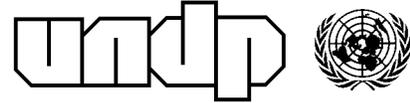


United Nations Development Programme

Sustainable human development



UNDP/ADM/96/50

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To: All UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS Staff

From: Robin Kinloch
Director
Office of Human Resources

Subject: **Revised Guidelines For Special Post Allowance**

This circular supersedes UNDP/ADM/PER/169/Rev.1/Add 1 issued 6 April 1983 and replaces policy directives contained in the Personnel Manual's Sections 10210 and 20302. Changes introduced herewith are:

a. Decentralization of SPAs for locally recruited staff to country offices is hereby introduced. Effective immediately, all locally recruited staff, holding UNDP letters of appointment (including those limited to service with UNFPA, UNHCR, UNOPS, and WFP, where applicable) and eligible for an SPA, will be reviewed by the Local Advisory Group for the Country Office concerned.

b. Extension of SPAs to headquarters general service staff. The Headquarters Advisory Group will continue to review all internationally recruited staff and headquarters General Service staff, holding UNDP letters of appointment, including those limited to service with UNFPA and UNOPS.

c. The duration of an SPA is normally up to twelve months, to be reviewed annually.

SPA is an exceptional allowance and not an entitlement. Managers are hereby reminded that the use of SPAs is intended as a temporary measure and should not be used in lieu of promotions.

REVISED GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL POST ALLOWANCE

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Definition

Staff members are expected, as a normal part of their work, to assume temporarily the duties and responsibilities of higher-level posts. However, Staff Rule 103.11 establishes the Special Post Allowances (SPA) as an exceptional reward mechanism, in recognition of demonstrated ability to carry out the functions and responsibilities of higher-level posts. A staff member may be granted an SPA, within the governing principles, if she/he is asked to assume for a temporary period exceeding a minimum of three months the full duties and responsibilities of a clearly designated higher-level post. It has been UNDP's practice to have staff occupy posts one level above, or below, their own. Consequently, it adopted the criterion of requiring the "clearly designated higher level post" to be at two levels above the level of the incumbent.

The SPA is a non-pensionable remuneration, and is equivalent to the salary increase, including post adjustments and applicable dependency allowance, that a staff member would normally receive upon promotion to the next higher level. It is provided on a temporary basis.

B. Purpose

The purpose of SPA is to recognize increased responsibilities and demonstrated ability of staff called upon to assume full duties and responsibilities of clearly higher-level posts.

II. ADVISORY GROUPS ON SPECIAL POST ALLOWANCES

Advisory Groups on Special Post Allowances will be established annually at both headquarters and country office levels. They will have the responsibility of reviewing all recommendations for a special post allowance, as per the conditions set in their terms of reference, contained in Annex 1 and 2. The Advisory Groups on SPA at Headquarters acts as an advisory body that makes recommendations, through OHR, to the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Directors of UNFPA and UNOPS, to award SPA to their respective organizations' staff members. Similarly, Local Advisory Groups on SPA act as advisory bodies that make recommendations to the UNDP Resident Representative, through the DRR (O) or ARR (A)1, to award SPA to staff members. The Local Advisory Group on SPA will submit recommendations for UNFPA and UNOPS national staff to the UNFPA Representative and UNOPS Outpost Management as applicable.

III. PROCEDURES FOR SPECIAL POST ALLOWANCE

The SPA is an allowance that does not constitute nor substitute for promotion. It is

temporary in nature, while promotions are not. Similarly it cannot be used as a corrective measure for changing the initial level of newly recruited staff. In cases relating to the latter, requests for reclassification of an incumbent's initial level of recruitment may be considered within the first year of joining UNDP only.

A. Pre-requisites

Requests for SPAs must satisfy the following pre-requisites to be eligible for consideration by the Advisory Group on Special Post Allowance.

1. SPAs are mandated in the United Nations Staff Rules governing staff holding 100 series contracts. It follows that they may only be granted to those staff holding 100 series contracts. Staff Rule 103.11 governing SPAs does not apply to staff hired under the ALD nor L - categories, governed under the 300 and 200 series.

2. A recommendation for SPA will be considered if the following documentation is provided:

a) evidence that the post is classified and budgeted at the higher level at time of the recommendation;

b) job description for the post classified at the higher level;

c) staff member's personal data record(for internationally recruited professional staff) and performance evaluation summary; For a recommendation for an SPA to be considered, it is the supervisor's/ management responsibility to ensure that the staff member's performance (at the higher post level), is reported as highly satisfactory, (PAR 3 rating);

d) description of the circumstances of the higher level assignment, proposed duration of the allowance, an indication of the means by which the post will be eventually filled; and

e) the Career Assessment Panel report in cases of conversions for UNDP general service staff to professional level.

3. A recommendation for SPA may only be made after the beginning of the fourth month of staff assuming higher responsibilities, except for general service staff performing at the professional level, and staff in hardship duty station, where recommendations can be made at the time staff members assume higher level posts.

B. Functional Responsibilities

1. Headquarters/Country Offices

Responsibility for SPA review of locally recruited staff is hereby delegated to the Local Advisory Group on SPA at the Country Office level, whose responsibility will cover UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNOPS and WFP locally recruited staff, where applicable. At

headquarters this responsibility will remain with the Advisory Group on SPA, whose responsibility will cover UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS professional staff and general service staff at Headquarters.

2. Supervisors and Managers

Supervisors and Managers should take into account that proposals for, and awards of, SPAs are to be formulated and/or considered independently from proposals for promotion. Staff whose performance merits submission of recommendation for promotion should not be recommended for SPA. A recommendation for an SPA should not be intended as compensation for a promotion that may have been denied, and should not be considered as a substitute for promotion.

3. UNDP Office of Human Resources (OHR)

UNFPA Division of Finance, Personnel and Administration (DFPA)

UNOPS Division for Finance and Administration (DFA)

On receipt of recommendations for SPAs for professional and headquarters general service staff, the Office of Human Resources (OHR) will ascertain that the pre-requisites for SPA are met for each case prior to presenting it to the Advisory Group at its next quarterly meeting. Any recommendation for SPA that does not meet the pre-requisites will be returned to the originating office. The UNFPA Division of Finance, Personnel and Administration (DFPA) and the UNOPS Division for Finance and Administration (DFA) will have similar responsibility for staff holding UNDP letters of appointment limited to service in their respective organizations.

OHR acts as ex-officio member of the Advisory Group and provides support services to it, including documentation relating to SPA recommendations and existing SPA holders, preparation of minutes of meetings and annual reports. OHR, UNFPA/DFPA and UNOPS/DFA are responsible for informing their respective organization's staff of the outcome of cases under review.

At the country office level, the UNDP DRR(O) or ARR(A) will act as ex-officio member of the Local Advisory Group on SPA and will carry out the same functions as OHR. He/she is responsible for informing UNFPA and UNOPS country-level management of the outcome of cases under review. UNFPA and UNOPS country level management will have the responsibility of conveying the outcome of cases under review to their headquarters management and local staff.

4. Advisory Groups on SPA

The review for eligibility for an SPA will be the sole responsibility of the Advisory Groups on SPA, in accordance with their respective terms of reference contained in Annex 1 (for Headquarters) and Annex 2 (for country offices). This responsibility covers the review of the eligibility in cases of:

- a) new recommendations for SPAs;
- b) extensions of existing SPAs up to a maximum of one year; and

- c) all staff occupying posts two levels higher than their personal grade.

On completion of its review of all proposals for SPAs, the Advisory Group will submit its recommendations to the Administrator for approval. Recommendations relating to UNFPA and UNOPS staff will be submitted to the Executive Directors of UNFPA and UNOPS respectively. Local Advisory Groups on SPA will make submissions to the Resident Representative for approval of SPAs for UNDP local staff. The Advisory Group will submit its recommendations for approval of SPAs to UNFPA, UNOPS and WFP local staff through the Resident Representative to the UNFPA Representative, UNOPS Outpost Management and the WFP Representative, as appropriate. In locations where UNFPA, UNOPS and/or WFP do not have a resident manager, the Advisory Group recommendations will be submitted to the Resident Representative who can grant SPAs for UNOPS, UNFPA and/or WFP local staff on behalf of the Executive Director of their respective organization.

In reviewing UNDP staff occupying posts two levels higher than the incumbents staff level, the Advisory Groups will request OHR or the DRR(O)/ARR(A) concerned to draw the attention of management to these cases.

5. Consultative Group on Staff Matters (CGSM)

The Chairperson of the Headquarters Advisory Group on SPA will present the annual report to the Consultative Group on Staff Matters for its review.

C. Recommendations for SPA

1. Internationally Recruited Professional Staff and General Service Staff at Headquarters

- Such recommendations should be made by the immediate supervisor and endorsed by the Bureau/Division Management, as appropriate, and transmitted to OHR. Recommendations for staff holding UNDP letters of appointment with limited service to UNFPA or UNOPS should be forwarded to OHR through UNFPA/DFPA and/or UNOPS/DPA.

2. Internationally Recruited Professional Staff in Country Offices

- The recommendation should be proposed by the Resident Representative for staff in Country Offices or the Head of Division for all other staff, and endorsed by the respective Bureau/ Division management and transmitted to the Office of Human Resources. The same procedure should be followed by UNFPA and UNOPS management at the country level where their recommendations should be forwarded to their respective organizational units.

3. Locally Recruited Staff

- Recommendations should be made by the unit chief, as appropriate, and transmitted to the DRR (O)/ARR(A). All recommendations for UNFPA local staff must be endorsed by UNFPA/DFPA at headquarters before they are submitted to the Local Advisory Group.

D. Criteria for recommendation for SPA

1. Staff members are expected to assume temporarily, as a normal part of their customary work, and without extra compensation, the duties and responsibilities of higher-level posts. Rotation of staff to posts one level above their personal grade reflects normal UNDP assignment policy and practice and does not constitute automatic grounds for an SPA, unless the exceptional considerations as described herein apply. The above principle notwithstanding, and in accordance with Staff Rule 103.11, SPAs may be recommended by supervisors in cases where a staff member has demonstrated his/her ability, during a temporary period of more than three (3) months, to assume the full duties and responsibilities of a post graded at two levels above his/her own level. The two-level rule applies to all categories of staff holding UNDP letters of appointment²; there will be no distinction between professional staff, specialists (recruited under the 100 series contracts) and generalists in the application of SPA criteria.

2. Staff Rule 103.11 (c) recommends, in specific circumstances, granting SPAs with immediate effect to a staff member serving in a higher-level post. This applies to UNDP staff in the following circumstances:

(a) the Advisory Group may recommend granting an SPA with immediate effect to professional staff assigned to posts only one higher than their own on an exceptional basis by virtue of the limited duration of the period considered and/or the extraordinary nature of the responsibilities assumed at the higher level in hardship and emergency country duty stations;

(b) The principle of one level requirement may also apply to those cases where staff members assume posts of higher duties and responsibilities in a different category, such as:

- (1) Local general service to National Professional level;
- (2) General Service to professional level

The following procedure will apply for those SPA recommendations aiming at conversion of UNDP general service staff to professional level. In line with circulars UNDP/ADM/ 89/29 of 10 March 1989 and UNDP/ADM/89/29/ADD.1 of 27 October 1989, eligible Senior General Service staff at the G-6/G-7 level, may be selected at the recommendation of their supervisors for professional posts through the vacancy management system and interview process of the UNDP Career Assessment Panel (CAP) for general service staff. All UNDP recommendations for SPAs to be awarded for conversion from general service to professional level must be recommended by the CAP. In these cases the SPA Advisory Group may approve the payment of SPA with immediate effect, for a period not exceeding one year, after which he/she will be considered for promotion to the professional category through the promotion mechanism.

E. Effective dates

1. SPAs take immediate effect for those cases approved under the provisions of Staff Rule 103.11 (c), namely in cases where staff members are assigned to serve in hardship duty stations, or when staff members in the general Service category are required to serve in a higher level post in the Professional category.

2. All other SPAs will be granted as of the fourth month.

F. Duration of SPA

The duration of an SPA is normally up to twelve months, to be reviewed annually. In cases where the conditions outlined above are found not to prevail, the withdrawal of the SPA will be recommended. The same applies for staff granted SPAs while on secondment. Should a staff member, recipient of an SPA, go on secondment, SLWFP or SLWP, the SPA will be discontinued as of the change of status date. SPAs will be discontinued for staff on sabbaticals during the duration of the sabbatical and may be resumed if they return to the two-level higher posts. An SPA may not be discontinued while a staff member is on maternity leave, unless she vacates the post before commencing maternity leave. The same will apply to staff on medical leave.

In reviewing eligibility for SPAs, the Advisory Groups may consider retroactive recommendations up to, but not exceeding, one year from the date of the recommendation.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

HEADQUARTERS ADVISORY GROUP ON SPECIAL POST ALLOWANCES

A. Appointment

The Advisory Group on Special Post Allowances will be appointed by the Administrator annually. The Administrator will also appoint its independent Chairperson. The Advisory Group will have the responsibility of reviewing, under the provisions of Staff Rule 103.11, all recommendations for a special post allowance for General Service Staff in Headquarters and all internationally-recruited staff holding UNDP letters of appointment for 100 series contracts.

The Advisory Group's membership is designated by management, in consultation with the Staff Council, through the mechanisms of the Consultative Group on Staff Matters, the UNDP/UNFPA Appointment and Promotion Board and the Appointment and Promotion Panel. UNOPS members on the Advisory Group are designated by the UNOPS Executive Director in consultation with the Staff Council, the UNOPS Management Forum, and the UNOPS Appointment and Promotion Bodies.

B. Composition and Quorum

The Headquarters Advisory Group shall consist of three members of the Board, three members from the Panel and an independent Chairperson selected by the CGSM. At least one of the seven members should be an UNFPA and another an UNOPS staff member. Members of the Advisory Group shall be nominated at the first meeting of the A and P bodies.

No review meeting should take place without a quorum, nor without the presence of the Chairperson. The attendance of at least four members, in addition to the Chairperson, will constitute a quorum. For the review of UNFPA and/or UNOPS proposals, at least one UNFPA or UNOPS member of the Advisory Group should be present.

C. Duration of term

The chairperson may serve a maximum of three years term. The term of other members shall correspond to their terms of office serving the Appointment and Promotion bodies.

D. Mandate

The review for eligibility (of professional staff up to the D-1 level and General Service staff up to G-7 level) for an SPA will be the sole responsibility of the Advisory Group on

SPA. It will conduct reviews of:

1. recommendations for special post allowances to determine whether they merit being granted an SPA;
2. cases of staff members with special post allowances to determine whether or not the circumstances that led to the granting of the SPA are still valid; and
3. all staff members with two-grade post-level differentials from their personal grades.

It will consider all proposals and cases for SPAs and will submit its recommendations for approval to the Administrator and/or the Executive Directors of UNFPA or UNOPS, relating to staff on their respective organization.

E. Operating Principles

1. Basic documentation

OHR, in its capacity as Secretary to the Advisory Group, will provide for all meetings of the Advisory Group, at least one week in advance the following material:

- a) Agenda for the meeting;
- b) Minutes of the previous meeting;
- c) Recommendations for SPA;
- d) Evidence that the post is classified and budgeted at the higher level at time of the recommendation;
- e) Job description for the post classified at the higher level;
- f) Staff member's personal data record and summary of performance evaluation;
- g) Description of the circumstances of the higher level assignment, proposed duration of the allowance, an indication of the means by which the post will be eventually filled;
- h) The Career Assessment Panel report in cases of conversions for UNDP general service staff to professional level; and
- i) Existing SPA under review will require resubmission of documentation indicated in items c to g.

In its deliberations, the Advisory Group will have as reference, the SPA Guidelines, the relevant Staff Rules and Regulations of the UN and such other decisions of the UNDP Administrator and the Executive Directors of UNFPA and UNOPS affecting the management of personnel.

2. Conduct of Business

The Advisory Group will consider SPA recommendations on the basis of the SPA criteria and make its recommendations through OHR (or UNFPA/DFPA or UNOPS/DPA, as appropriate) to the Administrator and Executive Directors of UNFPA and UNOPS, accordingly.

In doing so it will determine that proposals for, and awards of, SPAs are independent from any proposals for promotion and they are not intended to compensate for the fact that a promotion may have been denied.

Existing SPA cases will be reviewed quarterly by the Advisory Group. In cases where the conditions outlined above are found not to prevail, the withdrawal of the SPA will be recommended.

In its review of UNDP staff occupying two posts higher than their incumbent's level, the Advisory Group on SPA will make recommendations to OHR to bring these cases to the attention of their supervisors.

The deliberations of the Group and the recommendations resulting from them shall be treated as strictly confidential.

Recommendations should preferably be reached by consensus. In the event a decision is put to the vote, the Chairperson shall vote. A majority shall be a simple majority of those present and entitled to vote. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson shall take the final decision.

F. Frequency of review meetings

Normally the Advisory Group will convene four regular meetings. Ad hoc meetings may be scheduled, as required.

G. Reporting

Minutes should be prepared documenting the proceedings of each meeting by OHR as Secretary, and signed by the Chairperson.

The Advisory Group will submit its recommendations to the Administrator, as appropriate, through the Director of OHR. In making its recommendations, the Group will record policy recommendations to CGSM for future reference by successive Advisory Groups.

Before the expiration of its term of office, the Advisory Group shall submit a report to the CGSM on its work.

Annex 2: Terms of Reference

LOCAL ADVISORY GROUPS ON SPECIAL POST ALLOWANCES

A. Appointment

The review for eligibility for an SPA for locally recruited staff, holding UNDP letters of Appointment, will be the sole responsibility of the Local Advisory Group on SPA.

Each Country Office will set up a Local Advisory Group on Special Post Allowances to be appointed by Resident Representatives and UNDP Representatives annually. It will have the responsibility of reviewing, under the provisions of Staff Rule 103.11, all recommendations for a special post allowance for locally recruited Staff in Country Offices holding UNDP letters of appointment for 100 series contracts.

The Local Advisory Group's membership is appointed by the Resident Representative in consultation with Office UNFPA/UNOPS/WFP management, the Staff Association and the Local Appointment and Promotion Panel.

B. Composition and Quorum

The Local Advisory Group shall consist of four members of the of the Panel and an independent Chairperson. It should have one member from each of these categories: general service, local national officers and a professional at a higher level. In addition to UNDP, at least one member should be from each of the following agencies, if they maintain a presence in the Country Office: UNFPA, WFP and/or UNOPS. For the review of UNFPA, WFP and UNOPS proposals, at least one member of the Advisory Group shall be an UNFPA, UNOPS and/or WFP members of the Local A and P bodies, as appropriate. Members of the Local Advisory Group shall be nominated at the first meeting of the Local Appointment and Promotion Panel.

No review meeting may take place without a quorum, nor without the presence of the Chairperson. The attendance of at least three members, in addition to the Chairperson, will constitute a quorum.

C. Duration of term

The term of office of members of the Local Advisory Group will correspond to their term of Office as members of the Local Appointment and Promotion Panel. The Chairperson may serve a maximum of three years term.

D. Mandate

The review for eligibility for an SPA for locally recruited staff at all levels will be the sole responsibility of the Local Advisory Group on SPA. In dispensing its responsibilities, it will review:

1. recommendations for special post allowances to determine whether they merit being granted an SPA;
2. cases of staff members with special post allowances to determine whether or not the circumstances that led to the granting of the SPA are still valid; and
3. staff members with two-grade post-level differentials from their personal grades.

It will consider all proposals for SPAs and will submit its recommendations for UNDP staff to the Resident Representative for approval. Recommendations relating to staff of UNFPA, UNOPS and WFP will be made to their management representatives at the country level.

E. Operating Principles

1. Basic documentation

For all meetings of the Local Advisory Group, the DRR (O)/ ARR (A), in her/his capacity as Secretary to the Local Advisory Group will provide, at least one week in advance the following material:

- a) Agenda;
- b) Minutes of the previous meeting;
- c) Recommendations for SPA; for UNFPA staff an endorsement from DFPA is required;
- d) Evidence that the post is classified and budgeted at the higher level at time of the recommendation;
- e) Job description for the post classified at the higher level;
- f) Staff member's summary of performance evaluation;
- g) Description of the circumstances of the higher level assignment, proposed duration of the allowance, an indication of the means by which the post will be eventually filled; and
- i) Existing SPA under review will require resubmission of documentation indicated in items c to g.

In its deliberations, the Advisory Group will have as reference, the SPA Guidelines, the relevant Staff Rules and Regulations of the UN and such other decisions of the UNDP Administrator and the Executive Directors of UNFPA and UNOPS affecting the management of personnel.

2. Conduct of Business

The Local Advisory Group will consider SPA recommendations on the basis of the SPA criteria and make its recommendations to the Resident Representative and UNFPA/UNOPS/WFP country-level management, accordingly.

In doing so it will determine that proposals for, and awards of, SPAs are independent from any proposals for promotion and they are not intended to compensate for the fact that a promotion may have been denied.

Existing SPAs will be reviewed quarterly by the Local Advisory Group. In cases where the conditions outlined above are found not to prevail, the withdrawal of the SPA will be recommended.

In its review of staff occupying posts higher than their incumbents' level, the Local Advisory Group on SPA will make recommendations to the DRR(O)/ARR(A) to bring these cases to the attention of their supervisors. For UNFPA and UNOPS staff the recommendations will be made to the UNFPA Representative and UNOPS Outpost Management, as appropriate.

The deliberations of the Group and the recommendations resulting from them shall be treated as strictly confidential.

Recommendations should preferably be reached by consensus. In the event a decision is put to the vote, the Chairperson shall vote. A majority shall be a simple majority of those present and entitled to vote. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson shall take the final decision.

F. Frequency of review meetings

The Local Advisory Group will convene four regular meetings. Ad hoc meetings may be scheduled, as required.

G. Reporting

Minutes should be prepared documenting the proceedings of each meeting. The minutes, prepared by the DRR(O)/ARR(A) as Secretary, should be signed by the Chairperson.

Before the expiration of its term of office, the Local Advisory Group shall submit a report to the Resident Representative on its work. The Local Advisory Group may seek advice on policy matters from the Chairperson of the Headquarters Advisory Group on

SPA.