



UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY



Distr.  
GENERAL

A/36/432/Add.1  
29 October 1981

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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Thirty-sixth session  
Agenda items 104 and 107

JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

PERSONNEL QUESTIONS

Personnel policy options

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly annex VIII to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Personnel policy options" (A/36/432).

## ANNEX VIII

### Summary analysis of information collected from the organization of the United Nations system

In the course of the preparation of its report on "Personnel Policy Options" (JIU/REP/81/11, General Assembly Document A/36/432) the Joint Inspection Unit, after consulting the Secretariat of ICSC, decided to circulate a questionnaire to the organizations of the United Nations system in order to elicit specific information, on types of appointment, career development and other related issues, other than that which was readily available in existing CCAQ or ICSC statistics. All the organizations - with the exception of ILO and, in part, ICAO - completed the questionnaire. Some centralized statistics were also provided by the CCAQ Secretariat. Copies of the questionnaires received were sent to ICSC. A summary analysis of the replies could not however be included in the body of the JIU report in view of the late arrival of some replies.

The purpose of this annex is to bring to the attention of the General Assembly some of the main findings of the analysis of the questionnaires which may be relevant to its consideration of the JIU and ICSC reports.

#### 1. Types of Appointment:

There appear to be three main types of contracts: fixed-term, probationary and permanent, although the specific names may vary from organization to organization. One agency (UPU) does not normally use fixed-term contracts as its staff is recruited on a career basis. Two organizations, IAEA and WHO, no longer award permanent contracts, since 1965 and 1976 respectively. In the majority of organizations the typical career of a professional staff member begins with one or more fixed-term contracts which may then lead to a probationary and then a permanent contract. The required period of service under a fixed-term contract before a probationary contract can be awarded varies from six months to two years. In the organizations where a probationary contract may be awarded on initial appointment (UN, ITU, IMCO, UPU) the duration of the probationary period is always two years. In the organizations where staff members in the professional category are not or are no longer awarded permanent contracts, the staff serve on renewable normally five-year fixed-term contracts. Two organizations make a distinction between "career" fixed-term contracts (e.g. "long-term fixed-term contracts" in IAEA and "career expectancy" fixed-term contracts in ICAO) and limited fixed-term contracts. No organization has however introduced an upper limit to the number of fixed-term contracts that may be awarded to a staff member. Indeed, Tables I and II below indicate that "careers" (up to 20 years or more) through a succession of fixed-term contracts are not uncommon in the United Nations system.

As to the criteria for the granting of the different types of contracts, nationality is mentioned as being of particular importance by the United Nations (i.e. nationals from an over-represented member state will normally be awarded fixed-term contracts, initial career appointments will only be awarded to such

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nationals in the case of young persons expected to replace staff members of the same nationality who are about to retire). Nationality does not appear to be a factor affecting the conversion of fixed-term contracts to probationary contracts. Most organizations do not award probationary contracts to staff members over 50 (or 55). In the case of secondments from national institutions, staff members are given fixed-term contracts. But in UPU and ITU this is done only if the fixed-term contract is expressly requested by the staff member concerned.

A question was asked concerning decisions taken by organizations on the desirability of changing the proportion between permanent and fixed-term contracts. It appears that no such decisions have been taken in seven organizations (UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDP, FAO, IAEA, IMCO and UPU), whereas the governing bodies of three organizations have either limited the award of permanent contracts to the "minimum required" to carry out the organization's programme (WHO), or have indicated that a specific percentage of permanent appointments should not be exceeded (UNESCO), or that all vacant professional posts should be filled with staff serving on fixed-term contracts (ITU). The situation as regards the United Nations in this respect is described in Annex II, para. 8 of the JIU report of Personnel Policy Options (JIU/REP/81/11).

2. Statistical Information on the Contractual Status of Staff in the Professional Category:

Organizations were asked to provide a breakdown of their professional and general service staff by type of appointment and source of funding (Regular budget and extrabudgetary funds) for the years 1975 to 1980. Complete data were provided only by five organizations. The other organizations relied on data provided centrally by CCAQ, which however did not separate Headquarters from project staff. In view of the lack of uniformity in the information received it was therefore not possible to draw any significant conclusions on this point.

Table I presents some interesting information on the extent to which fixed-term contracts are utilized in the UN system. In the majority of organizations the number of staff members in the professional category having been granted a succession of fixed-term contracts is low compared to the total staff serving under fixed-term contracts (e.g. in the United Nations out of 1178 staff members serving under fixed-term contracts 604 were holding their first contract and 79 had been granted five or more fixed-term contracts in succession). The situation is quite different in two organizations, UNESCO and IAEA, which have either limited the proportion of permanent appointments or stopped granting such appointments altogether. In these organizations the number of staff members having been granted five or more fixed-term contracts in succession is extremely high (373 in UNESCO and 108 in IAEA) thus indicating that although the official policy of these organizations may be to limit permanent appointments this does not preclude the possibility of a "career" by stringing together a series of fixed-term contracts.

This is confirmed by the data in Table II which shows the number of staff members in the professional category holding fixed-term contracts by length of service. The table clearly indicates that careers of a duration of 10 to 20 years, or even more than 20 years, are quite possible even in the organizations where limits have been introduced in the granting of permanent appointments (UNESCO, WHO, IAEA). Fixed-term contracts which are systematically renewed thus tend to blur the distinction between permanent and non-permanent appointments. The implications of this situation are discussed in paras. 26-27 and Annex VII of JIU/REP/81/11.

TABLE I  
Contractual Status of Staff in the Professional Category

	UN	UNHCR	UNICEF	OTHER UN	UNDP	UNESCO	FAO	WHO	IAEA	ITU	IMCO	UPU
a) (i) Number of staff members presently holding their first FT contract	604	46	56	29	104	167	n.a.	n.a.	124	16	2	0
(ii) Number of staff members having been granted 2 FT contracts in succession	311	87	47	37	78	138	n.a.	n.a.	142	15	9	0
(iii) Number of staff members having been granted 3 FT contracts in succession	122	29	12	2	24	86	n.a.	n.a.	49	7	15	0
(iv) Number of staff members having been granted 4 FT contracts in succession	62	4	9	1	10	105	n.a.	n.a.	66	4	8	0
(v) Number of staff members having been granted 5 or more FT contracts in succession	79	1	21	-	15	373	n.a.	n.a.	108	6	5	0
b) Number of staff members having been awarded one FT contract and then having left the organization (annual average, last five years or best estimate).	97.4	8.2	11.4	5.2	7	214 other est. HQ offices 3,6	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	0	0
c) Same for staff members having been awarded 2 FT contracts.	27.6	1.8	2.2	1.6	4	4.8 4,5	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	(est)	1	0
d) Number of staff members awarded a probationary contract, or a permanent contract if there are no probationary contracts, after one or more FT contracts in 1980.	75	0	9	0	23	0	n.a.	0	0	2	0	0
e) Number of staff members awarded a probationary or permanent contract on initial appointment in 1980.	36	-	1	1	0	0	n.a.	0	0	7	4	4
f) Is there an upper limit in your organization to the number either of contracts or of months/years for staff serving on FT contracts?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

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TABLE II

Number of staff members in the professional category holding  
Fixed-term contracts by length of service\*\*\*

	less than 1 year	1-3 years	3-5 years	5-10 years	10-20 years	more than 20 years	TOTAL
UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT	399	251	536	228	92	10	1516
UNHCR	73	50	57	14	0	0	194
UNICEF	53	26	77	29	5	2	192
Other UN	28	18	29	24	10	3	112
TOTAL UN	553	345	699	295	107	15	2014
UNESCO *	224	281	241	290	245	15	1296
ILO *	314	390	196	147	36	11	1094
FAO *	493	933	435	330	172	2	2365
WHO	← 449 ** →			423	333	76	1281
ICAO *	180	167	94	19	12	6	478
UNDP	58	47	80	38	6	0	229
IAEA	84	94	142	79	77	13	489
ITU	12	11	13	10	2	0	48
IMCO	1	2	16	10	10	0	39
UPU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

\* : includes project staff (417 in UNESCO - 1980) (ILO : 795 in 1980)

\*\* WHO : 0-5 years

\*\*\* Some discrepancies exist between the figures given in Table I and in Table II :  
Studies are being undertaken to identify the reason.

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### 3. Agreed Terminations

Table III shows the annual number of agreed terminations of staff members in the professional category holding permanent or indefinite contracts for the years 1975 to 1980. It also shows the minimum and maximum amounts paid in some organizations.

TABLE III

Agreed Terminations of Staff Members in the Professional Category with Permanent Contracts

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	Minimum and Maximum Amounts Paid
UN	n.a.	1	3	0	1	3	\$ 16,400 - 32,249
UNICEF	1	2	2	0	2	0	\$ 2,235 - 61,919
UNEP	0	0	0	1	2	0	\$ 15,000 - 37,900
UNESCO	7	20	3	1	0	1	\$ 2,000 - 42,000
FAO	3	3	6	5	1	2	not available
WHO	0	0	0	0	0	0	
UNDP	2	1	0	2	1	2	not available
IAEA	0	0	0	1	1	0	\$ 25,500 - 46,500
ITU	0	*	0	0	0	0	
IMCO	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
UPU	0	0	0	0	0	0	-

\* A staff member was terminated but he contested the action; the case was raised with the ILO Administrative Tribunal.

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#### 4. Linked Grades

Table IV below summarizes the information provided by the organizations on the question of linked grades; it shows that linked grades are used to a varying degree in at least five organizations.

Organization	Utilization of linked grades	Percentage of linked grades in Professional category
UN	P-1 and P-2 are linked for budgetary purposes. P-1 staff members are automatically promoted to P-2 after four years of satisfactory service (if not promoted earlier). Many other posts are <u>de facto</u> linked when encumbered at a lower level than that determined by classification analysis.	n.a.
UNICEF	No linked grades	-
UNHCR	No linked grades; junior professional posts are however classified P-1/P-2.	-
UNDP	No linked grades	-
UNESCO	P-1/P-2 and P-2/P-3 are linked (the latter for translators only); some P-4/P-5 are linked but this practice is being discontinued. More extensive use of linked grades is made in the GS category.	Approx. 24%
FAO	Linked grades are used when the recruitment situation warrants recruitment at a lower grade than that of post. In the GS category some G-4/G-5 posts are linked.	Approx. 13%
WHO	No linked grades	-
ICAO	No linked grades	-
IAEA	No linked grades in the professional category. Levels 3-4, 4-5, 5-6, 6-7 are linked in the GS and M categories.	-
ITU	No linked grades	
IMCO	8 posts are graded P-3/P-4 (recruitment is at P-3 and promotion to the upper level takes place after 1 or 2 years)	Approx. 10%
UPU	50 posts (out of 53 in the Professional category) are linked. Appointment is normally at the lower level of grade; when the incumbent leaves the higher level, the grade returns to the lower level.	94%