	59 - 61	17
<b>STATISTICAL TABLES</b>		

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff rotation is essential to the United Nations system in order to provide effective technical co-operation programmes to its Member States in the developing countries. The need to institute a mobility programme in the United Nations system has been repeatedly expressed by the General Assembly, since 1958 in Resolution 1294 (XIII). The issue of mobility/rotation has been raised and discussed continuously since then by the General Assembly and the international Civil Service Commission (ICSC), mostly in the context of career development, as well as at a number of Staff-Management Co-ordination Committee (SMCC) sessions. The Joint Inspection Unit, in response to a request made by one of the five regional commissions to examine how best an equitable rotation system could be established, undertook the study to assist the Secretariats in their efforts to establish a formal rotation policy. Chapter I provides the rationale for the study and the methods used.

Chapter II discusses the need for staff rotation and the problems encountered. The inadequate incentives provided to staff members compounded by the lack of an official rotation policy make it difficult to assign staff to hardship duty stations.

Chapter III reviews staff rotation between duty stations and occupation groups and its impact on career development. The report emphasizes that to the extent possible rotation should be linked to career development so that staff are motivated to accept assignments to different duty stations, in particular to hardship duty stations. The need to rotate staff by the Secretariat is limited to some specialized areas and those areas should be identified and posts earmarked for rotation.

In Chapter IV the report discusses United Nations organizations which have special policies on mobility and rotation of staff. The organizations cited are UNDP, UNICEF and UNHCR which are basically field oriented and staff rotation has been integrated into their personnel policies.

In Chapter V the Inspector concludes that the United Nations Secretariat in particular the Regional Commissions will be handled better if a formal personnel policy that included a high factor of mobility, similar to those applied by UNDP, UNICEF and UNHCR is established. He has made five recommendations which he believes will help to expedite the process of Staff Rotation Plan being prepared by the Secretariat.

## I. INTRODUCTION

1 . United Nations Staff Regulation 1.2 states "Staff members are subject to the authority of the Secretary-General and to the assignment by him to any of the activities or offices of the United Nations...". Because this regulation has not been backed by a corresponding personnel policy on re-assignment, staff rotation has been carried out on an ad-hoc basis, resulting in some cases in high vacancy rates, an uneven distribution of staff in certain occupational groups as well as between Headquarters and the field (see paragraph 16). Most important of all, staff rotation is carried out without regard to career development. The effect of this has been to erode the morale of staff members who have been assigned to hardship duty stations for periods longer than might be considered reasonable.

2 . The present study was prompted by the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) which requested JIU to examine the rates of vacancies within the framework of an effective staff rotation system for the United Nations. However, in the course of the analysis, other important issues emerged such as hardship conditions at regional duty stations, the linkage between the vacancy situation and staff rotation, as well as that between staff rotation and career development. Therefore, as the report progressed, it acquired new dimensions.

3 . In preparing the study, the Inspector has consulted previous JIU reports on vacancy problems of the Commissions and similar studies by other organizations and the United Nations Secretariat. His proposals take into account the experience of UNDP, UNICEF and UNHCR who have already integrated staff rotation into their personnel policy. The Inspector is grateful to all those who have contributed to the study.

## II. THE NEED FOR STAFF ROTATION AND THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

4 . During the initial years of the United Nations, the number of field offices, the level of budgetary expenditure, as well as the range of activities were limited and the Secretariat was not oriented towards operational activities. Today, the United Nations has 159 Member States accounting for about 98 per cent of the world's population. It has 15 autonomous organizations affiliated to its programmes, employing nearly 20,000 professionals. Its current biennial budget (1990-1991) is about US\$1.6 billion for the regular budget and some US\$2.5 billion for programmes financed from extrabudgetary sources. The role of the Secretariat has expanded to include many economic, social and humanitarian programmes and the responsibilities of its staff have also increased. To implement these vast and diversified programmes, it has become necessary to move more staff to the field, and the need for staff rotation thus assumes an important position in the management of human resources.

5 . In its report on ESCWA (JIU/REP/89/1) the JIU recommended that the Secretary-General should "take the opportunity of the Vacancy Management and Staff Redeployment Programme to enforce with greater resolve staff regulation 1.2. and establish a systematic rotation of staff."

6 . A high vacancy rate had been observed in the Regional Commissions for a long period causing concern not only to the Secretariat but to Member States as well. The Joint Inspection Unit in its 1982 report on the Economic Commission for Africa (JIU/REP/82/1) and in the 1989 report on the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (JIU/REP/89/1) had studied the problem in detail and made several suggestions to improve the situation. The present study takes into account the changing nature of the problem in its wider context.

7 . The vacancy problem was aggravated during the period 1986-1989 by the financial crisis and the decisions of the General Assembly to reduce posts in the Professional category by 15 per cent, which required an internal reorganization and redistribution of functions and services.

8 . The United Nations Secretariat initiated the Vacancy Management and Staff Redeployment Programme in 1986 in order to identify vacant posts Secretariat-wide and redeploy staff to cope with the financial crisis and at the same time to improve mobility. However, the programme has not proved adequate to deal with the mobility problem particularly with respect to redeployment of Headquarters staff. The regional economic commissions claim that they have lost staff to Headquarters rather than gained. On the other hand, statistics provided by Headquarters indicate that, with the exception of ECA, all four regional commissions had a net gain of one or two staff members for the period from 1987 to date (See Table 1 on page 19).

A. Vacancy situation at the regional level

9 . During the consultations held by the Inspector with the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions in July 1990, they all observed that the recruitment freeze affected the commissions because it made it difficult to bring in new people and, in addition, the requirement that recruitment to all Professional posts had to be approved by Headquarters contributed to considerable delays in filling vacant posts.

10 . Even before the financial crisis, vacant posts in the regional commissions tended to take longer to fill than in the other offices of the Secretariat. The minimum time needed to recruit a Professional staff member ranges from 6 to 12 months, at present.

11 . The vacancy rates have decreased only recently (see table 2) when Vacancy Management and Staff Redeployment functions for posts at the P-2 to P-4 levels were decentralized to duty stations for all vacancies announced on or after 1 February 1990, thus enabling them to recruit up to P-4 level without Headquarters' approval.

12 . The Secretariat has also granted, on a limited basis, permission to the regional commissions to recruit staff for short-term assignments of up to 11 months. This measure has been appreciated by the regional commissions since it allows them to continue their activities while waiting for an appropriate candidate to be identified through the Vacancy Management Programme or to be recruited externally.

13 . According to information provided by the Secretariat the vacancy rates at regional commissions in 1990 varied from a low 1.5 per cent for ECE to a high 13.5 per cent for ECA (ECLAC 2.6 per cent, ESCWA 5.6 per cent and ESCAP 7.1 per cent).

14 . These vacancy rates, therefore, concur, with the information which the Executive Secretaries provided to the Inspector and they confirm that the commissions now receive adequate candidates both in quality and number for each advertised post and that, with the exception of ECA, vacancy rates in regional commissions have decreased since 1988 drastically. In previous years, however, the situation was different as vacancy rates were very high reaching 29.6 per cent in ESCWA in 1987 (see Table 2). Because of political developments in the region, it is difficult to predict whether or not the vacancy situation of ESCWA will improve. As regards ECA, the Secretariat had even expected the vacancy rate for 1991 to fall to below 10 per cent after the statistics were updated.

15 . In general, the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions feel that, although the vacancy situation has improved, the planned development of a systematic rotation programme is still essential to equip the regional commissions with highly qualified experts, to provide equal opportunities and to assist staff members to obtain experience at Headquarters and in the field.

16 . Statistics provided by the Secretariat indicate that the distribution of staff among the regional commissions and Headquarters in areas such as electronic data processing (EDP), legal (LEG), library (LIB) Politics (POL), and publication (PUB) is inequitable, since more than 95 per cent of the staff are assigned to New York, Geneva, and Vienna (see Table 3 on page 21). On the other hand, Table 4 (see page 21) shows a more equitable distribution of staff in other fields such as administration (ADM), economics (ECO), engineering (ENG), finance (FIN), language (LNG), information (INF), science (SCI), social (SOC), and statistics (STC). The Secretariat has informed the Inspector that the Recruitment and Placement Division has started



work on a computerized roster of vacant posts and eligible candidates to fill them. This will assist in comparing the existing number of posts in occupational groups, both at Headquarters and at regional level, to determine absorptive capacity for effective rotation in appropriate situations.

17 . The Inspector considers necessary the need for a systematic appraisal of post requirements in the regional commissions and Headquarters for the occupational groups listed above in order to find ways and means of establishing an effective rotation system. Occupational groups that already have an even distribution (see Table 4), such as Economics, Administration, etc., are expected to cause less problems in staff rotation. The Office of Human Resources Management is currently engaged in formulating a policy with a view to establishing an equitable staff rotation system.

18 . The Inspector welcomes this effort by the Office of Human Resources Management, since he strongly believes that the development of a clear policy in this matter for the appropriate job categories of the Secretariat and the regional commissions is an essential step in carrying out effectively the vast and diversified programmes of the United Nations.

#### B. Hardship conditions at regional duty stations

19 . Most regional commissions of the United Nations are located in developing countries, except the Economic Commission for Europe which is in Geneva. Because of the level of development of these countries, health, education, housing and recreation facilities are not comparable to facilities available elsewhere. Climatic conditions are at times difficult for some staff and their families to adapt to. A time frame, which is neither too short for adjustment nor too long to tolerate the hardship conditions in such duty stations, seems to be in great demand.

20 . For field personnel, attempts have been made by the United Nations organizations to classify the different duty stations based on prevailing conditions in the countries concerned.

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Assignments to duty stations classified as "very difficult" are for two years. In those classified as "difficult", the duration is three years. In "normal" stations, assignments are for four years. These classifications are followed by all agencies with some modification depending on the needs of the organizations. ICSC, in classifying the different duty stations, has consulted Member States who also approve of staff members' special conditions and privileges.

21 . In its Resolution 44/30, the General Assembly approved an important number of measures and incentives for staff serving in hardship areas. In addition, however, the Inspector believes measures can be taken to encourage staff members to accept assignments to the regional commissions. Taking into account the particular needs and specific requirements of the commissions for highly qualified staff, and the need for staff members to acquire both Headquarters and field experience, the Secretariat might consider the following measures to further strengthen the existing incentive policies:

a) Staff members assigned to the field from Headquarters should be granted a Special Post Allowance (SPA) immediately instead of at the end of the usual waiting period of six months;

b) Once a staff member is selected to fill a higher post in a "difficult" or "very difficult" duty station, he/she should be promoted after six months if he/she has met all the requirements mentioned in his/her letter of appointment;

c) The effects and results of the incentives approved by the General Assembly should be reviewed periodically, and adjusted accordingly.

22 . The United Nations has some fragmented personnel regulations and mobility. The Vacancy Management and Staff Redeployment Programme, which is one of the tools used to rotate staff, cannot be a substitute for a rational staff rotation system since it was introduced basically to deal with the recruitment freeze and prevent disruption of programmes. It has been four years since this Programme has been in operation and a review seems in order, to determine the degree of its success and its future applicability.

### III. STAFF ROTATION BETWEEN DUTY STATIONS AND OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

23 . In considering mobility and rotation it is necessary to study some factors which have negative effects and thus require appropriate answers. At present, a distinction is made between staff assignment and staff transfer. When a staff member is assigned to another duty station for a period of one year or less he is on loan and the releasing organization has the responsibility to absorb the staff member upon his return. However, when a staff member is transferred from one duty station to another, the releasing department has no obligation to accept the staff member back in his previous service. Staff members on transfer, have no guarantee that they will return to a suitable job at Headquarters or other duty stations. Assigning staff for a fixed period of time, perhaps a maximum of four years and with the assurance that they will find a job upon their return, can mitigate the problem of the absence of a systematic rotation policy.

24 . Because of lack of defined policy, staff members feel rotation decisions in some cases are subjective rather than objective and personal rather than professional, thus compounding already existing financial , family and social problems. Financial problems are encountered because post adjustments are usually lower in the field than at Headquarters. Problems concerning the family occur because of children's education and loss of jobs by spouses, and social problems due to a change of environment. These different elements could make the movement of staff to or from different duty stations unattractive.

25 . For the above-mentioned reasons, the procedure of transferring staff from one duty station to another needs to be carefully reviewed by the Office of Human Resources and Management as to its advantages and disadvantages vis-à-vis the Organization and the individual staff members concerned. Caution should be exercised to avoid rotation for its own sake and to ensure that human resources are used in the most effective manner.

26 . The Inspector sees, even in this respect, the necessity for establishing a comprehensive and formal policy, which will enforce and strengthen Staff Regulation 1.2 and, at the same time, promote career development plans. This idea was already stressed by the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations which stated in their recommendation 49 that "A job

rotation system among the various duty stations should be developed for staff members in the professional category as part of the career development plans."

27 . The Secretariat may identify, assuming the process is not yet completed, a list of specific types of posts for rotation purposes. These posts should fall in one of the three categories: (a) identical occupational groups; (b) similar occupational groups; and (c) related occupational groups. These broad occupational categories would allow for greater mobility within each group between Headquarters and regional staff.

28 . After the posts for rotation have been identified, profiles should be made of professional staff in the same occupational groups, taking into account length of service at the same duty station, qualifications, language ability, etc. on a Secretariat-wide basis. Staff members at Headquarters duty stations performing the same tasks as those in duty stations away from Headquarters could be assigned to these duty stations. Their counterparts in the duty stations could then be considered for transfer to Headquarters.

29 . Through the Vacancy Management Plan, these vacant posts for rotation should be brought to the attention of staff members who are outside the occupational group so as to give opportunity to all. However, staff members outside the occupational groups should be considered only in cases where qualified candidates are not available from within the occupational groups.

30 . The identification of posts, if properly designed and executed, will expedite matching them with eligible and available candidates, thus improving the rotation process. It will also facilitate administrative decisions such as recruitment and promotion operations, these being the most time-consuming responsibilities of the Office of Human Resources Management.

31 . If further investigation justifies it, a unit within the Office of Human Resources Management with appropriate personnel and financial allocation, should be responsible for managing and implementing the policy governing rotation. The Unit's terms of reference should form part of the Administrative Manual.

32 . All offers or appointment letters should incorporate very precise clauses which stipulate rotation as part of the terms and conditions of employment. It is assumed that the provisions of the relevant Staff Rules may be amended to reflect such changes in the conditions of employment

A. Staff rotation and career development

33 . Staff rotation is often associated with promotion, a concept particularly prevalent among the staff. Previous studies and recommendations may be responsible for such expectations. The General Assembly, in its resolution 33/143 in 1978, stated that "Professional staff of the United Nations should be encouraged to work at more than one duty station and satisfactory performance during such tours of duty should be considered an additional positive factor in evaluating them for promotion."

34 . In the same year, the Secretary-General established the first Career Development Committee (CDC) for staff in one occupational group (Public Information). The Committee had the function of advising, among other things, on:

"Regular review of the staff in the group with regard to the training and reassignment that would be most conducive to the development of the career of each member of the group in the interest of the Organization and of the staff concerned."

35 . In 1979, the ICSC stated that career development programmes facilitate staff mobility both between organizations and within organizations, and between different duty stations by planning assignments well in advance to avoid some of the obstacles which arise when staff are required to move at short notice (A/34/30, para. 214(c)).

36 . The Chairman of CCAQ, in presenting the view of the United Nations organizations in the 1989 ICSC report has stated that "in the view of the organizations, the most effective motivating force was an adequate process of career progression and promotion."

37 . The Inspector recognizes that, with a very strict post classification system, the movement of staff constitutes an important factor in career development. More and more, promotion has involved movement to another post which, in many cases, means moving to another duty station. At the recruitment stage, therefore, it is essential to verify that individuals applying for positions not only possess the right qualifications but are also willing to accept diverse assignments and serve in different duty stations. It is only then that career development can be an integral part of the management of human resources development.

38 . Further, the Inspector wishes to recall the JIU proposal of 1978 (JIU/REP/78/4) in which it was recommended that staff rotation should be related to promotion possibilities especially for those professional staff members who devote a considerable part of their lives to the service of the United Nations.

B. Rotation of staff of the regional commissions

39 . The five regional economic commissions, as the main economic and development focal points for their respective regions, require specialists for their diversified programmes dealing with development policy and practices, research, co-ordination, management of technical co-operation activities, and other substantive and administrative functions. In order to provide the expert assistance expected of them by the developing countries, regional staff need to upgrade continuously their professional standards by benefitting from the wealth of accumulated experience of both Headquarters and field operations. Therefore, a staff rotation system which will facilitate this mobility should, in general, work to the benefit of both the commissions and staff.

40 . However, movement between Headquarters and the regional commissions has not always worked to the benefit of the Commissions. The JIU report on the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), (JIU/REP/82/1) issued in 1982, stated that "while transfers out of ECA to other United Nations organizations amounted to almost half of the separations during 1977-1978 period, there appeared to be very few transfers, secondments, or assignments of other United Nations staff to ECA, except for some translators.". Another JIU report, on the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) (JIU/REP/89/1), concluded that "A high rate of staff turnover due to unsettling conditions in the region, taken together with the normally high vacancy rate, has made the management of human resources in ESCWA one of the more critical problems with which the Administration has had to deal.".

41 . These statements point to the fact that the movement of staff between Headquarters and regional commissions as conducted today is inadequate and requires more concrete policy definition. In this context, the fact that the regional commissions draw 75 per cent of their staff from their respective regions and the special features of their programmes should not be overlooked.

42 . The general conclusion is that rotating staff members from Headquarters to the field and vice versa is a necessity, in particular for the regional commissions. A framework for a sound rotation policy and an implementation mechanism must, therefore, be designed; recruitment procedures and employment contracts being adjusted accordingly.



#### IV. UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS WITH STAFF ROTATION SYSTEMS

43 . The Inspector has exchanged ideas with various organizations, in particular, UNDP, UNICEF, and UNHCR, which have special policies on the mobility and rotation of staff. Staff rotation requirements differ from one organization to another, depending on the nature of their programmes and mandates given to them by Member States. For organizations such as UNDP, UNICEF, and UNHCR, which are basically field-oriented, staff rotation is essential and has been integrated into their personnel policies.

##### A. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

44 . In UNDP, rotation is based on a personnel plan drawn up in consultation with the different Bureaux and Divisions, whereby staff members due for rotation within the following 6 to 12 months are matched against the vacancies projected for the specific period. Initial consideration includes the options the staff member has communicated to the Personnel Division five months before the planned reassignment date, the tasks and responsibilities, the choice of duty station, the proposed time for the move and the duration of assignment.

45 . After staff members have indicated their preferences, the Personnel Division prepares a draft reassignment plan taking into account the staff's preference which is discussed with the Bureau or Division concerned. Once consultation between all the parties concerned is completed, the plan is reviewed and approved by the Administration. After decisions are taken, staff members are advised by the Division of Personnel. An effort is made to provide staff members with five months' notice.

46 . It is the policy of UNDP that in the course of their career, staff members should serve not more than twice in duty stations that are classified as "very difficult".

47 . UNDP is currently in the process of finalizing a revised process which would initiate the issuance, 12-18 months ahead of time, of a compendium of all posts becoming available the following year. A questionnaire designed to ascertain the interests of the staff member would be circulated to all staff due to be reassigned in the coming year. Decisions would then be taken by Management - taking into account the preferences of the staff member.

**B. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

48 . UNHCR has three categories of duty station each with a specific duration of time known as the Standard Assignment Length (SAL); Category I "Normal" duty stations with four years' assignment; Category II "Difficult" duty stations three years; and Category III "very difficult" two years. The Appointments, Promotion and Posting Board makes recommendations for filling all vacancies at levels P-1 to D-1 inclusive. The allocation of duty stations to categories is subject to an annual review by the Personnel Service in consultation with the regional bureau concerned.

49 . In principle, staff members serving at a duty station are expected to rotate to another duty station when their SAL has expired. Staff members are also expected to undertake at least one assignment at Headquarters in the course of their careers. The Personnel Division keeps a roster of all posts from P-1 to D-1 indicating the date at which each post is expected to become vacant. A compendium of all vacant posts and those expected to fall vacant during a given period of not less than four but not more than six months as a result of expiration of the Standard Assignment Length (SAL), are advertised approximately six months before the commencement of the period in question. Staff members may apply for up to five vacancies, but must apply for a minimum of three in order of preference with an indication of any special considerations they wish to bring to the attention of the Board.

50 . The regulations of the Appointments, Promotion, and Posting Board issued in 1985, state that "The Board may consider individual exceptions to the requirements of rotation. Staff members who believe they have valid and compelling reasons for being unavailable for transfer from one duty station to another, for service at a particular duty station or for assignment to the field for the full period of a standard assignment shall state their case in writing to the Board. The Board will determine whether the reasons amount to adequate justification in each case and will advise Personnel Services of its decision, stating the length of the period of exemption from rotation, if any, to be granted subject to the review of the High Commissioner, the determination of the Board will be final."

C. UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)

51 . The assignment of UNICEF staff is determined according to the programme needs of the Organization and the length of service at a particular duty station. Tours of duty are classified as: three years for "very difficult" duty stations; four years for "difficult" duty stations; and five years for "normal" duty stations. Assignment also takes into account the career development and personal circumstances of staff members. Access to posts up to the P-6 level (excluding Representative posts) is on a competitive basis whereby posts are advertised internally in order that qualified staff may request consideration for reassignment. Consecutive assignments to "very difficult" duty stations will not normally be made except at the request of the staff member.

52 . Having regard to tour of duty requirements, a list of staff for reassignment is drawn up each year in consultation with the offices concerned, and comprises the regular placement exercise.

53 . In order to prevent excessive movement of staff and consequent lack of continuity, staff will not be eligible for reassignment until one year prior to their due date for rotation, i.e. after having satisfied the tour of duty requirement for the particular duty station.

54 . UNICEF has a system whereby a periodic "rotation review" is held on a biennial basis depending on the Organization's needs. This is in addition to the ongoing regular reassignment process. A Special Vacancy Bulletin is distributed only to those staff members who are due for rotation. A special rotation questionnaire is completed by staff members in which they provide information concerning their career aspirations and their reassignment choices in order of preference. The review process also benefits from input from the staff member's supervisor, whose views are also indicated on the questionnaire.

55 . To facilitate exchange of experience, re-assignment can be: (i) between regions; (ii) between duty stations in the same region; (iii) between Headquarters and the field; and (iv) transfer between functions in both Headquarters and the field.

56 . While internationally recruited staff administered under the 200 series of the United Nations Staff Rules are not subject to this reassignment policy since they are recruited for a specific project post, they are considered to provide an important source of recruitment for other project and regular posts and, as such, are included in the rotation review.

57 . In cases where one UNICEF staff member is married to another, efforts are made to accommodate both partners in their respective careers in the same duty station, ensuring that there is no direct reporting relationship. Should UNICEF not be able to accommodate both spouses, efforts are made to secure placement with another organization of the United Nations family or another organization.

58 . The actual review is conducted by the Appointment and Placement Committee which, after having taken all factors into account, i.e. skills, experience, aspirations of staff, post requirements and organizational needs, makes recommendations for reassignments.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

59 . The findings of this report reveal that the United Nations Secretariat has no coherent personnel policy for rotating its staff and that rotation has taken place until now, mainly on an ad hoc basis. As recently as 1986, the Organization started a "Vacancy Management and Redeployment" programme, primarily to deal with the consequence of the financial crisis which forced a reduction of staff and a freeze on recruitment. Through the Vacancy Management System attempts have been made to take advantage of the situation and redeploy staff to different duty stations. But the problem of staff rotation as such remains unsolved for the United Nations Secretariat and, in particular, for the four regional commissions which cover the developing countries.

60 . The Inspector is convinced that the staffing of the regional commissions will be handled better if the United Nations adopted a formal personnel policy that included a high factor of mobility, similar to those applied by UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, organizations which, like the commissions, are also field oriented. He also believes that in addition to establishing a formal rotation policy, further improvement in existing incentive measures could help to encourage staff members to accept assignments to the field and in particular to hardship duty stations.

61 . The Inspector proposes the following measures which may contribute to the development and implementation of a comprehensive rotation plan which is being prepared by the Office of Human Resources Management. He also believes that the plan must harmonize a career development system with a staff rotation plan in order to motivate staff members to accept assignments to hardship duty stations. In the light of the findings of the report, the Inspector makes the following recommendations:

### RECOMMENDATION 1:

The Secretary-General should strengthen Staff Regulation 1.2 by establishing a formal rotation policy that clearly defines the responsibilities and obligations of staff members and those of the Organization, including patterns of assignment, job security and promotion, procedures to be used, etc. He should also accept the career development process as the most effective motivating force in staff mobility and take measures to benefit from such process.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:**

a) For the purpose of rotating staff the following three broad occupational categories may be identified whereby staff members from Headquarters and field duty stations performing tasks within each category should be interchangeably assigned to the appropriate duty stations:

- (i) Identical occupational groups;
- (ii) Similar occupational groups;
- (iii) Related occupational groups.

b) Following the identification of the posts which are eligible for rotation, profiles should be made of professional staff in the same occupational groups, taking into account length of service at the same duty stations.

c) The concept of identical occupational groups could constitute an experimental starting point for a rotation programme. For instance, Chief and Deputy Chiefs of Administration, Chiefs of Personnel and personnel of this section, Chief of General Services Section and personnel, Chief of Conference Services Section and personnel, Chief of Translation and translators could be easily interchanged through reassignments.

d) Staff members outside the occupational group should be considered for assignment only in cases where qualified candidates are not available from within the occupational group.

The above occupational categories are recommended to enable parallel staff in Headquarters and regional commissions rotate within their fields of specialization. This approach is expected to favour the regional commissions.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:**

The Secretary-General should assign to a specific office, within the structure of the Office of Human Resources Management, the responsibility of managing and implementing the policy governing staff rotation.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:**

The movement of staff from one duty station to another in accordance with Staff Rule 101.4, either by assignment for a fixed period of time or transfer for an indefinite period, has created insecurity for staff members transferred to the field without a guarantee of returning to a suitable job at Headquarters or other duty stations. The practice of assignment for a fixed period of time should, therefore, be used preferably in favour of transfer for an indefinite duration.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:**

In addition to existing incentives encouraging staff members to accept assignments at hardship duty stations, the following suggestions might be taken into account in relation to staff rotation:

- (a) A staff member assigned to the field from Headquarters should be granted a Special Post Allowance (SPA) immediately instead of having to wait six months as at present.
- (b) Once a staff member is selected to fill a higher post in the field, promotion should occur within six months, making a differentiation in the implementation date of those going to difficult or hardship duty stations, provided they have met all the requirements mentioned in his/her letter of assignment.
- (c) The effects and results of the incentive for mobility approved by General Assembly resolution 44/30 should be reviewed from time to time by the Secretariat and adjusted as appropriate.

**RECOMMENDATION 6:**

In order to minimize the problem of job loss by spouses assigned to field duty stations, in particular to hardship duty stations, the Secretary-General should make efforts:

- a) to accommodate both partners in their respective careers in the same duty station, ensuring that there is no direct reporting relationship;
- b) when the Secretariat is unable to accommodate both spouses, efforts should be made to secure placement with another United Nations family organization or another organization.



Table 1: Movement of Staff Between Headquarters and the Regional Commissions

<u>Regional Commissions</u>	<u>Movement to</u>	<u>Movement out</u>	<u>Net gain</u>
HEADQUARTERS	34	32	+2
ECE	3	1	2
ESCAP	8	7	1
ECLAC	6	5	1
ECA	7	11	-4
ESCWA	10	8	2

Source: Headquarters

Table 2: Vacancy rates of the Regional Commissions for posts in the Professional category and above 1985-1990

<u>Organi- zations</u>	<u>RB Estab- lished posts</u>	<u>1985 %</u>	<u>1986 %</u>	<u>1987 %</u>	<u>1988 %</u>	<u>1989 %</u>	<u>1990 %</u>
ECE	128	7.0	11.7	19.5	18.8	13.5	1.5
ESCAP	201	5.6	13.9	18.8	18.4	10.3	7.1
ECLAC	201	6.2	28.1	29.4	28.1	12.7	2.6
ECA	226	6.8	21.2	24.8	22.1	15.3	13.5
ESCWA	108	27.8	26.2	29.6	26.8	18.2	5.6

Source: A/C.5/43/1/Rev.1.

**Table 3: Distribution of Staff Among Duty Stations and Headquarters by Occupational Groups in the Field of EDP, LEG, LIB, POL, PUB**

<u>Duty Stations</u>	<u>EDP</u>	<u>LEG</u>	<u>LIB</u>	<u>POL</u>	<u>PUB</u>
Santiago	5	1	2	0	2
Addis Ababa	0	0	2	0	0
Baghdad	2	0	0	2	0
Nairobi	0	0	1	1	1
Bangkok	4	0	3	1	0
Vienna	1	13	1	1	0
Geneva	30	7	17	51	9
New York	58	57	58	193	34

**Table 4: Distribution of Staff Among Duty Stations and Headquarters by Occupational Groups in the Field of ADM, ECO, ENG, FIN, LNG, INF, SCI, SOC, STC**

<u>Duty Stations</u>	<u>ADM</u>	<u>ECO</u>	<u>ENG</u>	<u>FIN</u>	<u>LNG</u>	<u>INF</u>	<u>SCI</u>	<u>SOC</u>	<u>STC</u>
Santiago	16	41	2	1	7	1	3	14	5
Addis Ababa	41	69	2	4	16	1	4	14	9
Baghdad	15	33	4	1	7	1	0	11	4
Nairobi	29	1	17	7	10	2	0	0	1
Bangkok	29	66	2	4	23	4	3	11	7
Vienna	19	0	0	1	15	7	2	61	0
Geneva	127	219	5	13	274	14	8	2	17
New York	344	137	8	84	548	151	17	45	39

Source: Headquarters