

STAFF UNION BULLETIN

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ILO Staff Union Committee

Opening Principles on Recruitment and Selection / Mobility

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PRINCIPLES

1. ***It would be unfeasible to separate Mobility from Recruitment and Selection.*** First, the Governing Body specifically spoke about delivering on a new Recruitment and Selection Collective Agreement by March 2014. We have the basics of an agreement hammered out during the Mediation in 2011. The administration of geographical and functional mobility procedures are intertwined with recruitment procedures and mechanisms.
2. ***We agree with Management's proposal for a voluntary mobility policy.*** However, to be effective, there need to be suitable incentives, and a clear linkage to career paths¹ for staff, as well as stability of employment. Giving priority to staff wishing to be geographically mobile – for both ***in-grade transfers*** and ***applications for promotion*** – whenever there are vacancies would achieve the desired movement of staff, and would lead to a voluntary system where staff understood the need to be mobile in order to move through the ranks.
3. ***Needs to be more ingrained in the enterprise culture, both for GS and P / D staff, again linked to career path and stability of employment.***
4. ***Work-life balance, trailing spouse, and initiatives to facilitate mobility must be tackled at the outset of discussions, and cannot be left as an afterthought.*** Most foreign services provide considerable assistance, and incentives² from housing to spouse employment³. This is not simply a matter of “emphasising very clearly that the frequent geographic mobility attached to their carrier path may challenge family life.” Knowing that mobility is “part of your job” is one thing. But putting in place supportive mechanisms to deal with the very unique situation of workers in these

¹ Including an increased obligation for managers, and HRD centrally, to help develop career prospects and paths for staff. The PDP collective agreement would be a good start: <http://www.ilostaffunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/pdp.pdf>

² For US Foreign Service staff posted abroad (foreign service and federal civil servants such as USTR in Geneva or Department of Agriculture in Brussels), they get Washington pay as a floor (i.e. base pay never goes below that even if the cost of living is much lower) + cost of living + hardship + housing. Two examples:

1. Bangkok: US staff get DC pay + 20% cost of living + 10% hardship + 45-60,000 housing benefit (depending on grade). UN staff get 10% less than in New York. Education grant for US staff in Bangkok is 25-25,000 (depending on grade)
2. Geneva: US staff get DC pay + 90% cost of living + 75-96,000 housing benefit (depending on grade). UN staff get 21% more than in New York. Education grant for US staff in Geneva is 30-40,000 (depending on grade).

³ See: <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/> a dedicated website of the US Department of State's Family Liaison Office. It helps with issues related to spouse employment, schooling for children of foreign service employees, counselling, stress management, etc. The section on Spouse Employment (<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1959.htm>) seems quite comprehensive, and strikes a better balance between avoiding nepotism and promoting opportunities for trailing spouses than the ILO currently does.

circumstances, and their families, is a crucial element in its success. These could include country- or regions-specific approaches, and pilot projects to see how we can get the best value for money, and which measures are most appreciated and deliver results.

5. ***How this is managed through the recruitment and selection procedures is key.***

- a. Use yellow pages (give staff an incentive to keep them updated). Here staff profiles should be verified for accuracy, and there should be an area where you can “tick the box” if interested in a lateral / geographical transfer.
- b. We should return to “career civil service” principle, where – with few exceptions – you come in at junior grade, then move up through the organization. ***Prospection for higher grades should be first used to promote internal mobility.***
- c. Workforce planning is essential. We need to do this better.
- d. Create priority list – similar to Article 4.2(g) of the Staff Regulations, but with mobility criteria integrated. This could be expanded to a points system, based on the number of years’ service in a particular category of duty station.
- e. Once the term limit (linked to hardship, but with an overall maximum related to the cancellation of the mobility allowance) is reached, the staff member should have overall priority for a move, and depending on circumstances and within certain parameters, should have some discretion as to where they go.

6. ***We believe that mobility should also extend to moves between RB and TC, and between ILO and the Turin Centre.***

7. ***Any new policies must be developed as a holistic package, with all mutually supporting the mobility objective, and tailored for ILO staff.*** Some recent changes in common system conditions of service in non-family duty stations (SOLA, R&R, etc.) have produced the opposite effect than what was sought.

8. ***There must be safeguards for staff members who want to move, apply to move, but are not able to move through no fault of their own.*** These staff should not then automatically lose entitlements (mobility allowance, housing subsidy in HQ, etc.).

9. ***A workable mobility policy based on the above principles requires a much greater, centralized management of the process in HRD.*** Individual managers in many organizations with rotation have limited say over who is assigned to their teams. This will be an essential element to ensuring that staff who go to the field but then lack “visibility” in headquarters or other duty stations, still get a fair chance at career development.

10. ***A policy promoting short-term mobility assignments for locally-recruited staff could be developed for the ILO with little difficulty, and with a major impact on morale.*** Such a programme already exists in UNICEF, and discussions have taken place within the UN Secretariat, Funds and Programmes for rolling out similar policies there. We should promote mobility for locally-recruited staff in the ILO based on good practice and lessons learned in organizations where it exists. Greater consideration should also be given to short-term (<6 month) mobility for international officials as well, and this should be seen as a value added, not a loss for the releasing manager.
