

**REPORT OF THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH SESSION
OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ON
ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTIONS
(PERSONNEL AND GENERAL
ADMINISTRATIVE QUESTIONS)**

(New York, 9- 11 and 14 July 1997)

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>
Introduction	1-3
I. Matters for consideration by ACC	
Remuneration of the Professional and higher categories, including a draft statement from ACC to the UN General Assembly	4-9
New approaches to human resources management, including a draft policy statement thereon	10-13
Security of staff and their families	14-15
The functioning of the Committee	16
II. Work of the Committee	
A. Action taken and decisions adopted by the Committee	17
(a) In conjunction with ICSC	18
(b) Work/family agenda: family leave.....	19-20
(c) Long-term care.....	21

Paragraphs

B. Summary of deliberations

**Outcome of the Working Group on the Consultative
Process and Working Arrangements in ICSC22**

New approaches to human resources management

- (i) Draft ACC statement on new approaches23
- (ii) The changing role of HR departments: the
expertise needed to fulfil that role 24-26

Core common system issues27

Professional remuneration

- (i) Draft ACC statement on the comparator/margin 28-29
- (ii) Update on the introduction of competency
functional differentials 30-32
- (iii) Base/floor salary scale 33-34
- (iv) Evolution of the margin 35-39

Post adjustment matters - Post adjustment at Geneva..... 40-43

**Performance management: Conclusion of discussions relating
to the review of the Commission's recommendations in the light
of the experience of the organizations 44-47**

Appointments of Limited Duration (ALD)..... 48-53

Medical standards 54-56

Long-term care 57-64

Standards of travel and per diem 65-78

Security matters 79-84

Code of conduct - update..... 85-88

Other business

- (i) Mobility between organizations 89-92
- (ii) Progress report on the feasibility study on the
development of an inter-agency skills inventory 93-95
- (iii) Meeting with the representatives of the Board
of Auditors carrying out a management audit
of the ICSC secretariat 96-98

Annexes

- I List of participants
- II Agenda as adopted by the Committee
- III Plan of action for next steps to be taken to advance new approaches to human resources management
- IV Parameters for the development of performance awards

**REPORT OF THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH SESSION
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Introduction

1. The Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel and General Administrative Questions) held its eighty-seventh session at UN Headquarters in New York on 9 to 11 and 14 July 1997. Members of the Committee also attended the forty-sixth session of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), which took place from 14 to 25 July 1997 and ICSC's Forum/Retreat on 12 and 13 July.
2. The session was attended by representatives of member organizations, the ICSC secretariat, the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund Secretariat, the Federation of International Civil Servants' Association (FICSA) and the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA). The list of participants is attached in annex I.
3. The Committee adopted its agenda as contained in annex II.

I. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY ACC

The following section of this report has been prepared specifically as input to the second regular session of ACC in 1997 and brings together recommendations and decisions from CCAQ(PER)'s eighty-sixth and eighty-seventh sessions, both of which took place after ACC's first regular session in April 1997.

Remuneration of the Professional and higher categories

4. Although the General Assembly did not support ICSC's 1996 proposals to increase salaries, it decided that, at its fifty-second session in 1997, it would revert to the question of which was the highest paid national civil service.
5. In this connection, the Committee noted that:
 - the General Assembly had repeatedly reconfirmed the application of the Noblemaire principle as the basis for the determination of salaries at the Professional and higher levels;
 - in 1995 and 1996, the General Assembly had also reaffirmed the need to continue to ensure the competitiveness of United Nations common system conditions of service;

- ICSC had reported to the General Assembly on two occasions that, based on its technical evaluation conducted in accordance with the approved methodology, the total compensation levels of the German federal civil service were superior to those of the current comparator (the US federal civil service);
- ICSC had however not suggested to the General Assembly how these findings should be interpreted in terms of the application of the Noblemaire principle;
- ICSC had also reported to the General Assembly that “the actual process of changing comparators was a complex one with implications for pensions, the currency of record, the location of the base of the UN remuneration system and related issues”;
- on the basis of information provided by ICSC in July 1997, the remuneration levels of the German civil service remained superior to those of the US federal civil service by some 11 per cent.

6. Taking account of the above factors, in July 1997, the Committee requested ICSC to use the margin as the mechanism by which to apply the Noblemaire principle until such time as it might be possible to change the comparator. CCAQ proposed adjusting the margin range from its current level of 110-120 to 120-130 to reflect the level of remuneration of the German civil service.

7. ICSC did not consider that it would be prudent to endorse this proposal *inter alia* because the General Assembly had decided to defer consideration of the German/United States comparisons until its fifty-second session in the last quarter of 1997.

8. In order to respond to ACC's ongoing concern for the need to substantially improve the conditions of service for staff and its invitation in April 1997 to the Secretary-General “to continue to seek a favourable solution to this issue with Member States in the General Assembly”, the Committee proposes that ACC recommend to the General Assembly that:

- the margin range be adjusted from its current level of 110-120 to 120-130 to reflect ICSC's findings in respect of the remuneration levels of the German federal civil service;
- ICSC be invited to make proposals, at the latest to the General Assembly's fifty-third session in 1998, for appropriate adjustments to UN common system remuneration levels to bring them within the revised range of 120-130.

9. To this end, the following draft statement has been prepared which ACC may wish to submit to the General Assembly's fifty-second session.

DRAFT ACC STATEMENT ON THE MARGIN

a) In recent years, ACC has repeatedly called on the General Assembly and ICSC to restore the competitiveness of United Nations common system remuneration. In 1995 and 1996, the General Assembly also affirmed the need to ensure the competitiveness of UN common system conditions of service.

b) Although ACC would have preferred a broader base for pay setting, the General Assembly has also repeatedly reaffirmed the current interpretation of the Noblemaire principle as the basis for the determination of common system remuneration at the Professional and higher levels (i.e., that UN common system remuneration should be based on the compensation levels of the highest paying national civil service).

c) Arising out of its study of the application of the Noblemaire principle, ICSC reported last year to the General Assembly that, on the basis of a technical evaluation conducted in accordance with the approved methodology, the total compensation levels of the German federal civil service were superior to those of the current comparator - the US federal civil service.

d) UN remuneration is, however, still being determined against that of the US federal civil service. Hence, the Noblemaire principle is no longer being applied.

e) By its resolution 51/210, the General Assembly decided to reconsider the question of the comparator civil service at its fifty-second session.

f) Acknowledging the complexity of changing from a comparator whose remuneration and classification structures are similar to those of the United Nations and the added complications inter alia for pensions, ACC proposes that the margin be used as the mechanism by which the Noblemaire principle may be effectively applied. Thus, ICSC's technical findings would be appropriately recognized.

g) Given that the gap between the remuneration levels of the German and the US federal civil services currently is some 11 per cent, ACC requests the General Assembly to revise the margin from its current range of 110-120 to that of 120-130. It would also request the General Assembly to invite ICSC to make proposals, at the latest to its fifty-third session in 1998, as to an appropriate adjustment in order to bring UN common system remuneration within the revised margin range of 120-130.

New approaches to human resources management

10. On the basis of requests made to it by ACC and in the context of the many major management reforms being introduced across the common system, the Committee has embarked on an in-depth review of new approaches to human resources management.

11. Under the overall rubric, the Committee focussed on:

- the changing role of human resources departments: the expertise needed to fulfil that role;
- the framework within which new approaches to human resources management or other initiatives should be based (the international civil service);
- core common system issues;
- the “core” and “non-core” functions of organizations;
- the introduction of competency (or function-based) differentials emanating from earlier proposals to introduce special occupational rates;
- the introduction of more flexible leave arrangements to cater for family emergencies within the framework of the Committee’s work/family agenda;
- the streamlining, centralizing and pooling of human resources processes.

12. From this initial review, which will continue to be a regular item on CCAQ’s agenda, the Committee took important steps forward in the following areas:

(a) the delineation of a draft policy statement on new approaches to human resources management which ACC is invited to adopt at its second regular session of 1997. The draft statement not only underlines the priority ACC attributes to the reform of human resources management, but also points to eight areas in which the executive heads will consider introducing further human resources management reforms.

(b) the adoption of a plan of action (see also annex III) to advance new approaches to human resources management across the common system through:

- the development of a common profile for a human resources manager;
- the organization of an annual conference of human resource specialists with human resources experts from outside the common system;
- temporary inter-agency exchanges of human resources personnel;
- more widespread dissemination of information on human resources journals and conferences;
- the development, by the UN Staff College, of a training module specially designed for human resources specialists;
- initiatives to promote the human resources profession further.

(c) in consonance with the policy adopted by ACC on the work/family agenda, the approval of a new provision by which absences resulting from family-related emergencies may be charged to uncertified sick leave provisions (see paras. 19 and 20 below).

(d) the adoption of a set of parameters (see annex IV) designed to respond to the General Assembly's request in resolution 51/216 to the Secretary-General and the executive heads to develop proposals related to the introduction of performance awards and bonuses. These parameters were subsequently reported to ICSC and were incorporated in large measure in the conclusions reached by ICSC on the matter.

(e) reconsideration of the introduction of occupational pay rates from which the Committee concluded that the determination of the jobs to which such rates should be applied had to be less occupation specific and more related to the competencies required to do the job in question. It preferred that the name applied to these rates be revised to that of competency (or function-based) differential. For highly specialized fields of work, such a competency differential could be used to attract and retain highly qualified specialists who would bring credibility to the functions they were required to perform. Competency differentials would be determined by the agency concerned, taking account of the need to satisfy two concurrent requirements, i.e. (i) the educational level required by the incumbent of the post and (ii) the ongoing application of this level of competence to the post in question. The Committee agreed to continue to pursue this matter with interested organizations and report to ACC accordingly.

13. **ACC is invited to note the considerations in paragraphs 12 (b) to (e) and to adopt the draft statement below.**

**DRAFT ACC STATEMENT ON THE REFORM
OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

a) The executive heads attribute the highest priority to the reform of human resources management.

b) Much has already been accomplished, often in the context of the reforms already introduced and designed to increase decentralization and the delegation of authority and to enhance the accountability of managers across the common system.

c) Human resources management reforms are the key to improving further the capacity of organizations to fulfil their diverse mandates effectively and efficiently; such reforms must uphold and strengthen the fabric of the international civil service within the framework of each organization's particular structure and personality.

d) Thus, each reform initiative must be assessed in terms of the impact it will have on promoting an effective, efficient and accountable international civil service and in upholding the Charter principles on which that civil service is founded - namely the allegiance of staff to the organization alone and the reciprocal duty of Member States to refrain from violating the independent nature of the secretariat and the maintenance of the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.

e) **In this context, it is evident that reforms which have worked well in one or other national setting may not be equally viable in an international setting. International human resources management involves a more diverse set of activities, serves a more culturally diverse population and operates in a far more complex external environment. If these differences are not recognized, whether as a result of ethnocentrism or poor information, the organizations will find it increasingly difficult to retain the moral authority on which the successful fulfilment of their mandates depends.**

f) **Within this framework, the executive heads are considering the introduction of human resources management reforms which will:**

- (i) further professionalize the human resources function in such a way as to ensure that (a) it is seen to be at the heart of the process of organizational change and (b) becomes a driving force behind strategies which will change an organization's culture and management style;**
- (ii) preserve the moral authority and independence of the international civil service;**
- (iii) uphold the competitiveness of conditions of service to ensure that organizations can attract and retain staff of the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity;**
- (iv) ensure the security and safety of personnel throughout the world;**
- (v) provide for more efficient and effective selection and recruitment of staff inter alia by giving increased attention to competency and merit based selection and promotion over other competing priorities;**
- (vi) intensify efforts already underway to introduce performance management and strengthen organizations' managerial competence;**
- (vii) support the advancement of staff through continuous learning and enhanced mobility both within and among organizations;**
- (viii) create a supportive work environment which will promote productivity and enable staff members to respond to the pressures of work and family life.**

Security of staff and their families (see also paras. 79 to 84)

14. In endorsing three recommendations referred to it by the 1997 Inter-Agency Security Meeting (see para. 6 (c) of ACC/1997/10) the Committee wished to bring to ACC's attention its continuing concern for the effective management of security arrangements in the field in order to ensure the safety and well-being of staff and their families.

15. **To this end, the Committee would ask ACC to take a decision which would invite organizations' headquarters to become more proactive in:**

(a) **ensuring the cooperation and coordination of managers in the field on security matters;**

(b) **promoting the training of these managers in security matters.**
The functioning of the Committee

16. The Committee has continued to make changes to its work programme and working methods. The eighty-fifth and eighty-sixth sessions of the Committee were notable because:

(a) they were reduced from five to four days; and

(b) for at least a day of each session, the Committee divided into two working groups meeting simultaneously which proved an efficient use of time.

II. WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

A. Action taken and decisions adopted by the Committee

17. The following decisions were taken by the Committee under its own responsibility:

(a) In conjunction with ICSC

18. The Committee adopted statements which were submitted to ICSC's forty-fifth and forty-sixth sessions on the following matters:

Adoption of the agenda of the ICSC session (2)

Proposal to establish a working group to review the functioning of ICSC

Resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly and other governing bodies

Evolution of the margin

Base/floor salary scale

Education grant

Performance management (2)

Report of ACPAQ/post adjustment at the base of the system

Post adjustment in Geneva (2)

Standards of travel

ICSC budget

Conditions of service of the General Service and other locally recruited categories

(b) Work/family agenda: family leave

19. At its eighty-fifth session, the Committee adopted a measure by which the current seven-day provision for uncertified sick leave could be expanded in its usage to cover family-related reasons. To this end, the Committee agreed that a text, along the following lines, be incorporated as appropriate in organizations' rules or administrative provisions:

“Within the current provisions for uncertified sick leave, a staff member may charge absences resulting from family-related emergencies.”

“A staff member appointed for a period of less than one year (and paid on a monthly basis) may similarly charge absences resulting from sudden family related emergencies within the limits of and proportionate to the amount of uncertified sick leave of the appointment.”

Organizations would be at liberty to revise this suggested text to meet their needs.

20. The Committee noted that this provision would be administered in the same way as uncertified sick leave and that it would not increase current overall entitlements.

(c) Long-term care

21. The Committee unanimously concluded that it should move forward to develop the framework for a long-term care insurance coverage scheme which could be introduced by organizations in 1998 (see paragraphs 57 to 64).

B. Summary of deliberations**Outcome of the Working Group on the Consultative Process and Working Arrangements in ICSC**

22. At its spring 1997 session, in consultation with organizations and staff bodies, ICSC had prepared terms of reference for a tripartite working group which would review the functioning of ICSC. The Working Group had been scheduled to meet in the week of 7 July 1997 in New York. In the event, neither of the staff bodies found that they were in a position to participate in the Working Group and sought a postponement. On 7 July, those members of the Working Group designated by ICSC and CCAQ met briefly and concluded the meeting could not go on without the participation of staff bodies. They concluded, nevertheless, that ICSC should be invited to convene the Working Group at a later date and that in the period before then, all efforts be made to ensure, as foreseen in the terms of reference, that a facilitator be nominated with the approval of all parties concerned to assist in the process.

New approaches to human resources management(i) *Draft ACC statement on new approaches*

23. On the basis of the decision taken at its eighty-sixth session (April 1997), and in the light of its discussions of new approaches to human resources management, the Committee adopted a statement for submission to ACC's second regular session of 1997.

(ii) *The changing role of HR departments: the expertise needed to fulfil that role*

24. The Committee took note of the information contained in ACC/1997/PER/R.15 on world-wide developments in personnel and human resources management. The Committee welcomed the opportunity provided to give time to the consideration of professional personnel and human resources management concerns. It confirmed that while many efforts were under way in the organizations to modernize human resources management practices, the CCAQ initiative provided a valuable forum for developing a more systematic approach to common problems. There was a certain uniqueness in the role of the HR professional in the UN common system; the commonalities of the profession were significant. Collaboration was warranted in all efforts to increase the professionalism and to develop forward-looking competencies for UN common system specialists.

25. Arising out of its review of the issues raised in the document, the Committee put forward a plan of action for further work in this area (annex III).

26. In addition to the specific action plan developed by the Committee, the CCAQ secretariat was charged with keeping all aspects of this matter under review and requested to take further initiatives to promote the UN personnel profession.

Core common system issues

27. The Committee did not formally discuss this matter; it was, however, an issue which was referred to at some length in the course of an informal ICSC forum/retreat which took place over the week-end of 12 and 13 July 1997. Arising out of the forum, a plan of action was drawn up and introduced at the forty-sixth session of ICSC. A number of concerns directly related to the delineation of issues relating to the core common system were included in the plan of action as follows:

(a) clarification of the respective roles and responsibilities of the consultative parties in ICSC to be developed in conjunction with the early 1998 meeting of the Tripartite Working Group on the Consultative Process and Working Arrangements;

(b) As a first step in tackling the subject of core common system issues, a case study approach would be used; the areas singled out for a possible case study were: job classification, linked grades, personal promotions and broad-banding. This issue would be developed by a focus group with a view to simplifying rules and procedures.

Professional remuneration

(i) *Draft ACC statement on the comparator/margin*

28. At its first regular session (April 1997), ACC had noted that the General Assembly had not reached a conclusion on the implications of ICSC's finding that the German civil service was better paid than the current comparator. It had gone on to reiterate views previously expressed on the need to substantially improve conditions of service for staff and had invited the Secretary-General to continue to seek a favourable solution to this issue with Member States in the General Assembly.

29. In this connection, the Committee adopted a statement which, subject to any action ICSC might take on the matter (see para. 9 above), it would request ACC to submit to the Fifth Committee later in the year.

(ii) *Update on the introduction of competence/functional differentials*

30. The Committee took note of the information contained in the secretariat's note (ACC/1997/PER/R.17) and in particular of the variety of innovations being introduced into national public services remuneration systems to try to preserve their competitiveness.

31. Although the public civil service arrangements were many and varied, they could be grouped into broad categories to include:

- greater flexibilities in classification structures;
- occupational/skill/competency based differentials;
- alternative methods of progressing through pay scales or bands;
- diverse contractual patterns.

32. By and large, such groupings coincided with studies CCAQ had pursued or was in the process of pursuing. In the Committee's view, the information about national practices was helpful to the extent that it enabled CCAQ to reaffirm to ICSC that the studies it was pursuing and the actions being taken by the organizations were not out of keeping with the concept of a civil service but were necessary for the maintenance of the productivity and effectiveness of that civil service.

(iii) *Base/floor salary scale*

33. The Committee endorsed the proposals of the ICSC secretariat as contained in document ICSC/46/R.4 in respect of an adjustment of the base/floor scale by 3.1 per cent with effect from 1 March 1998.

34. The Committee decided that it would point out to ICSC that such "regular" items as the updating of the base/floor salary scale should - in the interests of improved agenda management - not be given over-prominence but be dealt with as expeditiously as possible.

(iv) *Evolution of the margin (ICSC/46/R.3)* [See also paras. 4 to 9 above]

35. The Committee took note of the margin forecasts of 115.7 for 1997 and the forecast of a total compensation margin of 110.9 between the remuneration of the German and the US federal civil services.

36. It would recall to ICSC the comments ACC had made on previous occasions about the Commission's lack of action in respect of its finding that the US federal civil service was no longer the highest paying civil service; hence that the Noblemaire principle was not being applied.

37. In the Committee's view, the Noblemaire principle had to be upheld. ICSC had in 1995 and 1996 concluded that changing the comparator was complex and introduced added complications. The Committee concluded therefore that the margin should be used as a mechanism by which the Noblemaire principle was applied until such time as the comparator was changed.

38. It therefore decided to request ICSC at its current session:

(a) to move the margin range from its current level of 110-120 to 120-130 to reflect that the German federal civil service remuneration was some 11 per cent higher than that of the US;

(b) to make proposals to the General Assembly which would ensure that:

(i) by 1 January 1998, UN pay levels would be set at the bottom of the revised range (i.e. at 120); and

(ii) further adjustments to UN remuneration levels would be made over an appropriate period of time to ensure that they reached the mid-point of the revised range (i.e. 125).

[At its forty-sixth session, ICSC did not consider that it would be prudent to endorse CCAQ's proposals inter alia because the General Assembly had decided to defer consideration of the German/United States comparisons to its fifty-second session.]

39. The Committee further decided to advise ICSC:

(a) that it was no longer necessary to report margin figures based on the margin calculation methodology which the General Assembly had rejected in 1995;

(b) that since it had been clearly understood by all parties that by the very nature of the comparison, exchange rate variations between the US dollar and the Deutschmark had no impact on the total compensation margin between the US and German remuneration levels, the reference in paragraph 23 of document ICSC/46/R.4 to appropriate exchange rates being "one of the more significant aspects" of the COL differential calculations should be carefully clarified before inclusion in ICSC's Annual Report.

Post adjustment matters - Post adjustment at Geneva

40. The Committee took note of the information provided in ICSC/46/R.5 on the development of a post adjustment index or indices which would take account of the fact that a number of common system staff lived in neighbouring France. It appreciated the approach taken by ICSC to consult with the administrations and legal advisers of the Geneva-based organizations. This had proved to be a most useful way of ensuring that the views of the organizations were fully reflected in the documents available to the Commission.

41. The Committee also carefully noted the comments of the United Nations Legal Counsel as contained in his letter of 5 July 1997 which were also reprinted in ICSC/46/R.5. It was evident that, as the Legal Counsel had pointed out, in addition to the legal aspects, there were political, practical and administrative questions which remained. The administrative complexities and costs of revising the calculation of the Geneva post adjustment index were enormous. For example, at one level there were the complexities of revising the Organizations' Regulations and Rules. At another level, there were the

complications of administering a series of indices established to respond to the need for transitional arrangements.

42. The UN Legal Counsel had also referred to the need for a cost benefit analysis to be made of the whole exercise before a decision was made on the matter. The Committee strongly supported the Legal Counsel's view, noting that all costs of the exercise could not be foreseen.

43. The Committee also reiterated its concern for the common system ramifications of this issue. The Commission was in fact considering putting in place a methodology for measuring something that had never been measured before, namely the differences in cost of living resulting from where staff members resided rather than where they worked. Although it might be intended to apply the methodology to one duty station at present, in the future there could be calls for differentiating post adjustment indices by different localities of a major urban area. Such increased fragmentation of an already over-complex post adjustment system clearly ran counter to the often expressed concerns to introduce greater simplicity in the processes which surrounded the management of human resources in the common system.

Performance management: Conclusion of discussions relating to the review of the Commission's recommendations in the light of the experience of the organizations (see also paras. 43 to 52 of ACC/1997/6: Report of the eighty-sixth session and annex IV of this report (Parameters for the development of performance awards) which was developed at CCAQ(PER)'s eighty-sixth session)

44. The Committee appreciated the helpful approach taken in the ICSC secretariat's paper on this matter (ICSC/46/R.6) and in particular the non-prescriptive guidance provided. It considered that this approach responded to the organizations' calls for greater flexibility and was in line with the spirit of the delineation of responsibilities provided for in the General Assembly's resolution 51/216. The resolution made clear distinctions between what was required of the Secretary-General of the UN, the executive heads of the organizations and ICSC.

45. In the development of organizations' individual approaches, which would be tailored to suit their cultures and the different stages of development of their performance management systems, the non-prescriptive framework proposed by the ICSC secretariat would be particularly useful. Organizations appreciated the recognition that the introduction of performance management was a process which would require time. As they moved forward in this area, the organizations would share experiences between themselves and with ICSC.

46. The Committee underlined the potential for using non-monetary awards in the development of recognition and reward systems; these could be less contentious than monetary awards at the start-up of any scheme; this did not imply that non-monetary recognition had less value than monetary awards. It also welcomed the references in the ICSC document to the management of under-performance.

47. In addition, the Committee concluded that it would suggest to the Commission that caution be exercised in avoiding any finite determination which might in the long run jeopardize the introduction of performance management systems. Such caution should be exercised especially when determining whether cash awards for the Professional category

should be based on net base salary or on net remuneration (i.e. including post adjustment) and also on the introduction of quota systems. The experience of human resources practitioners and the wealth of academic research pointed to the conclusion that quotas were not considered to be a healthy or equitable manner of ensuring the integrity of performance management systems. It was purely arbitrary to prescribe in advance the proportion of staff meeting different performance levels. Clearly, each organization's governing body would exercise its responsibility of ensuring rigour when reviewing operational proposals and approving funding for such programmes.

Appointments of Limited Duration (ALD)

48. The Committee considered the report of the Working Group on Appointments of Limited Duration (ICSC/46/R.7 and addenda) which had met in conjunction with ICSC's forty-fifth and forty-sixth sessions to review the technical, legal and human resources policy issues resulting from the increasing use of limited duration employment arrangements in the common system. The Working Group had focused on (a) current practices and an analysis of organizations' needs, (b) the results of the on-going pilot schemes and (c) terminological and data gathering issues. It was foreseen that, on the basis of the Working Group's report, the Commission would provide broad policy guidance on the subject.

49. The pilot schemes of UN and UNDP, although different, had both been designed to provide for simplified and flexible employment arrangements, especially in circumstances of uncertain funding.

50. For the United Nations, it was essential to have a new administrative tool which met the unique staffing needs of peacekeeping and peacemaking missions, in particular the need to rapidly deploy large numbers of staff in response to emergency situations. UNDP had found that its pilot scheme had responded well to its objectives in providing flexibility to respond to market conditions, greater ease of administration and overall cost effectiveness, while encouraging broader reform initiatives, notably the decentralization of decision making to line managers and adjustment to the non-core work environment.

51. The Committee concluded that it would report to ICSC that it welcomed the flexibility afforded by the ALD arrangements. It was evident that the schemes introduced by the United Nations and UNDP were working well. At the same time, the Committee was aware that the introduction of flexibility had to be approached responsibly and that a number of guiding principles should be maintained.

52. Moreover, the Committee had particular system-wide concerns for the equitable treatment of employees. One of the prime reasons for introducing arrangements such as those for ALDs was to ensure that persons formerly working under special service or contractual service agreements could be provided with the protection afforded to staff members under the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations as well as with the social security protection arrangements for staff recruited for similar periods of time. Under the pilot schemes, staff under ALD arrangements were not only eligible for coverage under the Convention on Privileges and Immunities, but were also full members of the Pension Fund, thus being eligible for death and disability coverage. Their pensionable remuneration levels were defined like those of regular staff members. They were participants in the organizations' health insurance arrangements and, in the case of the United Nations, had the same leave entitlements as other staff members.

53. Overall, the Committee viewed the two pilot schemes as ground-breaking initiatives which could serve as examples for flexibilities in other areas. This would be in line with upholding organizations' basic policies and responsibilities whilst, at the same time, forming part of their drive to introduce more progressive human resources management.

Medical standards

54. In document ACC/1997/PER/R.18, the Committee was provided by WHO with a research proposal which would enable organizations to quantify the likely impact on the benefit and insurance package administered by the common system of (a) different policies regarding the recruitment of new staff with certain chronic or progressive and/or life-threatening diseases and (b) alternative scenarios regarding the incidence of life-threatening diseases, including HIV/AIDS, among existing staff. This was the second phase of the Committee's review of common system medical standards. An earlier phase of this review had dealt with legal and ethical issues, but that matter could not be finalized without the completion of the second phase on the potential consequences of any change in the medical standards on the organizations' benefit and insurance arrangements.

55. In response to WHO's request for financial support for the research proposal, the Committee agreed to apply the normal cost-sharing formula; it expressed the hope, however, that the costs of the research project would be carefully reviewed by WHO, in particular in respect of work/months of staff time that had been projected in the proposed budget for the research study. In this connection, the secretariat of the Pension Fund suggested that information related to expenditures on pensions and disabilities might be obtained from the Pension Fund.

56. The Committee would revert to the overall question of medical standards on completion of the research study.

Long-term care

57. In document ACC/1997/PER/R.19, the Committee was provided with the history of its consideration of the possible introduction of long-term care insurance begun in 1994. The arguments supporting the introduction of such an insurance were summarized in the document. The secretariat concluded that the question at the current stage was not so much as to whether long-term care insurance should be introduced but rather what that long-term care insurance coverage should constitute and when it should be introduced.

58. The document also contained details of contacts maintained with commercial insurers and included a revised proposal for optional insurance coverage from Van Breda. A second commercial insurer, Willis Corroon, had also put forward revisions to the scheme it had suggested in 1996.

59. Representatives of Willis Corroon were present to brief the Committee on these revisions. The revised Willis Corroon proposal was built around a small component of compulsory coverage on which could be developed any number of voluntary coverage options. The Committee welcomed the revised proposal from Willis Corroon and appreciated the careful analysis of the UN population on which it was based.

60. After a careful review of all aspects of the proposals, the Committee unanimously concluded that it was time to move forward to develop the framework for a long-term care insurance scheme which could be introduced in organizations of the common system. This would meet the needs for such insurance which had been explicitly reported on in previous sessions; it would also reflect societal trends and demographic changes and be in consonance with the common system work/family agenda adopted by ACC.

61. In introducing such a scheme, the Committee concluded that it would be best, in the first instance, to make use of the services of a commercial insurer whilst leaving open the option that after some years of experience the organizations might take over the scheme which would thus become self-insured. The Committee also concluded that the inclusion in the scheme of a small compulsory element as suggested by Willis Corroon would be advantageous to an entirely voluntary scheme in order to keep the premia at a reasonable level and to ensure the scheme's viability.

62. On this basis, the Committee requested its secretariat to work together urgently with the commercial insurers Willis Corroon to develop a framework which would provide for an insurance scheme which could be adjusted to organizations' particular needs. Amongst the alternatives which should be pursued, the Committee singled out the following key issues:

- an element of compulsory coverage limited to a benefit of US\$10,000 per annum for a maximum period of five years;
- premia for this compulsory coverage, which could be either returnable or non-returnable to staff members leaving service or retiring (N.B. for US\$10,000 per annum coverage, it was suggested that annual premia would be in the region of US\$18 in cases where premia were not returned and some US\$28 if premia were to be returned.);
- the purchase of life-long long-term care coverage on retirement from UN common system service;
- coverage for recognized dependants and pensioners.

63. There remained a concern for the manner in which the costs of the compulsory element might best be met. A number of organizations considered that there was a clear link between the costs of long-term care and the future costs which would be incurred by the organizations' health insurances on the direct or indirect costs of long-term care. In this respect, it appeared logical to meet some part of the costs of the compulsory element from existing health insurance schemes, at least in the vast majority of organizations in which health insurance coverage was mandatory. Organizations would want to look carefully at this possibility inter alia from an actuarial standpoint with which the secretariat would also seek help from the commercial insurers.

64. Much work was still to be done; the Committee expressed the hope that the secretariat, together with a focus group of organizations with which it would remain in close contact and with the help of Willis Corroon would be able to come up with a "variable geometry" framework by the end of 1997. This would then be circulated to organizations early in 1998 for discussion with all those responsible for insurance with a view to launching long-term coverage by the time of the Committee's spring 1998 session.

Standards of travel and per diem

65. In document ICSC/46/R.8, the ICSC secretariat provided information relating to the organizations' standards of travel. The material had been gathered by the secretariat in response to the request in the General Assembly's decision 51/465 of 3 April 1997 that the Commission "undertake a review, at the earliest opportunity, taking into account the relevant reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), on the question of travel entitlements of staff of the United Nations common system and to report thereon to the Assembly at the second part of its resumed fifty-first session".

66. Given the scope of the study, the Commission, at its spring 1997 session, had decided to defer consideration of the matter until its summer 1997 session.

67. The Committee noted the sensitivity and the complexity of the issue. It considered that the information contained in the ICSC secretariat document had to be regarded as a first step in an analysis of some of the complexities of the matter. Standards of travel were but one element in the management of travel and, in particular, of managing travel costs.

68. Before looking at standards, the purpose of travel had to be reviewed. Why did staff members have to travel? Were there alternatives to travel which would achieve the same results? How could travel be made most cost effective - not merely in terms of the absolute costs of going somewhere, but also in terms of the fitness of the staff member to complete tasks assigned as efficiently and effectively as possible?

69. The organizations were unique; their missions global. Travel to and from different destinations was a key factor in the successful attainment of those missions.

70. Throughout the common system, governing bodies and senior management were insisting that the costs of travel must not only be carefully monitored, but must, to the extent possible, be reduced. This meant that they must be properly managed. The matter was one of management, not over-legislation or arbitrary standard-setting. Moreover, in recent times, all organizations had made efforts to introduce alternatives to travel; tele-conferencing and video-conferencing were but two examples.

71. The picture was made more complex not only because the organizations had different mandates to fulfil, but because the business of travel had become increasingly diffuse. The tariffs applicable to air travel differed significantly depending on where a journey began, the length of the stay in any given location, whether a week-end was included and so on. Moreover, the different classes which airlines called business or economy were not standardized. What was deemed to be business class on one airline might better be approximated to economy class on another. The unpredictability of some missions required staff to change departure dates, this necessitated travel standards which were not restrictive. Everywhere around the world organizations, sometimes through decentralization, had worked out special arrangements.

72. The conditions under which travel were carried out was the second consideration. The organizations had a responsibility for the safety and health of their staff. They were responsible for ensuring that the airlines on which staff members flew were secure. They also had a responsibility to ensure that on arrival at their destination, staff members could

carry out their mission efficiently. They had to ensure that staff members' travel was cost effective. They had also to ensure that staff members had available the necessary equipment and materials to carry out their missions and did not have excess baggage limitations.

73. In the context of the health and safety of staff, the views of the Medical Directors, which had been submitted to ICSC, were key. For example, they had noted that "frequent travellers across time zones ... were exposed to an increased risk of hypertension/heart disease, emotional breakdowns, and poor performance at work".

74. The Committee was informed that air travel under cramped conditions for several hours resulted directly in the following medical problems:

(a) The vascular diseases - venous thromboembolism and peripheral arterial thrombosis, which are life-threatening conditions;

(b) Skeletal problems - chronic lower and upper back pain, which can become a serious source of absenteeism, poor morale and performance;

(c) Psychological problems - physical discomfort contributes to stress and many illnesses are stress-related.

These medical concerns had led the Medical Directors to support "business class" travel and stopovers for journeys of six or more hours' duration.

75. In addition to the input from the Medical Directors, a great deal more data from organizations was needed in order to review all aspects of this matter. These data included (a) how frequently staff were required to travel and between which locations and (b) how often staff travelled through many different locations rather than simply going to and from a single point. Amongst other findings, these data would confirm that travel management could not be based on the time taken to travel between two UN cities -- New York and Geneva, or simply on the time taken to cross the North Atlantic; 89 per cent of staff going on mission from New York did not go to Europe.

76. From these data, it would be possible to assess what, if anything, was wrong with the current provisions. CCAQ would suggest that ICSC exercise a great deal of restraint in its discussion of this matter. It would moreover suggest that ICSC invite the General Assembly to explain what was wrong with the current situation. If the General Assembly was concerned essentially with the costs of travel, then that should be the subject for review.

77. The question of Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) raised a similar need for a fundamental reappraisal of the purpose of the subsistence allowance and an analysis of whether the current DSA arrangements still met that purpose. The questions were not simply limited to the relevance of the 15 or 40 per cent (higher) levels of DSA; they were much more fundamental. They included, for example:

- whether the lump sum approach to the payment of daily subsistence allowance remained valid;
- whether a different approach - for example a receipt based or partially receipt based method - would be less or more cost effective;

- how best the aberrations of the system could cost-effectively be met (e.g. cases where there might be 20 or even, in one case, 80 DSA rates in one country);
- representation concerns - the document before the Commission recognized that Member States accorded different standards of accommodation to their senior officials;
- how security could be assured in hotel accommodation when staff - notably women staff members - were visiting high risk locations.

78. On this issue, as on the question of travel, more research was needed. In addition to the need for more data from organizations, it was necessary to make a full analysis of those instances where travel arrangements and DSA rates applied not only to staff members but equally to representatives of Member States attending governing bodies; the General Assembly would not have jurisdiction over these arrangements. An analysis of the practices of national civil services, the Coordinated Organisations and other international organizations was also required.

Security matters

79. The Committee considered in document ACC/1997/PER/R.20 the report of the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Security (Rome, May 1997) as well as proposals on a number of issues requiring its concordance.

80. In the course of the 12-month period June 1996 to May 1997, 1800 staff members and their dependants had been evacuated from various locations. This was the highest level of evacuations for many years and was an indication that the effective management of security arrangements in the field was of utmost importance to ensure the safety and well-being of the staff and their families. The Committee agreed that a standardized security training programme should be made mandatory for managers of field programmes.

81. The delineation of global common policies was one way of achieving consistency in security measures among agencies; yet, it was difficult to legislate in an area where circumstances rapidly evolved and where organizations were constantly building on past experience. At times, situations might warrant initiatives which were beyond the established framework; the Committee agreed, therefore, that the United Nations Security Coordinator's Office (UNSECOORD) should be granted the flexibility to institute special residential security measures for staff members or their dependants in order to respond quickly to such specific situations.

82. The complex and sensitive issue of self-evacuation of locally-recruited staff required organizations to coordinate to the maximum extent possible at the field level to ensure that locally-recruited staff would be treated equally. A number of measures which would assist locally-recruited staff in such situations were reported on by UNDP in document CCAQ(PER)/87/CRP.6. The Committee agreed that organizations with field presences should coordinate to introduce such measures.

83. In this connection, the Committee noted, however, that the organizations' responsibilities were first and foremost for its staff members. Those employed locally under Special Service Agreements (SSAs) and other similar arrangements which did not confer

staff member status were not eligible for the same provisions as staff members. There was an urgent need to develop common procedures for local SSA holders which would ensure consistent treatment and help eliminate unrealistic expectations. In endorsing the specific recommendations referred to it by the 1997 Inter-Agency Security Meeting, the Committee further considered that it was also important to bring its general concerns to ACC's attention in order that ACC could exhort organizations' headquarters to become more pro-active in ensuring the cooperation and coordination of managers in the field on security matters and in promoting their training in these matters.

84. Bearing in mind the ever-increasing difficulties staff were facing in the field and the growing number being required to serve in high-risk areas, the Committee supported the proposal to strengthen resources to provide stress counselling. It would therefore request that CCAQ(FB) consider the financing of two stress counsellors on an inter-agency basis.

Code of conduct - update

85. The Committee was provided with an update on progress with the development of a code of conduct for staff of the UN and its Funds and Programmes by the Office of Legal Affairs of the UN.

86. Regret was expressed that information on the code of conduct had not been forthcoming since the discussion at CCAQ's eighty-sixth session nor had there been any response to the questions raised by the executive heads on this matter in ACC. Organizations had expected to receive a copy of the draft code and stressed the need for more coordination among sister agencies especially in the light of the potential repercussions for different governing bodies which could result from the introduction of the code.

87. The representative of the United Nations explained that while it was understood that initiatives of the UN could have impact on others, the code of conduct would constitute part of the UN's Staff Rules and Regulations and therefore remained fully within the prerogative of the organization itself. The text would be submitted to the General Assembly along with commentary and thereafter distributed to other agencies. The draft code had not been circulated because it had been the object of consultation with staff representatives in May and June and had gone through a significant number of modifications. It was currently with the Secretary-General as a part of his reform agenda. The code incorporated the spirit and values of the international civil service outlined in the 1954 ICSAB Report on Standards of Conduct and also incorporated provisions inspired by other international instruments. The 1954 ICSAB Report, while not strictly speaking a set of rules, had been cited by the Administrative Tribunals in a number of cases and was the basis of the regulations and rules of the organizations relating to conduct and performance. If the ICSAB Code were to be updated, it would clearly be a common system issue.

88. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the clarification provided by the representative of the United Nations. In the interests of transparency and coordination across the common system, it regretted that - in spite of assurances - the UN's code of conduct had not been shared with other agencies. Those organizations which wished to do so would inform the General Assembly, before its consideration of the matter, of the potential system-wide implications of adopting the code without inter-agency consideration.

Other matters

(i) *Mobility between organizations (CCAQ(PER)/87/CRP.4)*

89. The Committee noted the secretariat's action to date to identify more precisely the extent to which there had - or had not - been movement of staff between different UN organizations. At the current stage, however, the Committee did not favour the distribution of a questionnaire on this matter to all Professional staff as had been suggested by the secretariat.

90. Rather, the Committee requested the secretariat urgently to pursue the matter at the policy level, developing a full picture of what have been the obstacles to inter-agency mobility and examining in detail where and when there had been successes which had been beneficial to organizations.

91. In this context, the Committee also decided that the secretariat should urgently put together a plan which would allow for the temporary exchange of human resources professionals between organizations (see action plan in annex III). This matter would also be reflected in the ACC statement on new approaches to human resources management (see para. 13).

92. The Committee concluded that the related issue of exchanges between the UN and the private and public sector should also be developed - at the policy level - by the secretariat taking into account concerns expressed for potential conflict of interest.

(ii) *Progress report on the feasibility study on the development of an inter-agency skills inventory (Participating Agencies Mobility System)*

93. The Committee took note of the progress report contained in CCAQ(PER)/87/CRP.5 on the development of a computerized system that would allow applicants to submit CVs through e-mail to a repository from which organizations could search for candidates meeting their needs. In general, the project was welcomed especially in respect of the long-term future potential which such a project might have for linking up with the private sector in the context of spouse employment.

94. It was agreed that the concerns raised in the discussion in respect inter alia of the need to ensure that such a system was secure, that CVS would be regularly updated or purged and that management costs would be kept to a minimum should be fully examined by the consultants and the secretariats in finalizing the feasibility study which was currently underway.

95. The Committee would be kept fully informed of the conclusions of the feasibility study and the Organizations' personnel and IT specialists would be consulted with proposals on the most appropriate way to move forward on a pilot basis with this project.

(iii) *Meeting with the Representatives of the Board of Auditors carrying out a management audit of the ICSC secretariat*

96. In the course of the Committee's session, a briefing session was arranged with the Representatives of the Board of Auditors carrying out a management audit of the ICSC secretariat.

97. Among the issues raised in the course of the briefing were the concerns on this matter expressed by CCAQ(PER) and (FB) and CCAQ of the whole since 1989, including:

- the structure and size of the secretariat and, in particular, the imbalance between divisions;
- the predominance of salary operations over research/policy issues;
- concerns for the selection process for Commission members;
- the need for innovation and experimentation;
- ambiguity in respect of the leadership exercised on the work of the secretariat;
- the importance of involving staff members of the agencies in the work of the secretariat either through exchanges or focus groups;
- the need for better analysis/diagnosis of individual organizations' needs.

98. The secretariat would prepare a set of documents prepared by ACC and CCAQ on this matter for submission to the Auditors.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chairperson: Mr. D. Goethel (IAEA)

Vice-Chairpersons: Ms. J. Beagle (UN); Ms. H. Hirose (UNESCO)

Representatives of member organizations

United Nations: Ms. Jan Beagle, Director,
Specialist Services Division,
OHRM

Mr. Julio Camarena
Common System & Inter-agency Policy,
SSD, OHRM

UNDP: Mr. Bruce Frank, Chief,
Policy, Compensation and Administration,
Office of Human Resources

Mr. Gary McGillicuddy, Chief,
Compensation & Classification Section
Office of Human Resources

Mr. Mark Farnsworth, Policy Officer,
Office of Human Resources

UNICEF: Mr. Michael Corbett, Deputy Director,
Division of Human Resources

UNFPA: Ms. Linda Sherry-Cloonan, Chief,
Personnel Branch, DFPA

WFP: Ms. Diane Dufresne-Klaus
Director, Human Resources

UNRWA: Mr. William Lee, Chief,
New York Office

UNHCR: Ms. Mary J. Murphy, Director,
Division of Human Resources Management

Mr. Duncan Barclay, Chief,
Policy Coordination,
Division of Human Resources Management

ITC: Ms. Christine Garstin, Chief,
Personnel Section

ILO: Ms. T. Prada de Mesa, Deputy-Director,
New York Liaison Office

FAO: Mr. Charles Juge, Chief,
Personnel Policy and Entitlements Service

UNESCO: Ms. Haruko Hirose, Director,
Bureau of Personnel

Ms. Ilana Krishnamurti, Chief,
Division for Personnel & Compensation Policy

ICAO: Mr. Dirk-Jan Goossen, Chief,
Personnel Branch

UPU: Mr. Christian Langheld,
Head of Personnel

WHO: Mr. A.T. Slater, Director,
Division of Personnel

Ms. Renee Lopez, Chief,
Policies and Recruitment Service

ITU: Mr. Jean-Patrick Baré, Chief,
Personnel and Social Protection Department

WMO: Mr. Mubarak Husain, Director,
Resource Management Department

Mr. Eric Renlund, Chief,
Personnel Division

IMO: Mr. Leif Gunnstedt
Head, Personnel Section

IFAD: Ms. Margaret Simon
Director of Personnel

UNIDO: Mr. Peter Lassig, Director,
Personnel Services

IAEA: Mr. Dieter Goethel, Director,
Division of Personnel

Mr. Ernest Obed, Head,
Staff Administration Section

WTO: Mr. R. Luther, Counsellor,
Personnel Division

Observers

ICSC: Mr. Prakash Ranadive, Executive Secretary

Mr. Kingston Rhodes, Chief,
Cost-of-Living Division

Ms. Enid Steward-Goffman, Chief,
Personnel Policies Division

Members of the ICSC secretariat

UNJSPF: Mr. John P. Dietz, Deputy Secretary

FICSA: Mr. Walter Scherzer, President
Ms. Magda Maged, Vice-President
Mr. Alvaro da Silva Durao, General Secretary
Mr. Joao Cordeiro
Mr. Dieter Zeller
Mr. Mahbib ul Alam
Ms. Hannelore Puhlmann

CCISUA: Ms. Rosemarie Waters, President

CCAQ secretariat

Secretary: Mr. Roger Eggleston

Assistant Secretary: Ms. Mary-Jane Peters

Guests

CFC: Mr. F. Finocchio,
Acting Administrative Officer

Annex II

AGENDA AS ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON 11 JULY 1997

	<u>Document symbol</u>
1. Adoption of the agenda	ACC/1997/PER/R.13
2. Outcome of the Working Group on the Consultative Process and Working Arrangements in ICSC	
3. New approaches to Human Resources Management	
(i) Draft ACC statement on new approaches	ACC/1997/PER/R.14
(ii) The changing role of HR departments: the expertise needed to fulfil that role	ACC/1997/PER/R.15
4. Core common system issues	
5. Professional remuneration	
(i) Draft ACC statement on the comparator/margin	ACC/1997/PER/R.16
(ii) Update on the introduction of competence/functional differentials	ACC/1997/PER/R.17
(iii) Base/floor salary scale	ICSC/46/R.4
(iv) Evolution of the margin between the net remuneration of the US federal civil service and that of the United Nations system	ICSC/46/R.3
6. Post adjustment matters	
Post adjustment at Geneva	ICSC/46/R.5
7. Performance management	
Conclusion of discussions relating to the review of the Commission's recommendations in the light of the experience of the organizations	ICSC/46/R.6
8. Appointments of limited duration	ICSC/46/R.7 and Addenda 1, 2 & 3
9. Medical Standards	ACC/1997/PER/R.18

10. **Long-term care** ACC/1997/PER/R.19
11. **Standards of travel and per diem** ICSC/46/R.8
12. **Implementation of ICSC decisions and recommendations** ICSC/46/R.9 & Add.1
13. **Security matters** ACC/1997/PER/R.20;
- CCAQ(PER)/87/CRP.6
14. **Code of conduct - update**
15. **Other matters**
 - (i) Mobility between organizations and exchanges
with the private and public sector
CCAQ(PER)/86/CRP.4
 - (ii) Feasibility study on the development of an inter-
agency skills inventory
CCAQ(PER)/87/CRP.5
 - (iii) Management audit of the ICSC secretariat

Annex III

**PLAN OF ACTION FOR NEXT STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO ADVANCE
NEW APPROACHES TO HR MANAGEMENT**

ACTION	BY WHOM	BY WHEN
Development of a common profile for a UN Human Resources manager, including competencies	CCAQ secretariat to prepare profile in consultation with organizations (in particular UNESCO, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF)	Document for April 1998. Consultations to start at once
Annual conference of UN HR specialists with outside HR experts	CCAQ to plan and fundraise for a conference to be held in 1998	April or July 1998 or at another appropriate time
Temporary inter-agency exchanges of HR personnel <u>inter alia</u> as part of career development progression and continuous learning policy	CCAQ secretariat to develop a mechanism to share with organizations; this should include provision for monitoring/evaluation	September 1997
Lists of HR journals and HR web sites	CCAQ secretariat to circulate both to organizations	September 1997
HR conference	CCAQ secretariat to circulate a list of appropriate HR conferences (worldwide)	December 1997
Inventory of meetings of UN HR staff currently taking place on a regular basis (e.g. POGO, field-based organizations' meetings)	Organizations to send information to CCAQ secretariat by September 1997 for distribution in October	October 1997
Training module in HR	CCAQ secretariat urgently to contact Director UN Staff College to commit College to prepare module as soon as possible and to offer CCAQ (organization and secretariat) support therein	As soon as possible

Annex IV

PARAMETERS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERFORMANCE AWARDS

(a) Organizations would be guided by experience gained by those organizations having introduced cash and non cash rewards for performance - both for individuals and teams - within and outside the UN system.

(b) Assurances would be provided to the General Assembly and organizations' individual governing bodies on the scope of coverage and overall costs of such schemes.

(c) Among the approaches identified as compatible with the above factors which organizations might consider were (i) individual lump sum bonuses and/or group or team incentives as an add-on to the existing salary structure, (ii) managing pay within the current min/max salary range according to performance, (iii) piloting a separate approach such as for managerial levels to be placed on performance pay along the lines of schemes developed by a number of national civil services.

(d) Overall costs of schemes should be kept within resources made available. Depending on organizations' needs and constraints, resources might be mobilized through a variety of approaches such as calibrating the frequency and/or proportion of step increments, replacing current step increments with a salary range through which movement would be based solely on level of performance, efficiency gains, turnover savings and, in some cases, additional appropriations.

(e) Monitoring systems would be devised to measure carefully the effectiveness of the operation of the schemes.