



UNITED NATIONS

Guidelines for UN Agencies to Implement Pre-Deployment Packages for Staff Operating in High-Risk Environments

1. Introduction

As our world changes, the United Nations (including all agencies in the United Nations System) must consider how 'to stay and deliver' and carry out its essential work and mandate in diverse, fragile and increasingly challenging environments. Appropriate balance must be found in maintaining operations in these contexts, whilst ensuring the associated risks are identified and mitigated as far as possible.

Reflecting this, and as part of the remit of the United Nations' 'Duty of Care' Taskforce, the High-Level Committee on Management has approved a series of recommendations to strengthen support to United Nations staff working in high-risk environments. These pre-deployment packages represent the implementation of some of these recommendations.

It is recognised that preparing to deploy to a high-risk context is a highly personal practice. The level of information and support staff and their families will need varies dependent on their experience, how long they have worked for the United Nations and their agency, their level of familiarity with the local context, their family and personal situation, and their general health and wellbeing at the time of assignment.

Via these packages, staff are therefore encouraged to manage their own preparation and research to meet their individual needs, with information and resources to support this provided.

The purpose of this document is to provide information and guidelines to support agencies with the implementation of the pre-deployment packages.

2. Structure

The pre-deployment package is in three parts:

- General pre-deployment package.
- Country-specific pre-deployment package (example for Afghanistan).
- Information for Families.

3. Scope

While some of the content may be applicable to all United Nations' personnel, the packages have been developed to apply to all United Nations staff (both International Professionals and locally-recruited), who are appointed as such by a United Nations agency in accordance with its rules and regulations.

Each United Nations agency will be expected to implement the pre-deployment packages for all staff deploying to high-risk environments. **Some of the content may need to be adapted if an agency wishes to use the packages for other personnel (e.g., Standby Partners, UN Volunteers, consultants).**

4. Implementation of the Packages

For all three packages, each United Nations agency will be expected to:

- Undertake a review to align all provided information with the agency's policies and practices. This may entail coordination between various departments including HR, Staff Welfare, Security and the agency's UN Medical Services or equivalent. It is therefore recommended this process is owned and coordinated by a single person at the right level and with appropriate authority to manage this process.
- Undertake a legal review to ensure all provided information is compliant and does not create any risks for the agency.
- Undertake the required internal sign-off / approval process so the packages can be implemented.
- Additional and agency-specific information and resources can be added to any of the packages.

4.1 General Pre-Deployment Package

- Some suggestions for agencies to consider are included in italics throughout the package.
- Some sections are marked as optional meaning agencies can decide whether to incorporate or not.
- In order to maintain some consistency across the United Nations system, content not marked as optional should only be adapted in consultation with relevant stakeholders, except when necessary for the alignment with the agency's policies. For example, the sections related to security have been developed in consultation with IASMN / UNDSS and therefore consultation with this body would be required before changes could be made.
- UNSSCG has recommended all agencies implement a mandatory pre-deployment resilience briefing with a counsellor for all staff prior to their deployment in high-risk environments. Agencies can therefore adjust the content of the Psychological Resilience and Wellbeing section (pp. 29 – 32 of the General Package) based on the status of their implementation of this recommendation. Once the recommendation is implemented, UNSSCG recommends only including information about the resilience briefing.

4.2 Country-Specific Package

An example of a country-specific package has been developed for Afghanistan in coordination with the Resident Coordinator's Office to serve as a standard model for other countries to follow.

- Some sections are marked as optional meaning agencies can decide whether to incorporate or not.
- Information under other headings is expected to be included for each country context. In order to prepare this, the following functional areas must be involved in the preparation:
 - Field Security
 - Local UNMSD representative
 - Local HR

- Local Operations
 - Staff Counsellor (where applicable)
- The development of the country-specific package for each country shall be led by the respective Resident Coordinator's Office. It is strongly recommended that a person be assigned for guiding the process globally, at least until the package is developed for all existing high risk duty stations and a procedure is established for the drafting process

4.3 Family Package

- UNSSCG is responsible for the content of this package. Any changes to this package would therefore need to be made in consultation with your agency's representative on this body.
- As far as possible, agencies should seek to answer the questions included in this document with specific information (e.g., who the family should contact in case of emergency, etc).
- It is recommended agencies adapt the Family Package to include other useful and practical information for families, such as communication with their family member (e.g., pouch system), Family Members' Association / support group, etc.