



Summary of Conclusions of the 31st Session of the Human Resources Network

20 ó 23 July 2015
IAEA, Vienna

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List of participants

I. Adoption of the agenda

Opening of the Session and Adoption of the Agenda

1. The Human Resource Network held its 31st session from 20-23 July 2015, hosted by IAEA in Vienna. The meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Carole Wamuyu Wainaina, ASG for Human Resources Management, United Nations, Ms. Karen Farkas, Director, Division of HR Management, UNHCR, Mr. Mark Levin, Director, HR Development Department, ILO.
2. The agenda was adopted as reflected in the table of content
3. The list of participating organizations and their representatives at the meeting is provided in Annex 1. All session documents are available on the HR Network website at:
<https://www.unsceb.org/content/july-2015>
4. The Network meeting was opened with a welcome from the Director of Human Resources of IAEA, Mr. Sergey Belyaev.

II. Closed session for HR Network members

i. ICSC Compensation Review

5. Substantive discussions took place concerning the ICSC Compensation Review. The results of these discussions are reflected in the statements by the HR Network for the ICSC 2015 Summer Session.

ii. Mandatory Age of Separation

6. Substantive discussions took place concerning the Mandatory Age of Separation. The results of these discussions are reflected in the statements by the HR Network for the ICSC 2015 Summer Session.

iii. The Field Group: Extended Security Evacuation Provision

7. Following discussions by the HR Network during the 30th HR Network meeting in Madrid, a paper on revisions to the Security Policy Manual was presented by the Chair of the Field Group. The Field Group also proposed several options on evacuation related payments for locally recruited staff to the HR Network.
8. HR Network members discussed the proposed revisions related to HR elements of security, as well as the different approaches taken by organizations to handle extended evacuation situations.
9. *Decision: The Network decided to request the Field Group to refine the proposals, and agreed to organize a separate virtual meeting on the extended security provision*

for organizations that are most impacted by these security provisions in order to finalize the proposals.

iv. HR Transformation

10. During an HR Directorø retreat in 2012 the topic of HR Professionalization was discussed for the first time. Based on the output of this retreat the HR Network decided to move forward with an initiative on the professionalization of the HR function. At the 2012 summer session of the HR Network an outline of such a project was discussed, based on a paper produced by WFP.
11. The initial proposal was focused on training of HR staff, while it was felt that the topic should be discussed in a more holistic and comprehensive manner. By collective and collaborative management of the professional HR community, the HR function could be evolving from the current rather transactional role towards a strategic value-adding HR function.
12. A proposal to organize a Strategic HR Directors Workshop, which would be organized early 2016, was presented to the HR Network. The outcome of this proposed workshop would be translated into Terms of Reference for a new HRN Working Group. The following elements could be included in such Terms of Reference:
 - a. The drafting of a document for an HR Transformation Strategy at an Inter-Agency level, to be endorsed by HLCM and CEB.
 - b. The proposal for an agreed HR maturity assessment model with underlying indicators and benchmarks.
 - c. A concept for Inter-Agency talent management, development and exchange programme for HR professionals at Inter-Agency level.
 - d. A proposal for HR competencies / skills standardization and certification
 - e. A make-or-buy analysis for the sourcing of relevant training and certification services.
13. Organizations reconfirmed their commitment to the initiative and to conduct, together, a holistic analysis of the HR profession within the UN System. They expressed particular interest in increased collaboration in the areas of HR Analytics, Workforce Planning and Recruitment.
14. *Decision: The members of the HR Network reconfirmed their support for the HR Transformation initiative and confirmed their willingness to participate in a HR Directorø retreat in the fall of 2015 or early 2016 to develop substantive input for the initiative. The CEB Secretariat is requested to support the preparations for this workshop.*

v. Update and next steps on HRN Working Group on Disabilities / partial disability benefits

15. The HR Network previously discussed the topic of employment of people with disabilities in 2012, when the Network tasked the HRN Working Group on Disabilities to commission a cost-benefit analysis to make a business case for a partial disability benefit. The HR Network expressed appreciation for the work of the Working Group. The issues raised in the paper presented to the HR Network and subsequent discussion however demonstrated a need to reprioritize the work of the Working Group. During the discussion two different streams emerged; one focusing on the reintegration of staff with disabilities and the other on developing a disability

- benefit. A number of organizations indicated to already have specific policies in place for staff with disabilities and it was suggested that the Working Group should explore and collect lessons learned from various organizations.
16. At the end of the discussion UNDP kindly agreed to take over the chairmanship of the Working Group from WHO.
 17. *Decision: The HR Network expressed appreciation and thanked WHO for the work of the Working Group. The Network agreed to assign the chairmanship to UNDP as of October 2015 and requested UNDP, in collaboration with the CEB Secretariat, to propose to the HR Network the revised Terms of Reference.*

III. Workshop on Stress Management and Medical Topics

18. The UN Stress Counselors Working Group organized and facilitated a half-day Workshop for the HR Network to inform the Network of its work and to emphasize the importance of a mental health strategy for all organizations in the UN System.
19. The Working Group provided the HR Network with a number of relevant presentations concerning Stress Management and other medical topics. In a presentation on counselling data, the group reported on its work by presenting a number of observed trends in the field of stress counselling, as well as possible links between staff's perceived stress levels and the working conditions.
20. The UN Stress Counselors Working Group has developed and conducted a UN-wide survey on staff mental well-being, conducted among doctors and HR professionals throughout the UN System. The Group shared the results of the survey with the HR Network and requested feedback on these results from the Network's members. The Group also noted the need for establishing a community of practice for staff health well-being matters.
21. The HR Network acknowledged the potential benefits of a community of practice, which would include HR professionals throughout the UN System. Community members would be able to access various types of information on staff wellbeing.
22. *Decision: The HR Network expressed great appreciation for the work of the Stress Counselors Working Group and thanked the representatives of the group for their presentation. The Network agreed to closer collaboration with the UN Medical Directors Working Group in an interdisciplinary working group to devise a mental health strategy for the UN System. To further facilitate the exchange of information and expertise, the HR Network requested the CEB Secretariat to explore the feasibility of an online platform for files and information exchange.*

IV. Open session

vi. Update from last CEB and HLCM session

23. During the 29th HLCM session in Paris the new HLCM Chair, Ms. Bokova, was presented. At the session the ICSC Compensation Review and the Occupational Safety and Health Framework were discussed. The Occupational safety and Health Framework was endorsed by the HLCM, incorporating the revisions recommended by the HR Network following the 30th HR Network session.
24. Some HR Network members noted that there was no HR Network representation present at the 29th HLCM session in Paris, due to the overlap with the spring ICSC

session, and emphasized the importance of HR Network representation during these sessions.

vii. Update from the FB Network including the Working Group on ASHI

25. During the last FB Network meeting in Montreal in June 2015 an update on the compensation review was presented to the Network, three points of concern were raised by the FB Network members. The Network noted that any discussion on staff costs has to be held holistically and emphasized the need for clarity on the expected implementation costs of the compensation review for each organization. A large proportion of the savings seems to be coming from a small amount of cost contributors.
26. The HR Network took note of the update provided by the ASHI Working Group. Members expressed concern regarding the impact of MAS 65 implementation and organizations' ASHI liabilities. The Network noted that proper utilization of national insurance schemes could have an impact on the ASHI liability for the organization.
27. *Decision: The Network agreed that the CEB Secretariat will explore the feasibility of conducting an information collection exercise on national insurance schemes, as input for further discussion both in the ASHI Working Group and one of the next HR Network Sessions.*

viii. Update from IASMN and the Working Group on Duty of Care

28. At the last IASMN in Montreux both the Policy on Management of Stress and Critical Incident Stress and the Policy on Residential Security Measures were adopted and will be presented to HLCM at its next session for endorsement. OLA had commented on the Policy on Residential Security Measures, indicating that no distinction can be made in reimbursement for residential security measures between owners and renters. A status update from the Working Group on Duty of Care was provided by the Co-Chair of the Working Group, Karen Farkas, Director of HR at UNHCR. Further substantive discussions will be held in the HR Network upon availability of the Working Group report

ix. Update from the Field Group

29. The Chair of the Field Group briefed the HR Network on the latest developments of its activities and presented the results of its last meeting. The review of the Field Duty Stations, according to the ICSC framework, covered this time 647 Duty Stations.
30. The FG provided the HR Network with an update on the implementation of the new UN Clinics policy. A number of organizations in field duty stations indicated to be unable to implement the new policy due to the new grade level and contractual status requirements for doctors working at UN Clinics. The Field Group requested support from the HR Network regarding cost-sharing arrangements to assure staffing of clinics as specified in the new policy.
31. The Chair of the Field Group reported to the HR Network on current situations of extended security evacuations. The Chair proposed to extend the extended security related payments for staff in Syria one more time for an additional three months.
32. FICSA noted the importance of adequate security provisions to locally recruited staff and encouraged the HR Network to give this issue particular attention.

33. *Decision: The HR Network thanked the Field Group for the update and presentation. The Network decided that the extended security related payments to staff in Syria will be prolonged one more time for a period of three months. The Field Group will develop and present to the HR Network a proposal for managing the extended security provisions for UN staff in Yemen.*

x. Update from UN Cares

34. UNFPA, as host of UN Cares, briefed the HR Network on relevant issues related to its many activities and achievements. In June 2014, the HR Network approved the continuation of UN Cares through the biennium 2016-17. At the current meeting, organizations were asked to confirm their pledges for 2016-17. In the subsequent discussion a number of organizations highlighted the value of the well-established project structure in the multitude of field locations by UN Cares, which as some noted, could be seen as an asset in potential further initiatives in psycho-social care and staff support. Various other organizations challenged the priority of UN Cares in their current funding situations. UN Cares requested the Network's organizations to each identify a focal point within their organization for the UN Cares workshop on stigma and inclusion.
35. UN Cares requested the Network's organizations to each identify a focal point within their organization for the UN Cares workshop on stigma and inclusion, called UN for All.
36. *Decision: HR Network members expressed their appreciation for the work done by UN Cares and agreed to a comprehensive review of the UN Cares project during the 32nd HR Network Session.*

xi. Update from HRN Working Groups

HRN Working Group on Performance Management

37. During the 29th HR Network session in Rome the Network established a revised Working Group on Performance Management. The Working Group is co-chaired by Victoria Campbell (UNOPS) and Aitor Maguna (WFP), its core team is composed of six core team members from UN Secretariat, UNDP, UNFPA, ICAO, IFAD and OSCE. Additionally, the extended Working Group includes focal points from all UN organizations. The CEB Secretariat briefed the Network members on the progress made in the Working Group.
38. The Good Practice Guidance Notes will be presented in fall 2015 and a final report will be presented to the HR Network in 2016.

HRN Working Group on Language Testing

39. The HR Network Working Group on Language Proficiency Examination was established by the Network in 2012 to examine options with respect to phasing out and replacing the UNLPE, as well as to present recommendations.
40. The HR Network discussed the progress report that was presented by the CEB Secretariat, after consultations with the members of the Working Group. The Network requested the Working Group to present to the HR Network suggestions for practical administrative arrangements for phasing out the UNLPE.
41. *Decision: The HR Network took note of the progress report provided by the Working Group and agreed with its proposed recommendations. It agreed that the UNLPE in four of the six official UN languages will be discontinued as of January 2017. The*

UNLPE will be replaced by internationally recognized certificates of external test providers for the following languages: English, French, Spanish and Chinese. UNLPE exams will be continued for Arabic and Russian until appropriate external providers have been found. The Network agreed that as of 1 January 2016 test results of approved external providers comparable to a C1 level will be considered valid as proof of language proficiency on a system-wide level.

xii. FICSA Proposal for Cost-Sharing

42. FICSA submitted to the HR Network its proposal for cost-sharing of funding for the President and General Secretary of FICSA. The proposed cost-sharing formula is based on the number of staff in each participating organization.
43. The HR Network took note of the proposal presented by FICSA and, prior to deciding on the proposal, requested further information on the current funding structures of staff associations to be submitted by September 2015
44. *Decision: The HR Network expressed appreciation for the work done by FICSA to prepare the presented proposal. The Network requested FICSA to present to HLCM at its next Session a paper on mapping the financing of staff associations across the UN System.*

xiii. Progress update on the initiative for support of geographic mobility

45. Following the closure of the Dual Career and Staff Mobility Programme, the HR Network requested the CEB Secretariat in March 2014 to prepare a proposal for a new Programme that will focus on wider support for geographic mobility. The CEB Secretariat started the work on the proposal, focusing on the following elements:
 - a. Reviewing selected external practices
 - b. Capturing staff needs and expectations on organizational support for geographic mobility
 - c. Providing an overview of practices, services, resources and planned projects to further support geographically mobile staff in the UN system
 - d. Develop detailed recommendations and an implementation plan for future joint activities
46. The paper that was presented to the Network provides an overview of potential areas of inter-agency collaboration, such as establishing a job market for spouses, offering support services to newly arriving staff and other practices and resources in a number of key countries.
47. *Decision: HR Network members took note of the progress update and expressed their interest in a further in-depth discussion on the topic of geographic mobility during the next HR Network session.*

xiv. Budget / Cost sharing for local salary survey activities in 2016/17

48. The UN Secretariat presented the proposed budget for salary survey activities for non-headquarters locations for the 2016-2017 biennium.
49. The HR Network took note of the proposal put forward by the UN Secretariat and noted that the overall costs are going down. A number of smaller agencies enquired about the possibilities to review the cost-sharing arrangements currently in place. It was however recalled that during the 27th HR Network Session in summer 2013.

Furthermore, some organizations requested that in future discussions on the matter, and overview of actual expenses during the recent biennium should be joined to the budget proposal.

50. *Decision: The Network endorsed the proposal and requested the CEB Secretariat to forward it to HLCM for approval following consultations with the Finance & Budget Network.*

xv. Status on new initiatives for Joint Classification and Reference Checking

51. UNFPA presented a status update on the new initiatives for joint classification and reference checking. The results from a survey conducted by the CEB Secretariat show that there is a broad interest in shared activities in both joint classification

52. UNFPA in collaboration with the UN Secretariat and UNOPS developed four possible funding models for the joint activities:

- e. Joint funding based on size of organizations
- f. Self funding based on per transaction costing
- g. Banded funding model: small, medium, large
- h. Banded funding model combined with a per transaction funding

53. A paper with a detailed outline of the initiatives will be submitted to the HR Network for the HR Network spring session in 2016.

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