



HOW WE MANAGE

GUIDEBOOK ON

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT
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1. INTRODUCTION

1. This Guidebook is designed to provide senior managers, particularly those newly entering the Secretariat, with basic information concerning their authority to make decisions relating to the human, financial and physical resources at their disposal. The guidebook is intended to be informative without being unduly technical or detailed. Accordingly, it should be read in conjunction with the relevant financial regulations and rules, the Staff Regulations and Rules and related administrative issuances. Whenever further clarification is needed, it should be referred to the relevant offices in the Department of Management as follow:

- Accountability, oversight support, self-evaluation and general management issues – Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management
- Finance and budget issues – Office of the Assistant Secretary-General, Controller;
- Staff related issues – Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM);
- Physical resources issues – Office of Central Support Services (OCSS).

2. In 1997, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan initiated a comprehensive review of the activities of the United Nations that focused on ways to make the Organization more effective and efficient. The result was the General Assembly report “*Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform*” (A/51/950).

3. From 1997 to 2002, many human resources management initiatives were introduced including a new recruitment, placement and promotion system, mobility measures, annual human resources departmental action plans, streamlined rules and procedures, and the establishment of the Ombudsman’s office to facilitate informal resolution of staff grievances. Financial management improvements were also implemented including simplified and streamlined rules and procedures and the introduction of results-based budgeting.

4. A primary focus of the first reform was on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational functioning which includes delegating additional authority, as needed, to managers and ensuring that managers fully understand their authority and are held accountable for their financial, human and physical resource decisions. Accordingly, accountability measures have been strengthened and include the introduction of performance agreements (now referred to as Compacts) between the Secretary-General and his senior managers.

5. A second wave of reforms were outlined in the *Agenda for Further Change* (A/57/387), where the Secretary-General identified further measures that would give managers more authority to utilize their resources efficiently (A/57/387, Action 32). A number of new delegations of authority were agreed and implemented and various process improvements relating to better standards of service were undertaken. Many more important reform initiatives were introduced in 2006 as part of the Secretary-General’s report “Investing in the United Nations” (A/60/692 and Corr.1) and the way senior managers exercise their authority is key to achieving the overriding goal of the reform: a stronger, more efficient and effective United Nations.

6. This guidebook was initially prepared by the Department of Management in 2005 in response to a request for a consolidated reference document on delegation of authority. The present version has been updated to reflect the situation in 2007.

2. BUDGETING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

7. This guidebook is only concerned with that authority which is established through the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations. This includes all activities financed from the Regular Budget, Peacekeeping Budgets, International Criminal Tribunal Budgets and almost all Trust Funds, but does not include those parts of the United Nations, e.g. substantive Commissions (such as UNODC, OHCHR) which have separate authority through their own statute or their own financial regulations and rules, which will require that a budget be prepared and approved before commitments are made.

8. The Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations establish a clear and hierarchical structure in the delegation of authority.

9. The Secretary-General delegates authority and responsibility for the implementation of all Financial Regulations and Rules to the Under-Secretary-General for Management who in turn delegates this authority to the Controller - except for the implementation of the regulations pertaining to procurement and property management which are delegated to the Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services.

10. In turn, the Controller delegates some authority in the area of financial management to the Heads of Administration and/or Finance in the Offices Away from Headquarters, and Executive Officers in the Departments.

I. The Budget

11. The budgeting and associated control process is primarily the responsibility of Programme Managers, as they are a prime player in three of the four main steps of this process:

- Budget preparation – while this step is led by OPPBA, the base work is done by Departments/Offices which submit their budget proposals to the Controller for consolidation
- Legislative Review by the ACABQ and the Fifth Committee
- Budget Implementation
- Reporting

Budget cycle

- Regular Budget – 2 calendar years ending in the “odd” year, e.g. 1 January 2006- 31 December 2007
- Peacekeeping budget – 1 July to 30 June
- International Criminal Tribunal budgets – 2 calendar years ending in the “odd” year, e.g. 1 January 2006 – 31 December 2007.

II. Programme Budget (Regular Budget)

A. Budget formulation

12. The Financial Rules require the Heads of Departments, Heads of Offices and individual programme managers to prepare biennial budget proposals for the programmes falling within their area(s) of responsibility.

13. The strategic framework, as approved and revised by the General Assembly, serves as the basis for the formulation of the biennial programme budget, since the programme proposals aim at achieving the objectives established in the strategic framework.

14. A budget outline is submitted to the General Assembly containing an indication of a preliminary estimate of resources to accommodate the proposed programme of activities during the biennium, priorities, real growth, and the size of the contingency fund. On the basis of the decision by the General Assembly, the proposed programme budget is then prepared.

15. The proposed programme budget is divided into parts, sections and programmes. The latter sets out by sub-programme, its overall objectives, expected accomplishments and related indicators of achievement, together with the outputs expected during the biennium.

16. A results based budgeting methodology is used, and in the proposed programme budget, the programme managers should justify the resources (posts, travel, consultants, other expenditures) required to achieve a particular objective in terms of expected accomplishments and related quantitative indicators of achievement.

17. The proposed programme budget is approved by the General Assembly taking into account any adjustments recommended by the ACABQ, which in turn are considered by the Fifth Committee before the budget is considered by the General Assembly. The General Assembly also approves, based on the recommendations of the Fifth Committee, additional resource requirements arising from statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates.

18. When a Main Committee of the General Assembly is about to adopt a draft resolution involving expenditures, the Secretary-General submits a statement of programme budget

implications (PBI). The PBI details the administrative, financial and programmatic changes to the programme budget that the adoption of the draft resolution would entail. Similarly, whenever a substantive Commission (such as UNODC, OHCHR etc.) is about to adopt a resolution which has programmatic and financial implication, its Secretariat must also, in consultation with PPBD, prepare a PBI before that decision is considered by the main Committees of the General Assembly.

19. Revised estimates are submitted by the Secretary-General detailing additional resources required relating to: (a) items not included in the proposed programme budget owing to the unavailability of information at the time of preparation of the proposed programme budget; (b) items that were included in the proposed programme budget but on which the General Assembly did not act but requested further information; and (c) developments that took place after the preparation of the proposed programme budget.

B. Utilization of funds

20. The amounts approved by the General Assembly “appropriations” constitute an authorization to the Secretary-General to incur obligations and make payments for the purposes for which the appropriations were voted and up to the amounts so voted. Appropriations remain available for obligation during the financial period to which they relate.

21. In order that programme managers may commit, obligate and expend against their budget, the Controller issues funding authorizations, called “allotments”.

C. Monitoring of programme implementation

22. Heads of Departments and Heads of Offices must monitor the programme implementation and at the end of the biennium submit programme performance reports, comparing actual expenditures against those authorized, within their area(s) of competence.

III. Peacekeeping budgets

A. Budget formulation

23. The Financial Rules delegate the authority to prepare annual budget proposals covering the period from 1 July to 30 June for programmes under their purview to Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Directors and Chiefs of Administration and programme managers in peacekeeping operations.

24. The resolutions approved by the Security Council serve as the overall framework for the operations of the peacekeeping missions. Based on these resolutions, the Department of

Peacekeeping Operations provides its annual strategic guidance to peacekeeping missions, which sets out the overall plan and assessment for each peacekeeping mission. The strategic guidance serves as the basis for the missions to formulate their planning assumptions, which outlines the more specific impact and implications on mission operations. The planning assumptions are then used as the basis for the preparation of the results-based frameworks, which sets out the expected accomplishments, indicators of achievement, projected outputs and external factors for the various substantive and support components of each mission. The approved frameworks become the basis for the formulation of the budget proposal for each peacekeeping operation.

25. The peacekeeping budget is divided into 23 classes of expenditure that are grouped in three major categories: military and police personnel costs, civilian personnel costs and operational costs.

26. Programme managers are required to provide detailed justification on resource requests for additional civilian staff and operational costs to deliver the outputs presented in the results-based frameworks.

B. Utilization of funds

27. The General Assembly approves an appropriation for each peacekeeping operation covering the financial period from 1 July to 30 June. These appropriations constitute an authorization to the Secretary-General to incur obligations and issue payments for the purposes for which the appropriations were voted and up to the amounts voted.

28. Funding authorizations, called allotments, are then issued to the relevant cost centers of each peacekeeping operation by the Controller, to enable cost center managers to commit, obligate and expend their respective resources.

C. Monitoring of programme implementation

29. The Directors and Chiefs of Administration of peacekeeping missions monitor and coordinate with cost center managers on the implementation of the budget and, subject to certain conditions, can redeploy funds between the three major categories of expenditures. The Directors and Chiefs of Administration submit annual performance reports for their cost centers shortly after the end of the financial period.

IV. International Criminal Tribunal budgets (ITY, ICTR)

A. Budget formulation

30. The Financial Rules require the Heads of Departments, Heads of Offices and individual programme managers to prepare biennial budget proposals for the programmes falling within their area(s) of responsibility.

31. The proposed biennial tribunal budget is divided into parts representing the main organizational units of the Tribunal (namely Chambers, Office of the Prosecutor, The Registry). In the case of the Office of the Prosecutor and The Registry, it sets out its programme of work, overall objectives, expected accomplishments and related indicators of achievement, together with the activities/outputs expected during the biennium.

32. A results based budgeting methodology is used, and the programme managers is required to justify the resources (posts, travel, consultants, other expenditures) required to achieve a particular objective in terms of expected accomplishments and related quantitative indicators of achievement.

33. The proposed tribunal budget is approved by the General Assembly taking into account any adjustments recommended by the ACABQ, which in turn are considered by the Fifth Committee before the budget is considered by the General Assembly. The General Assembly also approves, based on the recommendations of the Fifth Committee, resource requirements arising from revised estimates.

34. Revised estimates are submitted by the Secretary-General detailing additional resources required relating to: (a) items not included in the proposed budget owing to the unavailability of information at the time of preparation of the proposed budget; (b) items that were included in the proposed budget but on which the General Assembly did not act but requested further information; and (c) developments that took place after the preparation of the proposed budget.

35. In view of the imminent closure of the tribunal in accordance with its completion strategy, addressing legacy issues, both legal and operational, gain greater emphasis in the budget formulation stage.

B. Utilization of funds

36. The amounts approved by the General Assembly “appropriations” constitute an authorization to the Secretary-General to incur obligations and make payments for the purposes for which the appropriations were voted and up to the amounts so voted. Appropriations remain available for obligation during the financial period to which they relate.

37. In order that the Registrar, working closely with the Chief of Administration, may commit, obligate and expend against his/her budget, the Controller issues funding authorizations, called “allotments”.

C. Monitoring of programme implementation

38. The Registrar, working closely with the Chief of Administration, must monitor the programme implementation and at the end of the biennium submit programme performance reports, comparing actual expenditures against those authorized.

V. *Financial Management*

39. In the area of financial management, authority is delegated on a personal basis to staff members with whom technical-level liaison can be established. It is not delegated by virtue of an individual's office, which means that two Heads of Administration can receive different levels of delegated authority.

40. A staff member to whom a delegation is issued is always informed in writing of the extent of his/her authority and must provide signed confirmation that he/she understands, accepts and will abide by its provisions.

41. The acceptance of delegated authority entails, of course, responsibility for ensuring the efficient performance of financial management functions and the full implementation of all Financial Regulations and Rules and administrative instructions. Any staff member who contravenes the Financial Regulations and Rules and administrative instructions may be held personally accountable and financially liable for his/her actions.

42. Heads of Administration and/or Finance and Executive Officers may, in turn, if authorized to do so, further delegate their authority, as appropriate, to other officials. However, while an official may delegate his/her authority to another official, he/she remains ultimately accountable for the use of this delegation.

43. All exceptions to the Financial Rules have to be communicated to and approved by the Controller, who is in turn required to open such actions to scrutiny by oversight bodies. Failure to abide by the provisions issued in the delegations may result in the withdrawal of authority.

44. The Controller may delegate the following authorities to the Heads of Administration and/or Finance in the Offices Away from Headquarters and Executive Officers in the Departments.

A. Certifying Authority

45. All commitments, obligations and expenditures must be signed ("certified") by a designated certifying officer. The Controller may delegate to heads of administration or executive officers the authority to perform certifying functions and to designate certifying officers. Certifying authority and responsibility is assigned on a personal basis and can not be delegated. Officials designated as certifying officers cannot exercise approving authority.

B. Approving Authority

46. Following certification, the establishment of obligations, the recording of expenditures in the accounts and the processing of payments must be signed (“approved”) by a duly designated approving officer. The Controller may delegate the authority to perform approving functions and to designate approving officers. Approving authority and responsibility is assigned on a personal basis and can not be delegated. An approving officer cannot exercise the certifying functions or the bank signatory functions.

47. Approving authority may include specific functions such as the approval of payments, remittances, advances and obligations, and travel claims.

C. Bank Signatory Authority

48. The Controller may designate bank signatory authority for the operation of bank accounts. This function includes the authority to sign disbursement documents such as payments made by cheque or electronic funds transfer. Bank signatory authority and responsibility is assigned on a personal basis and can not be delegated. Officials designated as bank signatories cannot exercise approving authority.

49. Bank signatory authority does not include the establishment and/or closure of bank accounts or the amendment of terms and conditions governing existing banking operations, all of which must be submitted to the Treasurer (OPPBA) for action.

D. Other Finance Functions

50. Heads of Administration and Executive Officers may receive specific delegation of authority from the Controller enabling them to perform other finance functions such as:

- receive and deposit money,
- establish petty cash and imprest accounts,
- authorize low-value write offs in respect of a single loss or a series of related losses,
- establish a Local Claims and Review Board
- approve Quick Impact Projects (peacekeeping only)

E. Trust Fund Management

51. The Controller may delegate the authority to manage specific trust funds. This function includes:

- the acceptance of voluntary contributions and the clearance, prior to the signature of the Head of Department/Office, of all related financing agreements including those with donors and implementing partners;
- the issuance of allotments, allocations and grants in respect of the trust funds.

The authority delegated is only to manage specific trust funds. A Trust Fund can only be established centrally by the Programme Planning and Budget Division of OPPBA. In accordance with General Assembly decision 35/217, posts at the D1 level and above continue to be approved by the ACABQ.

F. Special Accounts for Programme Support Costs

52. The Controller may delegate the authority to manage Special Accounts for Programme Support Costs. This function includes the approval of Annual cost-plans and staffing tables (up to the P-5 level – posts above that level can only be approved by the Controller) and general explanations of the activities to be undertaken in connection with the cost-plans. This delegation will not include the authority to change the rate applicable to calculate the programme support cost over the extrabudgetary cost implementation. Exceptions may be granted only by the Controller. In accordance with General Assembly decision 35/217, posts at the D1 level and above continue to be approved by the ACABQ.

G. Host Country Agreements

53. Host Country Agreements require the approval of the Controller for financial issues and by the Office of Legal Affairs for the legal aspects. The Controller may delegate authority to clear the financial aspect of Host Country Agreements and to administer the associated special accounts, including the issuance of allotments, accounting and reporting to the Host Country. A Host Country Agreement will not be cleared if the host country has an outstanding financial obligation to the United Nations with respect to a previous Host Country Agreement.

3. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

54. The management of human resources in the United Nations is governed by the Staff Regulations (approved by the General Assembly), the Staff Rules and related administrative issuances (bulletins, administrative instructions and information circulars). While the General Assembly has emphasized the central role of OHRM in all human resources matters, especially for the interpretation and enforcement of the Staff Regulations and Rules, heads of departments and offices have extensive delegated authority to manage their staff. Details regarding the delegation of authority can be found in the electronic Human Resources Handbook.

55. The exercise of delegated authority generally requires both strict compliance with specific rules and a substantial degree of discretion. For example, when appointing a staff member, the head of department or office must strictly adhere to the procedures governing the staff selection system; at the same time, he or she has substantial discretion to determine the candidate best suited to perform the functions of a particular post, taking into account the need to ensure equitable geographical distribution and gender balance.

56. In many cases, a head of department or office may request other designated officials to exercise delegated authority on his or her behalf. Typically, decisions relating to the payment of salary, post adjustment and other allowances and benefits will be made on behalf of the head of department or office by the Executive Office at Headquarters or by the local Administrative/ Human Resources Office at Offices away from Headquarters. In some cases, however, action is required on the part of the head of department or office personally, for instance in the context of exercising delegated authority relating to the staff selection system. In all cases, the head of department or office remains ultimately accountable for the exercise of delegated authority.

57. Accountability for the proper exercise of delegated authority in the management of human resources is ensured through various means, including the Administrative Tribunal which has the competence to review appeals of administrative decisions. The Tribunal has consistently affirmed the principle that discretionary decisions must be fair and reasonable and must respect the rights of the staff member concerned. The Tribunal awards damages, which may be substantial, if it finds that discretionary authority was improperly exercised. Therefore, the fact that the head of department or office may exercise considerable discretion in making particular decisions does not mean that his or her decision-making authority is unlimited. Moreover, an official determined to have taken a decision as a result of “gross negligence” may be held personally and financially liable for the resulting financial loss. The General Assembly has repeatedly emphasized the importance of managerial accountability to ensure that human resources management decisions are taken in conformity with applicable regulations, rules and policies.

58. The following outlines delegation of authority in areas of special relevance to heads of departments and offices noting that greater delegation of authority has been granted by the General Assembly or the Secretary-General to certain heads of programmes or offices, such as the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support in respect of mission staff, and the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

A. Staff selection (recruitment, placement and promotion)

59. Authority for the recruitment, placement and promotion of staff is delegated to a varying degree depending on the level and category of the staff member, as well as the type and duration of appointment.

i. Appointments under the 100 series (most frequent)

a. *Staff at the D-2 level for appointments of one year or longer*

60. Following circulation of the post, the head of department or office evaluates the candidates and submits a recommendation to the Senior Review Group which will advise the Secretary-General on the selection decision.

b. *Staff at the G-5 to D-1 levels for appointments of one year or longer (except for mission staff)*

61. Following advertisement of the vacant post, the head of department or office has authority to select a candidate for that post, provided a central review body approved the evaluation criteria and found that the evaluation criteria were properly applied and that the applicable procedures were followed. When exercising that authority, the head of department or office must certify that the targets relating to equitable geographical distribution and gender balance contained in his or her annual Human Resources Action plan have been taken into account. In order to ensure better compliance with General Assembly mandates, proposals by a head of department or office for the selection of a particular candidate must be justified to, and approved by OHRM when the candidate is: (i) an external candidate from an overrepresented Member State who is proposed for a post in the Professional and higher categories subject to geographical distribution, (ii) a male candidate where an equally qualified female candidate exists and the department or office concerned has not met the gender targets set out in the departmental action plan, and (iii) an external candidate for a post at the P-3 level.

62. If the central review body finds that the evaluation criteria were not properly applied or that the applicable procedures were not followed, the delegation of authority for that case is withdrawn and the decision is made by the Under-Secretary-General for Management for positions at the P-5 and D-1 levels, or by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management (“ASG/OHRM”) for all other positions.

c. *Staff at the G-5 to D-2 levels for appointments of less than one year, and support staff up to the G-4 level*

63. At Headquarters, the decision is made by the ASG/OHRM or on behalf of the ASG/OHRM by the appropriate designated OHRM official. At Offices away from Headquarters, the authority to appoint staff up to the D-1 level for less than one year is delegated to the head of department or office.

d. *Lateral moves within a department or office*

64. The head of department or office is authorized to transfer or reassign staff to another position at the same level within the department or office concerned, without having to advertise a vacancy or go through the staff selection system. There are, however, limitations placed on lateral movements of staff appointed on short-term or fixed-term for less than one year, and staff appointed for service limited to a particular office or to a particular post.

ii. Appointments under the 200 series (for project personnel, typically engaged in technical assistance activities)

65. The situation is currently under review. The Executive Secretary of a Regional Commission has the authority to appoint “L” staff or “project personnel” up to the L-5 level when the candidate is from the region. Appointments at the L-6 and L-7 levels under extrabudgetary funding require the financial approval of the Controller for the creation of a GTA post, as well as approval by the Technical Cooperation Management Service, Department of Economic and Social Affairs for the appropriate level of the post and the clearance of the identified candidate. L-6 and L-7 temporary appointments under the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation are submitted only to TCMS, DESA for review of post level. As the delegation to the Executive Secretary is limited to candidates from the region, all appointments of L staff outside of the region, irrespective of level, must be referred to the Technical Cooperation Management Services for review.

66. UNCTAD has special delegated authority for the appointment of its project personnel. The appointment of project personnel for other offices located in Geneva is processed and authorized by UNOG.

iii. Appointments under the 300 series (short-term for a maximum of six months, or for a limited duration in peacekeeping and related missions)

67. At Headquarters, the authority to appoint staff on short term under the 300 series is exercised by OHRM. At Offices away from Headquarters, this authority is delegated to the head of department or office.

68. Appointments of limited duration (ALD) are typically granted by DPKO for mission service in the field. Use of ALDs by any other office requires the specific approval of OHRM.

B. Consultants and individual contractors

69. The decision to select and retain consultants and individual contractors is subject to strict conditions, including limitations on types of services requested, compensation for services rendered and on the duration of their contracts. Heads of departments and offices should bear

in mind that consultants and individual contractors serve in their personal capacity and are obliged under their contract to maintain independence from Governments or authorities external to the United Nations. Retention of a government official as consultant or individual contractor would in most cases be inconsistent with this obligation.

70. Heads of departments and offices that require the services of a consultant or individual contractor are responsible for ensuring that the terms of reference are clearly defined and that the relevant conditions are fulfilled. Extension of the services of a consultant or individual contractor beyond the permissible time periods requires prior approval by OHRM.

C. Post classification

71. For posts in the Professional category and above, classification authority is generally exercised by OHRM. Certain offices have special delegated authority to classify those posts up to a specified level.

72. For posts in the General Service and related categories at Headquarters, classification authority is exercised by OHRM. At Offices away from Headquarters, classification authority for those posts is exercised by the head of UNOG, UNOV or UNON or the Executive Secretary of the Regional Commission (other than ECE).

D. Staff administration

73. Generally, the day-to-day administration of staff, and the determination of whether a staff member is entitled to a particular benefit or entitlement is made in accordance with applicable rules under the authority of the head of department or office concerned, except in those cases where the authority has been specifically retained by the Secretary-General, the Department of Management, or OHRM.

74. The authority to make exceptions to applicable rules is exercised by the ASG/OHRM.

75. Heads of departments and offices have a duty to maintain a work environment free of discrimination, intimidation and abuse of authority. In this context, heads of departments and offices should promote compliance with the Standards of Conduct for the international civil service.

E. Staff appraisal and development

i. Performance Appraisal System

76. The authority and responsibility for the proper implementation of the Performance Appraisal System (PAS) is delegated to heads of departments and offices. PAS requires all staff and managers to set development goals and holds managers accountable for developing their

staff. In the discharge of their responsibilities relating to PAS, heads of departments and offices are assisted by the Management Review Committee which consists of the senior management of the department. A Joint Monitoring Committee, with representatives of the management and staff, is established in each department or office and is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the PAS. Staff members who disagree with their performance rating may avail themselves of the rebuttal process.

ii. Staff development

77. OHRM makes available to staff a number of in-house and centrally-provided staff development and training programmes, including language and IT training. In addition, each department or office determines its training needs and submits annual training plans for external upgrading of substantive and technical skills to OHRM. On the basis of these training plans, resources are allocated to individual departments and offices within budgetary limitations. The head of department or office is responsible for the management of the resources allocated for substantive and technical training programmes and for ensuring that the training plan is implemented to benefit as many staff as possible, at all levels.

F. Separation from service

78. Separation from service may be on a number of grounds, where authority is delegated to a varying degree.

i. Resignation

79. The head of department or office is authorized to shorten or lengthen the statutory notice period (30 days for fixed-term staff; 3 months for permanent staff).

ii. Mandatory age of separation

80. The authority to retain staff in service beyond the mandatory age of separation is severely limited and is not delegated to heads of department or office, except in respect of GS staff who can be retained in service beyond the mandatory age of separation by the head of office in UNOG, UNOV, UNON and the Regional Commissions. Special arrangements are in place in respect of staff in mission service that are administered by DPKO.

iii. Non-renewal of appointment

81. The head of department or office has authority to decide not to renew a fixed-term appointment but that decision should always be taken with great care, due to the considerable

restrictions imposed by the Administrative Tribunal and the risk of damages if this is not properly done. In particular, the following considerations should be taken into account:

- If a specified reason for not renewing the contract is provided, it must be accurate and supported by the record. Poor performance cannot be invoked if the staff member has a good record of PAS evaluations.
- Even though a fixed-term contract carries no expectancy of renewal, there may be surrounding circumstances which will be seen by the Tribunal as creating a legal expectancy in the particular case.
- Even though a fixed-term appointment expires automatically and without notice, it is usual practice to give one month notice and damages have been awarded by the Tribunal when no notice was given.
- Staff members may claim that the non-renewal of a contract is due to prejudice or improper motives. It is important to be able show that the staff member was fairly treated and not singled out.
- Non-renewal of contract may not be used as the “easy way out” to separate a staff member who has engaged in misconduct. The separation of a staff member based on a determination that he or she has engaged in misconduct can only be imposed by the Secretary-General after the conduct of disciplinary proceedings.
- Appointments are extended pending conclusion of disciplinary proceedings or rebuttal of performance appraisal when non-renewal of appointment is based on poor performance.

iv. Termination of permanent appointment or fixed-term appointment before its expiration date

82. The authority to terminate an appointment before its expiration has generally not been delegated to heads of departments and offices and is reserved to the Secretary-General or, in certain cases, the ASG/HRM. However, the heads of UN offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi have limited delegated authority in this area.

83. Agreed terminations require approval of the Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Management unless specific authority to make such agreements has been given.

v. Separation on disciplinary grounds

84. The authority to separate a staff member as a disciplinary measure has not been delegated.

G. Administration of justice

i. Appeals of administrative decisions

85. The authority to take decisions on appeals of administrative decisions after consideration by a Joint Appeals Board is not delegated to heads of departments and offices. Before cases reach that stage, OHRM seeks comments of the department or office where the decision under appeal has been made and encourages efforts to seek resolution before the formal appeal process. If this is not possible, the official who took the decision will frequently be asked to submit additional information to the Joint Appeals Board, either in writing or in person when requested to appear at a hearing.

ii. Conduct of disciplinary proceedings

86. Authority and responsibility for investigating allegations of misconduct on the part of staff members has to a large extent and for all high risk and complex cases been given to the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) by General Assembly resolution 59/287 of 13 April 2005. Other cases may continue to be investigated by the head of department or office, which will have to inform OIOS of the results of the investigation. Guidance on the distinction between the cases that must be investigated by OIOS and those that may be investigated by the head of department or office will be provided by OIOS. In case of doubt, it is always advisable for the head of department or office to consult OIOS for determination of who should investigate a particular case. Investigation reports are transmitted to the ASG/OHRM for decision on whether disciplinary proceedings should be conducted. In cases where the report has been prepared by OIOS, the transmittal is made first to the programme manager for review and comment and, if the manager considers it appropriate, he or she transmits the report onward to ASG/OHRM with a request for disciplinary action.

87. Unless specifically authorized, the head of department or office does not have the authority to suspend a staff member suspected of misconduct during investigation nor to impose disciplinary measures at the conclusion of the process. The ASG/OHRM is authorized to suspend a staff member with pay during investigation; the heads of offices at UNOG, UNOV, UNEP and UN-Habitat have also been specifically authorized to exercise this authority. The authority to suspend a staff member without pay during an investigation has not been delegated and is authorized by the Under-Secretary-General for Management.

88. The head of department or office, however, has the authority to impose a reprimand, which is not a disciplinary measure. Before doing so, the comments of the staff member should be sought to ensure that his or her due process rights are respected and that the facts of the case for which the reprimand would be imposed are properly established.

4. CENTRAL SUPPORT SERVICES

89. Support Services carry with them, by definition, a degree of centralization so the organization is in a position to manage limited resources such as space, promote the use of standardized Information Technology (IT) applications, leverage the organization's expenditures in areas such as procurement and travel and generally reduce administrative duplication while taking advantage of economies of scale.

90. However, Heads of Departments, Heads of Offices and Chief Administrative Officers are delegated a number of responsibilities usually covered by central or support services. These areas include aspects of procurement, property management, and travel and information technology.

91. The organization's staff rules and regulations and the financial rules set the framework for the provision of support services. In order to maintain uniformity in the application of rules, procedures and entitlements and to guarantee that the organization receives best value for its expenditures, many aspects of support services are centrally administered or monitored. At the same time, such services are delivered in support of programme delivery by Departments and Offices in fulfilling the ultimate goals and mission of the United Nations and the Secretary-General.

92. The organization is aware of the need of Departments and Offices to have flexibility over the use of their resources. Many decisions on the allocation and use of funds have been delegated to the Heads of Department and Heads of Offices.

93. The following chapters provide a high level guide to the delegation of authority of support services.

I. Information Technology

94. Departments or Offices away from Headquarters are delegated the authority to employ Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources in support of their substantive mandate, mission, and programme of work. Programme managers can assign their ICT resources in accordance with their needs and programmatic requirements. The Office of Central Support Services (OCSS)/Information Technology Services Division (ITSD), UNHQ provides central infrastructure ICT services in order to ensure essential integration and the utilization of economies of scale. It also set standards, system-wide, for essential services such as e-mail (Lotus Notes), office productivity applications (Microsoft Office), anti-virus (McAfee), etc. ITSD is currently in the process of making available a complete collection of all IT standards.

95. Local ICT Committees in Offices away from Headquarters, and Departmental ICT Committees at Headquarters, establish local or departmental ICT strategies, maintain and update information on their systems, resources and assets, and ensure that standard methodologies are consistently used in order to maximize standardization of systems and avoiding duplication. Major ICT initiatives and projects require a High Level Business Cases (HLBC) which is reviewed by the local ICT Committee to justify the return on investment. Significant HLBCs (involving an initiative costing \$200,000 or more over a 4-year period) are reviewed centrally by the Project Review Committee (PRC) which meets frequently and makes its recommendations to the chair of the Information and Communications Technology Board (ICTB). The ICTB, chaired by the Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services and comprising members appointed by the Secretary-General, from each Department at Headquarters and each Office away from Headquarters, ensures coherent and coordinated global usage of information and communications technology across departments and duty stations.

II. Procurement

96. Procurement in the United Nations is undertaken balancing the following four principles:

- a. best value for money
- b. fairness, integrity and transparency
- c. effective international competition
- d. the interest of the United Nations.

97. Procurement action covers tangible items, products, property as well as services. While the central procurement rests with the Under-Secretary-General for Management, this authority has been currently delegated to the Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, Controller. Delegated authority for procurement has been further delegated to procurement staff at Headquarters, Heads of Administration in the Missions, Offices Away from Headquarters, Regional Commissions and Criminal Tribunals. It should be noted that this delegation of authority is personal and cannot be passed on or assumed simply through appointment to a specific office or function. In some instances this authority can be further delegated in writing to an alternate however the primary delegated official remains accountable for the use of this authority.

98. The Heads of Administration in the Offices away from Headquarters have complete delegation of authority and the Head of Administration in the Regional Commissions and peacekeeping missions are normally delegated the authority to enter into contracts for the purchase or rental of services, supplies, equipment and other requirements up to \$200,000 per year. Procurement in excess of an estimated cost of \$200,000 requires approval of the Procurement Division at Headquarters prior to undertaking such procurement action. In addition, peacekeeping missions can procure certain types of goods and service, known as “core requirements” up to a financial limit of \$1,000,000 but are required to report on these

procurement activities regularly on a retroactive basis. In order to assist officials away from Headquarters, local Committees on Contracts (LCC) are established which render written advice on all contracts to be entered into which involve commitment to a single contractor for goods or services in excess of \$75,000 and proposals for modification of previously approved contracts by more than 20% or \$75,000, whichever is the lower amount. The Committee also reviews and makes recommendations on renewal of contracts previously reviewed by the Committee. All transactions which exceed \$200,000 and proposals for modification of previously approved contracts by more than 20% or \$200,000 are submitted to the LCC for review and then to the Chief of the Procurement Service at Headquarters for review and further submission to the Headquarters Committee on Contracts (HCC). All procurement actions exceeding the value of \$200,000 once reviewed by the HCC have to be approved by the Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, Controller. Splitting of awards to maintain the lower threshold is not permitted.

99. Heads of Departments and Offices at Headquarters are delegated the authority to procure low value items up to \$2,500. Procurement for such items does not have to be channelled through the Procurement Service. In order to assist Departments and Offices with low value procurement, the Department of Management is introducing purchasing cards for all Departments and Offices at Headquarters which can be used for the purchase of low value goods or services.

100. Only those individuals who have been personally delegated procurement authority, normally the heads of administration or chiefs of procurement, are authorized to sign binding contracts on behalf of the United Nations. Heads of Departments and senior officials at Headquarters and in the field are not authorized to sign such contracts unless a specific authorization is given. Prior to signing any contract with financial implications to the Organization outside of regular procurement activities, guidance and/or approval should be sought from the Controller.

101. The United Nations participates actively in the High Level Committee on Management's Procurement Network, which replaced the Inter-Agency Procurement Working Group. This Procurement Network facilitates global coordination of procurement activities throughout the UN System through a network of procurement professionals from the United Nations Secretariat, Funds, Programmes and Specialized Agencies, including the Bretton Woods Institutions. Its work includes the sharing of best practices, the development of common policies and processes and the institution of cooperative procurement arrangements.

III. Space Management

102. As other limited resources, the management of space in the United Nations is centralized to ensure fair, efficient and cost effective planning and use. The Facilities Management offices at Headquarters, Heads of Offices away from Headquarters and Chief Administrative Officers of peacekeeping missions are delegated the authority to plan the overall utilization of the respective UN premises.

103. Office space is assigned based on the needs and priorities of the organization, using common standards, guaranteeing a healthy, safe and secure working environment and providing best value for money. Requests for space have to be substantiated by organizational requirements which include staffing tables and funding sources.

104. Office space management also includes all related minor alteration work, the setting of standards for and provision of furniture as well as the selection, recommendation and final approval of all building and land leases. Any leasing action has to comply with the relevant authority for procurement, financial rules and regulations.

105. The local Facilities Management Service/Unit is also in charge of maintaining the structural and architectural integrity of the official premises and their monetary, cultural and symbolic values emphasizing the creation of an efficient, safe and secure working environment for staff and visitors.

106. The Organization is obliged to charge for space, including office and exhibition space assigned to programmes financed through extrabudgetary resources. Exception to such charges can only be approved by the Controller and have to be obtained prior to assigning space.

IV. Overseas Property Management and Construction

107. The Office of Central Support Services/Facilities Management Service at Headquarters, in collaboration with an Organization-wide team of designated focal points, namely the Chiefs of Facilities Management from each duty station, provides guidance, assessment and overview of all United Nations facilities with regards to their physical condition, property valuations, facilities-related contracts, major maintenance, alteration/improvement projects and environmental concerns.

108. The Inter-agency Network of Facilities Managers (INFM) has been established to facilitate Headquarters' global coordination of such a decentralized technical, administrative and budgetary approach ensuring that reliable standards, best practices, common principles and directives are applied throughout the United Nations as a whole maximizing a steady flow of information-exchange through e-mails, its website and a yearly networking meeting.

109. The management and administrative arrangements for each overseas construction project are jointly proposed by the duty station and Headquarters when presenting the request for funds to the Legislative bodies.

110. Major improvement/alteration construction projects are managed, implemented and supervised on a daily basis through a local project coordination unit established for the duration of each project. The Office of Central Support Services/Facilities Management Service in Headquarters, provides all necessary guidance, oversees the development, progress and the overall implementation of the projects while ensuring compliance with best practices and standards within its existing resources.

V. Property Management and Inventory Control

111. Heads of Departments at Headquarters, Heads of Offices away from Headquarters, Chief Administrative Officers of Regional Commissions and peacekeeping missions may be delegated the responsibility for maintenance of property records and control of property in the area of their responsibility. Chief Administrative Officers may also transfer mission property to other field missions without Property Survey Board review and advice if instructed by the Director Logistics Support Division, DPKO at Headquarters. The delegated authority also allows the CAO to act directly and write-off property with individual inventory value of less than \$1,500 without any Property Survey Board review and advice.

112. Heads of Offices away from Headquarters, Chief Administrative Officers of Regional Commissions and peacekeeping missions are also delegated the authority to establish a local Property Survey Board to advise on property related matters as far as loss, shortage, damage (or re-use) in transferability and other irregularities in equipment, supplies and properties are concerned.

113. Individuals who are delegated authority under the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations should consult the Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services immediately if any difficulties are experienced in interpreting or enforcing the rules.

VI. Travel

114. Heads of Departments at Headquarters and Heads of Offices away from Headquarters have full authority over their travel budget. All travel has to comply with the UN's travel policy, which mandates the use of the most direct and economical airfares. While the policy does not mandate connecting flights when non-stop flights are available, staff members cannot choose a routing that is more costly than the most direct and economical route. Travel over 9 hours published flying time allows business class travel. Staff members at the Assistant Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General level can fly in business class regardless of flying time. Any exceptions to this policy (upgrade to business class for flights under 9 hours, first class air travel etc.) have to be approved by the Under-Secretary-General for Management and are reported individually to the General Assembly. Departments are held accountable for authorized exceptions.

115. Staff in Departments and Offices with limited travel budgets may voluntarily downgrade their travel entitlements to save costs. However, such savings cannot be used for personal deviations or upgrades. Although frequent flyer miles are retained by the traveller, they may be used for official travel to defer costs.

116. As in other Support Service categories, the United Nations uses a leverage approach to managing travel. Most duty stations have a contracted travel agency which provides air tickets in line with the UN's travel policy. Central purchase of air travel is considered a best practice, which ensures best value for money. On an exceptional basis, individuals can be authorized to purchase their own tickets when the organization cannot provide them at the same price or on an emergency basis. Travel advances can be issued to cover such ticket purchases (Staff Rules of the United Nations Rule 107.12).

117. In order to be able to globally leverage air expenditure of the United Nations, its funds, programmes and related international organizations, the Inter-Agency Travel Network has been created. The Network also provides a forum for all travel related issues. The United Nations Secretariat at Headquarters and all Offices away from Headquarters are among the members of the group.

118. The UN uses a per diem system which provides travellers a daily subsistence to cover all costs except for air travel. The DSA rates are set for individual locations by the International Civil Service Commission and are revised monthly. In the event that travellers have to use specific accommodation which is higher than the DSA rate, ad hoc requests can be made to OHRM to cover such costs (ST/AI/1998/3 System of Daily Subsistence Allowance).

119. The UN issues UN Laissez-Passers (UNLP) and UN Certificates to travellers on official travel (UNLPs for staff members and certificates for consultants and experts on mission). Heads of Departments and Heads of Offices (and their respective senior administrative officers) are authorized to request such documents. They are issued in New York, Geneva and Vienna. Heads of Offices and CAOs of Regional Commissions and peacekeeping missions as well as Resident Coordinators in field duty stations are authorized to renew blue UNLPs. Red UNLPs (which are issued to officials at the D-2 level and above as well as to heads of UN Offices in the field) can only be renewed at one of the issuing stations.

VII. Archives and Records Management

120. Responsibility for policy development, standards setting, provision of advice and overall management of the records and archives of the United Nations, including Secretariat units away from Headquarters, peacekeeping operations, and subsidiary organizations of the United Nations, is centralized in the Office of Central Support Services' Archives and Records Management Section (ARMS).

121. Heads of Departments at Headquarters, Heads of Offices away from Headquarters and Chief Administrative Officers of Regional Commissions and peacekeeping missions are delegated the authority to ensure compliance with the rules that pertain to the legal title to and inviolability of Secretariat records. They specify, inter alia, that

- All records (recorded information), in any form or medium, created or received and maintained, by any office or staff member in the transaction of business or the conduct of affairs of the United Nations are the property of the United Nations;
- Staff members separating from the Organization shall not remove any records from the United Nations premises; records are to be retained within their work unit for future business use, unless disposal is authorized in an approved retention schedule;
- Staff is prohibited from altering, destroying, misplacing or rendering useless any official document, record or file in any medium that is intended to be kept as a record of the Organization.

122. Heads of Departments at Headquarters, Heads of Offices away from Headquarters and Chief Administrative Officers of Regional Commissions and peacekeeping missions are also delegated the responsibility to

- Develop records management practices, tools, and training, and employ records management resources in support of their substantive mandate, mission, and programme of work;
- Develop and implement in all cases retention policy for their business records through a comprehensive retention schedule, approved by ARMS;
- Transfer to ARMS' custody for secure storage and preservation those records no longer need for current business (typically after three years) but which need to be retained for administrative, legal, or historical purposes;
- Establish suitable conditions for the maintenance and preservation of records which they are authorized to retain beyond the normal period for the conduct of their official; and,
- In the event of the closure of an office, ensure that and records be transferred to the ARMS in accordance after mutual consultation between the office and ARMS.

123. Electronic records are subject to the same requirements for record-keeping as paper documents. Departments and offices shall ensure that e-mail records are identified, managed and stored in accordance with these requirements (ST/SGB/242 United Nations Archives and Records Management, ST/SGB/2007/5 Record-keeping and the management of United Nations archives).

5. SENIOR OFFICIALS' COMPACTS WITH THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

124. Originally called Programme Management Plans and introduced in 2000, the senior officials' Compacts form the basis of an agreement between the head of Department and the Secretary-General, and enables the Secretary-General to carry out his mandate to ensure that the performance of all staff, including those of senior managers, is annually appraised.

125. The Compact integrates in one instrument the areas of programmatic and managerial performance that need to be monitored and reviewed. The Compacts contain three sections, each with a set of objectives, expected accomplishments and measures of success and enables senior managers to discuss their programme and management performance priorities in a structured way with the Secretary-General each year.

126. Accordingly, a letter and timetable for the development of the annual Compact is sent to each Head of Department in order for them to begin the process of developing the plan in a consultative manner with their senior officers, well in advance of the request from the Office of the Secretary-General.

127. The Management Performance Board, established through document ST/SGB/2005/13, monitors the manner in which senior managers exercise all aspects of the authority that has been delegated to them and advises the Secretary-General on matters concerning the performance of individual senior managers through the review of senior officials' Compacts.

128. The members of the Management Performance Board are appointed by the Secretary-General for a two year term, which may be renewable. Its membership consists of a chairperson, who is the Deputy Secretary-General, two members at the Under-Secretary-General level and an external expert in public sector management.