**Chief Executives Board
for Coordination**

Conclusions of the fifth session of the High-level Committee on Management

(New York, 12 and 13 June 2003)

Contents

I. Introduction

1.   The High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board on Coordination (CEB) held its fifth regular session at United Nations Headquarters on 12 and 13 June 2003. The list of participants is contained in annex I. The agenda of the session as adopted (CEB/2003/HLCM/R.1) focused on:

(a)   The security and safety of staff;

(b)   Measures to improve system-wide mobility;

(c)   Emergency preparedness and the development of business continuity planning;

(d)   The impact on management and programmes of the changing relationship between regular and voluntary funding;

(e)   Information and communication technologies;

(f)   Reform of the pay and benefits system;

(g)   The future work programme.

2.   The symbols of relevant CEB documents appear in parentheses under section headings. All documents related to the session and presentations thereto can be viewed on the HLCM web site, at www.unsystem.org/hlcm/documentation-fifth.htm.

3.   It was agreed that an additional item relating to the selection procedures for the post of Secretary to the Committee would be taken up together with the future work programme.

4.   A moment of reflection was observed for Maryan Baquerot, who passed away shortly before midnight on 13 May 2003.

II. Dialogue with the representatives of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) and the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA)

(CEB/2003/HLCM/CRP.4 and 5)

5.   The representative of FICSA gave a presentation (see www.unsystem.org/hlcm/documentation-fifth.htm.) that contained the views of FICSA on the Committee's agenda, in particular in relation to the reform of the pay and benefits system. The presentation also amplified the FICSA request for financial support, as contained in document CEB/2003/HLCM/CRP.4.

6.   At the conclusion of a long and useful exchange of views, HLCM:

(a)   Congratulated the President of FICSA on his effective presentation and confirmed that it was important to hear the Association's views on the Committee's agenda at the beginning of each session;

(b)   Expressed its appreciation for the frank dialogue that had taken place as a result of the President's presentation;

(c)   Agreed with the FICSA analysis in respect of the increasing tendency to employ a greater number of staff on short-term contracts;

(d)   Reiterated the importance it attached to an effective consultative process with the staff bodies and the benefits that could accrue from working together on such reform issues as increasing the mobility of staff among organizations and bodies of the United Nations system;

(e)   Regretted that CCISUA had chosen not to be represented in the dialogue;

(f)   Expressed its appreciation for FICSA support in treating all United Nations system staff as internal candidates with respect to vacant posts.

7.   In respect of the FICSA request for financial support, HLCM:

(a)   Did not consider that a valid case had been made in the request;

(b)   Requested, without commitment, that FICSA present a more formal proposal, giving details of its programme and budget and incorporating — to the extent possible — an analysis of the funding arrangements for each of the FICSA member associations;

(c)   Decided to invite CCISUA to provide similar information;

(d)   Requested that the CEB secretariat, together with a small working group of interested agencies, assist FICSA and CCISUA with the proposals;

(e)   Further requested that the staff bodies submit the requests to HLCM through the human resources and financial and budgetary networks.

III.   Security and safety of staff

(CEB/2003/HLCM/R.3 and CEB/2003/HLCM/CRP.3)

8.   The United Nations Security Coordinator provided details on the meeting of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN), which had met in May 2003.

9.   He noted that while considerable progress had been made over the past year to mainstream staff security and make it an integral part of all operations, there continued to be an increase in conflict situations, general insecurity and criminal activities, which affected staff and hampered operations throughout the United Nations system.

10.   He confirmed that:

(a)   Over the past year, over 95 per cent of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly in 2001 had been implemented or were in the process of being implemented. Posts for 100 field security officers had been filled and each officer had been provided with a dedicated budget to permit him/her to operate effectively in the field. The new system would enable the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) to react quickly by shifting field security officers from one duty station to another in response to crisis situations.

(b)   The recruitment process at Headquarters was almost complete; only two posts remained to be filled. As a result, UNSECOORD would be in a better position to implement its mandate effectively.

(c)   The minimum operating security standards were being put in place at all duty stations. Although implementation was not moving quickly as had been hoped, there was nevertheless tangible progress to report.

(d)   The CD-ROM on basic security in the field, which the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Security Coordinator had launched at the April 2003 meeting of the CEB had been extremely well received. The CD-ROM was but one of a number of training initiatives critical to the enhancement of preventive measures for staff security.

(e)   The framework for accountability, currently in effect, had been cited by United Nations Member States as an example of excellence. Inspection and compliance missions had commenced.

(f)   The UNSECOORD web site was up and running, making it easier to convey information to the largest number of people in the shortest period of time.

(g)   Evidence that the new measures were having an impact could be seen in the analysis of fatalities among staff members of the United Nations system. The annual number of staff members who had lost their lives in the service of the Organization was the lowest since 1992.

(h)   Nevertheless, IASMN considered that much still remained to be done. This was also the view of Member States. Over the past two years, two General Assembly resolutions had been adopted regarding the safety and security of staff: in resolution 56/255, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to conduct an evaluation of the United Nations security management system, including the new security arrangements, and the relationship and interaction between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat and UNSECOORD; in resolution 57/155, the General Assembly requested the United Nations system and all Member States to take all appropriate measures to achieve a strengthened and unified security management system for the United Nations, both at Headquarters and at the field level. An evaluation team had been constituted to respond to those requests and was to travel to a number of duty stations to review the existing situation and to submit a report to a steering group headed by the Deputy Secretary-General.

11.   The representative of the World Food Programme (WFP) confirmed the WFP agreement to be the agency responsible for administering all United Nations humanitarian and other air operations (excluding peacekeeping) as of 1 January 2004. The WFP air safety service received technical advice from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also assured WFP of its willingness to assist in the implementation of air safety issues.

12.   Updates were also given to the Committee on the 2003 census arrangements and on the proposal to reimburse 100 per cent of the cost of the residential security measures contained in documents CEB/2003/HLCM/R.3 and CEB/2003/HLCM/CRP.3.

13.   HLCM:

(a)   Welcomed the report of the Security Coordinator and noted that under his effective leadership a strong, well-qualified security management team had been put in place;

(b)   Took note of the information contained in the report of IASMN, in particular in respect of the implementation of the minimum operating security standards;

(c)   Was informed that, as a result of filling the posts of field security officers in an effective and timely manner, there was a shortfall of some $12 million in the budget for 2002-2003;

(d)   Took note, in the context of preparing budgets in a timely fashion, of the financial projections of staff security costs provided by the Programme Planning and Budget Division of some $87 million for the 2004-2005 biennium, and, on the basis of an inflationary increase of $7 million, of $94 million for the 2006-2007 biennium;

(e)   Approved the recommendation of IASMN and the human resources networks to reimburse the cost of residential security measures at 100 per cent, as part of the minimum operating residential security measures, and confirmed the central role of UNSECOORD in determining the levels of such reimbursements;

(f)   Noted with appreciation the arrangements for the 2003 census and the need for further refinement of various definitions;

(g)   Expressed its appreciation to WFP for agreeing to be the agency responsible for administering all United Nations humanitarian and other air operations (except for peacekeeping) and for establishing an air safety unit;

(h)   Looked forward to receiving a further report on the safe use of commercial air carriers;

(i)   Underlined the crucial importance it attached to continuing to strengthen stress counselling arrangements throughout the United Nations system and to improving arrangements for the safety of women, especially in dangerous field locations.

IV.   Measures to improve system-wide mobility

(CEB/2003/HLCM/R.4)

14.   In its note (CEB/2003/HLCM/R.4), the CEB secretariat provided details on a number of initiatives that had been, or were being, brought forward to enhance the mobility of staff among organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. It also referred to perceived impediments to inter-agency mobility.

15.   The note provided evidence that inter-agency mobility had been a goal since the creation of the United Nations system. From the outset, the desire to facilitate the interchange of staff in order to obtain the maximum benefit from their services had been expressed in each of the relationship agreements between the specialized agencies and the United Nations, in accordance with Article 63 of the United Nations Charter.

16.   Impediments to mobility in the United Nations system took many forms: they could be perceptional and informal; they could be administrative and related to different practices in different organizations; they could reflect concerns for dual careers and other work/family issues; they could be financial or a combination of some or all of the above. They could also be affected by concerns for reintegration into the parent organization or successful integration into the receiving organization.

17.   Notwithstanding their common origin and formal relationship agreements, individual organizations and bodies had not encouraged transfers (which, were sometimes even viewed as disloyal) within the United Nations system.

18.   As a first step, the CEB secretariat proposed that:

(a)   Consideration be given to announcing that all common system candidates be considered on a par with internal candidates for vacant posts;

(b)   Promotion of a staff member, while on secondment or loan, be recognized when the staff member had returned to his or her original organization;

(c)   The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) be invited to consider introducing a strategic non-pensionable bonus for staff members who took up assignments in different organizations within the United Nations system;

(d)   Experience gained in other organizations within the United Nations system be reflected in job descriptions and vacancy notices;

(e)   New staff members be made aware that they were part of an international civil service, and not permanently tied to a specific organization. Where more than one United Nations organization was located in the same place, joint briefings could also be held.

19.   In light of the above-mentioned considerations, the CEB secretariat further proposed that a small group be tasked with amending the inter-organizational agreements.

20.   Brief presentations were also made on a number of other related initiatives: (a) the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) spousal employment policy (see www.unsystem.org/hlcm/documentation-fifth.htm.); (b) the expansion of the participating agencies mobility system project; (c) contacts with two international corporation initiatives for support employment, "partnerjob.com" and "PermitsFoundation.com"; and (d) efforts by a United Nations-led group to bring greater harmony to the different types of contractual arrangements for staff on mission assignment and the different entitlements resulting therefrom.

21.   In the light of the concerns expressed, inter alia, by an ICSC consultant in document ICSC/57/R.4 regarding the lack of a culture of mobility in the United Nations system, HLCM embarked on a searching reappraisal of whether or not management truly believed in inter-agency mobility. The Committee concluded that management believed strongly in such inter-agency mobility, inter alia, for sharing experience and expertise, for career development and, in the long run, for strengthening the effectiveness of the United Nations system itself.

22.   The Committee could only concur, however, with some of the expressions of concern for the impediments to mobility, and decided to seek ways to eliminate or at least minimize them. The targeted recruitment, for example, of specific key individuals in any given agency was seen as disruptive and should be discouraged,

as it ran counter to the basic principle of the United Nations common system, which is to avoid undue competition among the agencies. This was particularly the case when the recruiting agency offered promotion as an enticement to attract the targeted staff member.

23. A further concern related to the budgetary and programmatic consequences that resulted from the requirement to grant "return rights" to a staff member released on secondment, since it was often difficult, if not impossible, to fill the post (even temporarily) during the staff member's absence. The CEB secretariat's proposal to recognize, upon a staff member's return to the original organization, promotions earned while on secondment or loan, also raised both budgetary and job classification issues that needed to be addressed. Another impediment to mobility as well as to recruitment and retention in general was the lack of a common system policy for the recognition of domestic partners as dependants.

24. What was needed was a strategy to move forward on the many fronts that surrounded the complex issue. Clearly, a culture change was needed; it was time to move beyond good intentions.

25. HLCM agreed:

    (a) To invite the CEB secretariat to circulate a draft "vision" statement reflecting the United Nations system's ongoing commitment to inter-agency mobility and the need to develop solutions to its inherent impediments;

    (b) To request the secretariat to convene a small representative working group to look further into the issues raised in document CEB/2003/HLCM/R.4, inter alia, that were brought forward at the session (including employment of spouses, recognition of domestic partnerships, listing of all United Nations system vacancies on the Extranet, availability of work permits for spouses or domestic partners). It was suggested that the working group start by better defining the different issues involved (including distinctions between secondments, loans and transfers) and the approaches required to tackle them effectively;

    (c) To invite the human resources network to provide input for the working group in respect of the harmonization of entitlements by bringing together the efforts being pursued by a number of groups and subgroups, inter alia, of the network and UNDG;

    (d) To encourage organizations, where possible, to join the UNDG initiative on spousal employment;

    (e) To request the CEB secretariat to pursue, as appropriate, its work on the participating agencies mobility system and its contacts with international organizations outside the United Nations system, and the private sector, to boost spousal employment;

    (f) To underline the importance it attached to the maintenance of the current mobility and hardship scheme as a vital support to mobility in general;

    (g) To express concern — particularly in terms of possible duplication of effort — at the plethora of groups that had convened to review problems in the human resources area (some as part of UNDG), to encourage them to work within the framework of the human resources network and to ask the human resources network to report back to HLCM thereon at its next session;

(h)   To request the secretariat to list current provisions for the issuance of work permits for spouses or domestic partners;

(i)   To request again — by letter from the Under-Secretary-General for Management — that United Nations resident coordinators facilitate spouse or domestic partner employment, as per the agreements concluded between the United Nations system and, inter alia, host governments and to request that the Office of Legal Affairs and other legal entities strongly encourage these efforts;

(j)   To underline the importance — and urgency — of moving forward with a common approach on the issue of recognizing domestic partners and to invite the human resources network to bring forward options thereon to HLCM at its next session.

V.   Emergency preparedness and business continuity planning

(CEB/2003/HLCM/R.5)

26.   Noting that the above-mentioned issue was a work in progress, HLCM:

(a)   Appreciated the information contained in document CEB/2003/HLCM/R.5;

(b)   Congratulated those organizations that had taken action to develop emergency preparedness plans and encouraged those that had not yet done so to move forward thereon;

(c)   Also invited those organizations that had not yet done so to report to the CEB secretariat on their common assets.

VI.   Procurement

(CEB/2003/HLCM/CRP.7)

27.   The Committee received a briefing from the Inter-Agency Procurement Working Group (IAPWG) and the Common Services Working Group on Procurement (CSWGP) on developments in respect of common system procurement, the training and certification of procurement and central security personnel, and the need to develop closer formal links between HLCM and IAPWG, on the one hand, and with other groups engaged in management issues, including the Inter-Agency Network of Facilities Managers (INFM) and the United Nations Security and Safety Network (the UNSSNET).

28.   HLCM agreed:

(a)   To incorporate the work of IAPWG within its agenda, to receive IAPWG reports in respect of matters where high-level inter-agency support was required and to provide guidance and oversight, as appropriate;

(b)   To invite members to inform procurement officers in each organization of the discussion in HLCM and of the follow-up meetings of IAPWG;

(c)   To develop, similarly, closer links with INFM and UNSSNET;

(d)   To invite the United Nations System Staff College to consider its role in the training and certification programmes for procurement and central security staff.

VII. The impact on management and programme of the changing relationship between regular and voluntary funding

(CEB/2003/HLCM/R.6)

29. In addition to the report contained in document CEB/2003/HLCM/R.6, the Committee received an in-depth briefing on the successful conclusion of an agreement reached in the Executive Board of UNICEF for a methodology to determine programme recovery costs.

30. Four areas were identified as requiring further reflection, namely: (a) determination of minimum standards for the receipt and management of voluntary funds; (b) conditions for earmarking funds; (c) reappraisal of programme support costs formulae; and (d) rationalization of the plethora of reporting requirements.

31. HLCM:

(a) Enthusiastically endorsed the proposals contained in document CEB/2003/HLCM/R.6 to pursue further work in a working group(s) and invited the CEB secretariat to set up these arrangements as soon as possible;

(b) Considered that the nature of work in the four areas was so interlinked that it should be pursued by one group, if possible;

(c) Congratulated UNICEF for successfully determining a methodology that should provide a major input to the working group(s);

(d) Also expressed appreciation to the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) for its report on programme support costs, which had been useful for organizations and formed the basis for the Committee's ongoing work in this area;

(e) Invited the working group(s) to bring forward proposals for revising the United Nations/European Union (EU) agreement on support costs, especially in the context of multi-donor arrangements.

VIII. Issues brought forward from the networks

(CEB/2003/HLCM/R.7 and 8)

32. On the basis of a briefing by the spokesperson of the human resources network, HLCM:

(a) Agreed with the network's proposals to further the development of a senior management service under the aegis of CEB, as outlined in document CEB/2003/HLCM/R.7, on the understanding that the link to the United Nations System Staff College's future leadership and management programmes would be strengthened and made more explicit;

(b) Took note of the latest stages of ICSC efforts to reform the pay and benefits system.

33. Taking note of the information contained in document CEB/2003/HLCM/R.8, and the briefing from the United Nations as lead agency of the information and communication technologies (ICT) Extranet project, HLCM:

(a) Invited organizations to review the ICT Extranet with a view to proposing more precisely what should be incorporated into it on both the strategic and policy levels (linked to the HLCM's workplan) and the purely practical and information level, taking into account that the ICT Extranet could be a one-stop quick reference point for staff in all organizations of the system;

(b) Encouraged the United Nations, as the lead agency, to implement the search engine project urgently;

(c) Invited organizations to provide reports on their experience with this project to the Committee's next session.

Personnel statistics

(CEB/2003/HLCM/INF.1)

34. HLCM:

(a) Regretting the delays in reporting personnel data, drew members' attention to the imperative need for organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to provide annual computerized personnel statistics in an accurate and timely manner. The statistics formed the basis for almost all analyses undertaken by ICSC, CEB and other bodies involved in affecting conditions of employment in the United Nations common system, and for reports submitted to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly;

(b) Requested the CEB secretariat to pursue its review of the feasibility of extending the coverage of common system data to include staff under contractual arrangements other than those currently in force.

Future Agenda

(CEB/2003/HLCM/R.9)

35. HLCM:

(a) Took note of the information contained in document CEB/2003/HLCM/R.9;

(b) Agreed to reinvigorate the financial and budgetary network immediately and to encourage virtual exchanges, as well as videoconferences, with a view to receiving input in respect of ongoing HLCM projects, including the changing relationship between regular and voluntary funding, the development of United Nations accounting standards and the future financial and budgetary agenda;

(c) Requested that the CEB secretariat urgently look into the possibility of updating and maintaining the financial and budgetary web site and of preparing, appropriately, to recruit a focal point in 2004 for financial and budgetary issues in the Secretariat;

(d) Further to the communications of Mr. Joseph Connor and Qazi Shaukat Fareed of 30 December 2002 and 12 May 2003, respectively, containing details of

the budget of the CEB secretariat for the 2004/2005 biennium, noted that a copy of the complete budget fascicle would soon be sent to them.

Replacement of the secretary of HLCM

36.   HLCM noted that the Chairperson would consult with all organizations and bodies of the United Nations system with a view to establishing a timely and transparent consultative mechanism for the selection and appointment of the secretary of the Committee and on similar arrangements for the staffing of vacant positions in the future.

Accounting standards

(CEB/2003/HLCM/CRP.6/Rev.1)

37.   HLCM agreed with the conclusions of the task force, as contained in document CEB/2003/HLCM/CRP.6/Rev.1 in terms of the further work needed on updating United Nations accounting standards by applying, as appropriate, international public sector accounting standards. However, it considered that the work should be pursued by the financial and budgetary network with specialist, consultant or other dedicated support rather than by a permanent task force.

IX.   Date for the next sessions

38.   HLCM:

Requested that the CEB secretariat consult on dates for its next sessions, focusing on a 1½ day meeting during the week of 20 October 2003 in New York and on the first week of March 2004 in Geneva.

Annex I

List of participants

Organization	Name and title
United Nations	Catherine Bertini, Under-Secretary-General for Management
	Jan Beagle, Director, Division for Organizational Development
	Tun Myat, United Nations Security Coordinator
	Diana Russler, Deputy United Nations Security Coordinator
	Eduardo Blinder, Director, Information Technology Services Division
	Andrew Toh, Director, Facilities and Commercial Division
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Duncan Barclay, Chief, Human Resources Management Section
United Nations Development Programme	Jan Mattsson, Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau of Management
	Johan van de Gronden, Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office
United Nations Environment Programme	Alexander Barabanov, Chief, Division of Administrative Services
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Mary Ann Wyrsch, Deputy High Commissioner
United Nations Children's Fund	Ellen Yaffe, Comptroller
	Anna Maria Laurini, Senior United Nations Affairs Officer
United Nations Population Fund	Imelda Henkin, Deputy Executive Director (Management)
World Food Programme	Michael Stayton, Chief of Staff and Director, Office of the Executive Director and Administration
	Diana Serrano, Director, Human Resources Division
	David Morton, Director, Transport, Preparedness and Response Division

Organization	Name and title
United Nations Human Settlements Programme	Antoine King, Director, Programme Support Division
	Henk Verbeek, Chief, Management Support Unit, Programme Support Division
International Trade Centre	Gian Piero T. Roz, Director, Division of Programme Support
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Johanne Girard, Manager, Human Resources
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Khalid Mehboob, Assistant Director-General, Administration and Finance Department
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Dyane Dufresne-Klaus, Director, Bureau of Human Resources Management
	Yolande Valle, Director, Bureau of the Budget
World Health Organization	Alejandro Henning, Managing Director, Human Resources Services and Policy Development
	Hilary Wild, Comptroller
The World Bank	Peter J. Gallant, Security Manager
Universal Postal Union	Michael Mauer, Director of Human Resources
World Meteorological Organization	Kathleen Charles, Director, Resource Management Department
World Intellectual Property Organization	Orobola Fasehun, Director, Coordination Office
	Rama Rao Sankurathripati, Coordination Office
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Renato Fornocaldo, Managing Director, Division of Administration
World Tourism Organization	Peter Shackleford, Director of Administration Division
International Atomic Energy Agency	David Waller, Deputy Director-General and Head of Management
World Trade Organization	Jacques E. Chabert, Director, Finance and General Services
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	Alexander Vorobiev, Chief of Conference Services
FICSA	Richard Kerby, President
	Anne Marie Pinou, Research/Liaison Officer
	Stephan Flaetgen, UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Staff Association

Organization	Name and title
CEB secretariat	Shaukat Fareed, Director
	Roger Eggleston, Secretary, High-level Committee on Management
	Mary Jane Peters, Inter-Agency Human Resources Management Adviser
	Karina Gerlach, Senior Inter-Agency Officer

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