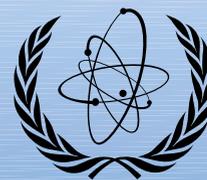




# A Framework for Human Resources Management

**International Civil Service Commission**



# Introduction

The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) adopted in 2000 a Framework for Human Resources Management. It was developed by members of ICSC and its secretariat, representatives of the organizations of the United Nations common system and representatives of the staff.

The purpose of the Framework is to enable the organizations of the United Nations common system to manage their human resources effectively. The philosophy underlying it is grounded in the principles emanating from the provisions of the United Nations Charter, namely, the independence of the international civil service and the need for the organizations to recruit staff with the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, with due regard to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible and to the equal participation of men and women in the work of the organizations.

An overriding concern of human resources managers in the common system is to link human resources management with organizational goals, taking into account the external and internal forces relevant to human resources management. The Framework includes a definition of organizational design and its impact on the human resources management environment. It identifies the diverse yet interrelated elements which make up human resources management in the common system. It has six major components, some of which have a number of sub-components. Definitions, identification of core/non-core elements, underlying principles and the linkages between components are provided for the components and sub-components.

The Framework provides the organizations with a holistic conceptual base from which to take action in one or more areas of human resources management reform. As such, it can be used to form the basis of the organizations' future work on human resources policies and procedures.

**Mohsen Bel Hadj Amor**

Chairman

International Civil Service Commission

August 2001

# A Framework for Human Resources Management



# Environmental impact on human resources management



# Environmental impact on human resources management

Forces at various levels influence changes in human resources strategies and directions. Those with the most direct effect include changes in the nature of the organization's mission, work and overall policy direction. Other forces are internal to the organization itself (its culture, work organization and management style), while still others originate outside the organization and are related to the global economy and other changes in society. Further impetus for change stems from the evolution of thinking about the management of human resources (the conceptual base) and of the practical tools available to human resources practitioners (the evolution of technology). Above all, human resources management strategies are affected most directly by the changing nature of the organization's mission, work and overall strategy.

A human resources management framework does not exist in a vacuum but is interconnected with the organization's mission and is subject to a number of forces, both internal and external. International organizations of the United Nations family, however, present three additional unique features that in one way or another affect the management of human resources:

- Their system of governance: all organizations are responsible to large numbers of Member States which decide their missions, mandates and strategies
- Their legal status: the organizations are extraterritorial and not bound by national legislation or international labour conventions
- Their international, multicultural nature: the organizations' aims and activities are global and their employees come from all parts of the world

# Major components of the Framework for Human Resources Management



# Core elements

CORE ELEMENTS of the human resources management framework are those that bind together the United Nations family of organizations in order to:

- Avoid any competition in the employment of staff that may result from fundamental differences in the compensation package
- Promote common values of the international civil service
- Facilitate mobility of staff across the system

# Linkages and principles

## **LINKAGES**

The relationship or interconnections among the various components of the Framework

## **PRINCIPLES**

Guiding concepts on which the components of the Framework are based

# Organizational design

## DEFINITION

Organizational design is an overarching element in the Framework. It grows out of an organization's mission and human resources strategies and is the process through which programmes and plans are created and implemented to fulfil the aims of the organization. It includes such areas as job design, reporting relationships, workload distribution and classification, as well as strategies for motivating staff, inspiring creativity, handling change, improving productivity and morale etc.

The two major sub-elements of organizational design are job design and human resources planning.

## NON-CORE ELEMENT

Problems of organizational design must be resolved by each individual organization, rather than being subject to any form of common prescription across the United Nations system, not least because of the significant differences among organizations' mandates, structures, size of workforce etc. Job design and human resources planning are therefore not core elements of the common system.

## JOB DESIGN,

which precedes job classification, encompasses determination of the content of jobs, the roles of the incumbents of those jobs and the relationships which exist between the job holders and others in the organization. The requirements of job content determination are twofold: it must meet the organizations' requirements for operational efficiency and quality service, while satisfying the job holder's needs in terms of interest, challenge and accomplishment. This will entail analysing the work that needs to be done through process planning, systems analysis and work study.

## HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING

involves the systematic assessment of future staffing requirements in terms of numbers and levels of skills and competencies and formulation and implementation of plans to meet those requirements. It is vital to match human resources to the longer-term programme needs of the organization and to maintain an ongoing review of how to make the best use of current and future human resources. In the process, human resources managers must assess how a well-trained and flexible workforce can best be maintained to meet the organization's changing and at times uncertain needs.

# Compensation and benefits

## DEFINITION

Compensation policy governs the establishment of pay scales. It is based on the Noblemaire and Flemming principles, which address the need to recruit staff at both the national and international levels. The design of the compensation and benefits system determines how pay is administered and managed.

## CORE ELEMENT

Consistent compensation policies are required in an international civil service to prevent organizations' undesirable competition for staff on the basis of disparate compensation policies.

## LINKAGES

### Recruitment and retention:

Must be competitive to attract and retain staff

### Performance management:

Provides financial rewards that recognize individual and team contributions to organizational objectives and greater incentive and motivation for staff to excel in the workplace

### Inter-agency mobility:

Provides for compensation/benefits equity among all common system organizations

### Contractual arrangements:

Satisfy organizations' needs for different types of appointments

### Career management:

Provides opportunities for financial advancement for career staff

## PRINCIPLES

Compensation and benefits should:

Reward staff in a competitive and equitable manner and be based on merit, competence, responsibility and accountability

Be designed to motivate and encourage staff to develop skills and competencies and provide opportunities for career advancement

Be flexible, transparent and administratively simple

Make illegal the acceptance of supplementary payments from Member States and other unauthorized sources

# Employment: Recruitment, placement and retention

## DEFINITION

Recruitment/placement is the starting point of an organization's overall employment policy. It covers both hiring new talent and reassigning serving staff, including those on inter-agency transfer, secondment or loan. Retention addresses the conditions which enable staff members to continue to serve.

## NON-CORE ELEMENT

While recruitment and placement/selection should be based on shared principles, such as merit, geographical distribution and gender balance, organizations should continue to be responsible for designing recruitment systems that meet their unique needs.

## LINKAGES

### Mobility:

Candidate pools of mobile international civil servants provide a source of filling vacancies

### Performance management:

Staff performance is taken into consideration when decisions are made about selection and retention

### Career management:

Provides staff with the opportunity for further development through new job assignments

### Compensation and benefits:

The compensation package needs to attract and retain staff of the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity

### Staff well-being:

Ensures appropriate work/life conditions and policies to create an enabling work environment

### Good governance:

Empowers staff and contributes to their morale

## PRINCIPLES

The acquisition of high-quality staff drives the organizations' ability to accomplish mission objectives. Therefore, recruitment, placement and retention programmes should:

Be based on plans and strategies aligned with the organizational goals and objectives

Use reliable assessment tools to select staff that meet the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, taking into account geographical distribution and gender

Incorporate contemporary approaches to balancing work and family needs

Encompass the concept of early assessment of performance to determine retention

Ensure that staff/candidates are provided information about the international civil service, standards of conduct, the organization's mission and values and career prospects

Be swift, transparent and free from discrimination and inappropriate influence

# Employment: Contractual arrangements

## DEFINITION

Contractual arrangements covering all types of appointments are the tools used by organizations to employ staff on a short-, medium- and long-term basis.

## CORE ELEMENT

To the extent that the compensation package is common across organizations

## LINKAGES

### Compensation and benefits:

To attract candidates for employment of varying duration

### Recruitment and retention:

They are the vehicle for delivering the employment conditions needed to attract staff and they communicate the expectation for continued employment

### Career management:

Because of the career nature of employment conveyed in some contracts

## PRINCIPLES

Contractual arrangements should:

Be flexible so as to respond to organizational needs

For those with a career in the international civil service, be compatible across organizations in the area of compensation and benefits to facilitate inter-organizational mobility

For those without a career in the international civil service, recognize the need for compensation equity

# Employment: Staff well-being

## DEFINITION

An enabling work environment will result in staff well-being. It encompasses staff security; occupational, environmental, health and safety standards; medical services; and work/life programmes. Security policy involves the physical and psychological safety of staff and takes precedence over organizational expediency. Accordingly, organizations should remind Member States of their obligation to ensure the protection of staff at duty stations.

## NON-CORE ELEMENT

Because organizations' programmatic responses must meet local conditions. However, common arrangements for the protection of life and property have been developed by the organizations.

## LINKAGES

### Recruitment and retention:

Policies that enhance the quality of work and life attract and retain staff

### Mobility:

Staff well-being weighs heavily in decisions to make geographic moves

### Good governance:

Contributes to staff morale and ensures equitable treatment of staff

## PRINCIPLES

Staff well-being should ensure the following:

Occupational health, safety and medical programmes should provide for environmental safety and overall protection to safeguard the physical and psychological well-being of staff

Organizations should ensure that Member States provide for the legal protection of staff as envisaged in the relevant conventions (currently the Conventions on privileges and immunities and the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel)

To be an employer of choice, organizations should provide for a balance between work and family needs through programmes that take into account contemporary approaches

# Career management: Staff development and training

## DEFINITION

A career may be defined as a series or progression of work assignments within or outside the United Nations system coupled with a continuing acquisition of skills and experience. It encompasses the notion of a widening of competencies and responsibilities, either in one or several professions. It normally involves several lateral or vertical moves. Career management is the process by which a staff member is empowered, with the support of the organization, to plan, organize and pursue a career in an enabling environment. Staff development and training refers to those opportunities identified by a staff member or provided by the organization to enable staff to continue to acquire skills and experience in pursuing careers. Staff development usually covers a broad range of activities, which may include specific work assignments, on the job training and coaching and other work-related developmental opportunities, while staff training is often referred to as involving a strictly formal acquisition of skills.

## NON-CORE ELEMENT

Because organizations need mechanisms adapted to their mission, occupations and organizational structure

## LINKAGES

### Compensation and benefits:

Motivate staff by job progression and promotion and provide financial remuneration for staff who acquire increased skills, experience and responsibilities

### Recruitment and placement:

These processes take into account career plans

### Retention:

Represents the fulfilment of career plans

### Mobility:

Provides more opportunities and broadened horizons for career management involving either upward or lateral moves both within and across organizations

### Performance management:

Assessment of performance should be taken into account in pursuing career goals and providing development and training

## PRINCIPLES

Appropriate and effective career planning, staff development and training programmes aligned to the competencies defined by the organization are key to the successful delivery of the organization's work. Such programmes should:

Be consistent with the organization's goals and needs

Identify and develop talent in order to build a high-performing, motivated and flexible workforce

Recognize the shared responsibility of staff members and organizations in developing career plans

Take into account staff members' career plans, performance and achievements to maximize their contribution to the organization

# Career management: Mobility

## DEFINITION

The concept of mobility includes movement within and across organizations, occupations and geographic locations. For the purposes of this framework, an important aspect of mobility is the movement of staff between agencies within the common system. Mobility increases staff versatility, provides additional career opportunities and encourages the concept of developing a career in the United Nations family. It strengthens the organizations' capacity to respond to changing needs. Mobility need not be limited to international organizations.

## CORE ELEMENT

To the extent that inter-agency mobility is an underlying premise of the international civil service that affects all organizations of the common system

## LINKAGES

### Career management:

Strengthens a common system culture and offers staff opportunities to enrich their experience

### Compensation and benefits:

offer incentives, inter alia, for geographical relocations in line with organizations' operational needs

### Staff well-being:

These policies directly influence the willingness of staff to relocate

### Performance management:

Experience acquired through mobility is taken into account in placement decisions

## PRINCIPLES

Mobility is an underlying premise of the international civil service which promotes shared principles and values. Organizations' mobility requirements may vary depending on their structure, size and mandate. Mobility programmes should:

Provide for the movement of staff within and across international organizations, and to the extent possible, to and from national civil services and public and private sector institutions

Where there is the expectation of return, provide for reabsorption within the organization in such a manner that the organization benefits from the staff member's experience

Be a condition of employment when required by the organization

# Career management: Performance management

## DEFINITION

Performance management is an integrated system, including organizational design, work planning, assessments and feedback designed to maximize performance at the individual, team, unit and organizational levels to motivate and to develop staff. Award and recognition systems form part of this system. They provide for monetary and non-monetary awards in recognition of meritorious performance and other noteworthy accomplishments.

## NON-CORE ELEMENT

Because to be effective, performance management must be responsive to the needs of the particular organization

## LINKAGES

### Placement and retention:

Assessments of performance are used in both processes.

### Career management, staff development and training:

Provide the basis for staff to make informed decisions about career aspirations and for managers to make decisions about the development and training needs of staff

### Compensation and benefits:

Provide incentives for staff to excel

Identify performance expectations that are tied to the organization's goals and objectives and at the same time ensure that staff can fully develop and utilize their capabilities

Provide for the recognition of performance as an important tool for improving productivity and morale at all levels

Employ assessment tools which can be readily understood and easily communicated

Ensure that assessment tools measure performance that is consistent with the organization's goals

## PRINCIPLES

The effective management of performance is essential to the overall functioning of the organization. Performance management programmes should:

Provide for dialogue and employ the concept of continuing feedback on performance

Emphasize the importance of clear communication at all levels with regard to the concept of performance management and its modalities, including expectations, assessments and consequences of performance

Include monetary and non-monetary awards that are based on a transparent and widely disseminated policy and are clearly tied to the performance and event concerned; monetary awards should not replace the need for a competitive remuneration package

# Good governance: Management style

## DEFINITION

Management style is instrumental in reinforcing delegation of responsibilities and establishes reporting relationships to ensure consultation, cooperation and partnership in decision-making processes at the lowest practical levels to enable staff and management to perform their duties in a professional, impartial, transparent, coherent and accountable manner.

## NON-CORE ELEMENT

Because management style, to be effective, must be responsive to the particular organizational culture, work requirements and mandates

## LINKAGES

### Performance management:

Managers and staff are accountable for the way they communicate and conduct business within the organization

### Staff well-being:

Directly affects staff morale and productivity

## PRINCIPLES

Effective management style provides leadership that upholds the values of and creates commitment to the organization, builds the capacity for improved productivity and creates an environment that brings out the best in the staff and recognizes the value of multiculturalism. In an environment that values managerial excellence, executives and managers should:

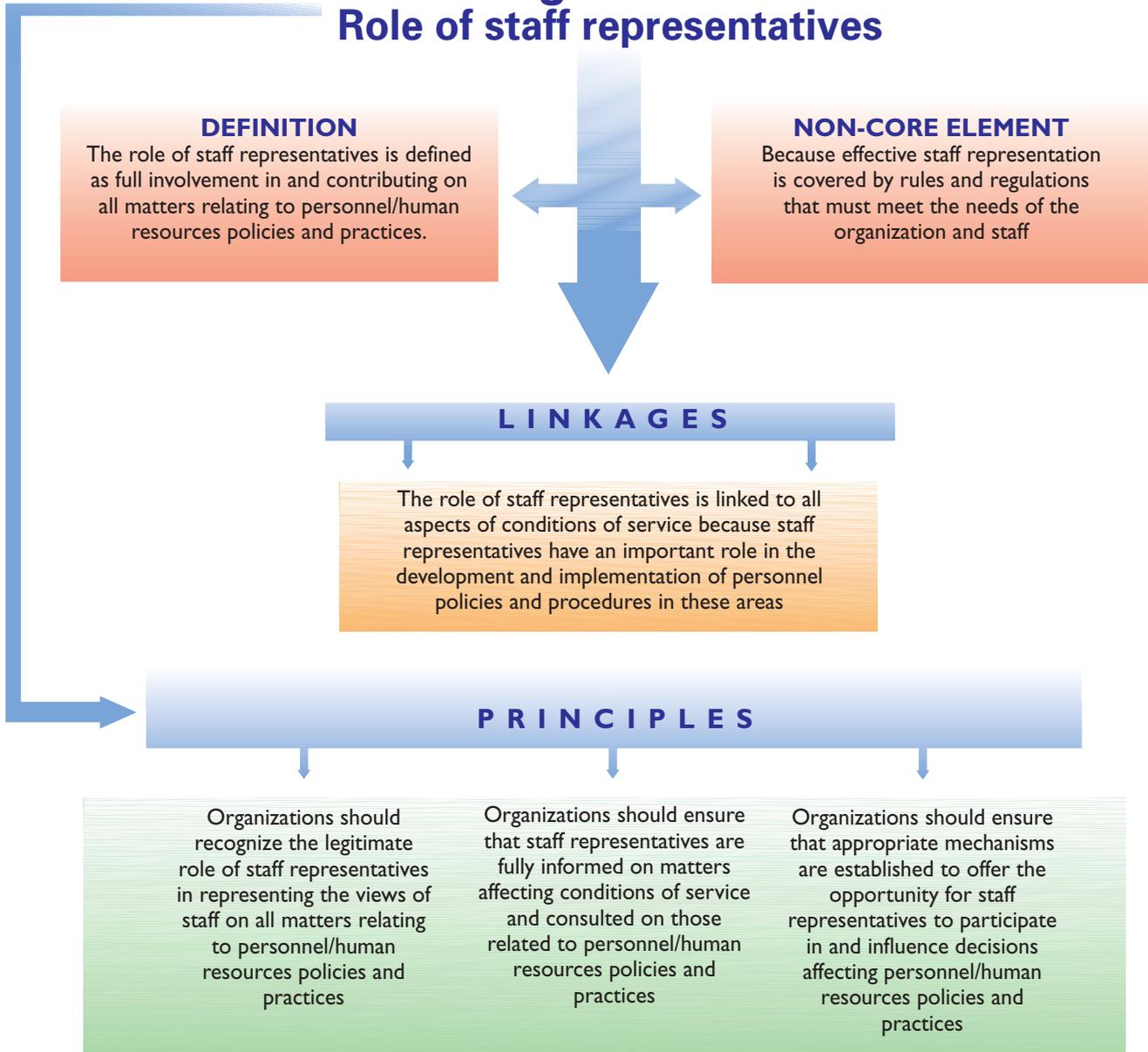
Be held accountable through performance management for creating a work environment that promotes communication and cooperation, and engenders working methods that are efficient, effective, fair, impartial and transparent

Empower staff to participate in decisions affecting the organization

Engage in continual learning and apply techniques to improve their own management skills to meet the challenges of a dynamic work environment

Demonstrate ethical values and build and maintain partnerships by gaining the trust and respect of those with whom they work

# Good governance: Role of staff representatives



# Good governance: Administration of justice

## DEFINITION

The administration of justice is an internal system that guarantees due process and provides staff with the means to raise grievances and appeal administrative decisions.

## CORE ELEMENT

To the extent that decisions of the Administrative Tribunals affect core elements of the human resources framework

## LINKAGES

The administration of justice is linked to all human resources elements in that it provides mechanisms for appealing administrative decisions, respecting regulations and rules, and providing due process and equity

## PRINCIPLES

Each organization should provide internal administrative procedures which respect due process so that the executive head may take decisions that are fair, equitable and consistent with law and statutes

Staff have a right to effective defence, including representation in relevant internal processes

# Human resources information management

## DEFINITION

Human resources information management is the design, development and maintenance of an integrated system for gathering and analysing workforce data and forecasting trends, as a basis for decision-making and policy development.

## CORE ELEMENT

To the extent that information on human resources needs to be compatible across organizations for effective policy development in the common system

## LINKAGES

Human resources information management is linked to all elements of the Framework, in that it underpins and supports all aspects of human resources management

## PRINCIPLES

Human resources information system policies should provide for:

Ownership by human resources specialists of the design, development and maintenance of the system

A comprehensive and integrated information strategy

Relevant, complete, compatible, valid and current information about the total workforce and its productivity

An interface with the organization's planning, budgeting, finance and human capital functions

Keeping abreast of current technology

# Ethics/Standards of conduct

## DEFINITION

Although organizations' internal cultures may vary, they face similar ethical challenges. Standards for ethical conduct promote common values and define the behaviour and performance expected of international civil servants.

## CORE ELEMENT

Because they promote a common system of values and ethics that are essential to an international civil service

## LINKAGES

Ethics/standards of conduct are linked to all elements of the Framework because they are inherently part of the overall human resources management strategy

## PRINCIPLES

Ethics/standards of conduct should:

Be clear and be reflected in the legal framework of the organization

Be brought to the attention of the staff on a recurring basis

Enjoy demonstrated commitment on the part of the leadership

Be reinforced through management and human resources practices that are transparent

State the staff members' rights and obligations when confronted with wrongdoing in relation to the organization

Be supported by effective procedures and mechanisms to ensure accountability

# Glossary

**ACCOUNTABILITY** — Concept which implies taking ownership of all responsibilities and honouring commitments; delivering outputs for which the staff member has responsibility within prescribed time, cost and quality standards; operating in compliance with organizational regulations and rules; supporting subordinates, providing oversight and taking responsibility for delegated assignments; taking personal responsibility for personal shortcomings and, where applicable, those of the work unit.

**BEST PRACTICE** — Innovative policy, strategy, programme, process or practice with demonstrated positive impact upon performance, currently being used by at least one major employer, and that is relevant and applicable to others.

**COMMON SYSTEM** — System of common arrangements resulting from relationship agreements between the United Nations and the specialized agencies so as to avoid competition in the recruitment of personnel and to facilitate interchange of personnel.

**COMPENSATION EQUITY** — Fair and consistent compensation package for similarly situated employees, in particular in accordance with their contribution and by comparison with others.

**COMPENSATION PACKAGE** — Structures which are devised and managed to provide and maintain appropriate types and levels of pay, benefits and other forms of reward.

**COMPETENCIES** — Combination of skills, attributes and behaviours that are directly related to successful performance on the job.

**CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS** — Types of contracts which are used to hire individuals for periods ranging from short-term to long-term, or to engage their services for the provision of a specific end product. The contracts may be time-based (fixed-term or without time limit) or linked to the completion of a specific event/task.

**CORE ELEMENTS** — Elements of the Framework for Human Resources Management which bind together the common system.

**FLEMMING PRINCIPLE** — Basis used for the determination of conditions of service of the General Service and other locally recruited categories of staff. Under the application of the Flemming principle, these conditions of employment are based on best prevailing local conditions.

**GENDER BALANCE** — Continuing efforts by common system organizations to increase the representation of women serving at all levels, but especially at senior and policy-making ones.

**GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION** — Concept by which special attention is given to the maintenance of a proper representational balance among Member States, and by which staff to fill Professional and higher category posts are recruited from as many, if not all, Member States represented in a common system organization.

**LEGAL FRAMEWORK** — Basic system of law under which an organization functions. Includes the instrument by which the organization was established and any other subsidiary regulations and rules including judicial precedents.

**LOAN (INTER-AGENCY)** — Movement of staff members from one organization to another for a limited period (normally not exceeding one year) during which time they fall under the administrative supervision of the receiving organization but continue to be subject to the staff regulations and rules of the releasing organization.

**NOBLEMAIRE PRINCIPLE** — Basis used for the determination of conditions of service of staff in the Professional and higher categories. Under the application of the principle, Professional salaries are determined by reference with those of the highest paying national civil service.

**OWNERSHIP** — Concept which refers to the enjoyment of proprietary rights, enabling staff members to take action as appropriate and necessary.

**PLACEMENT** — System of assessment and selection by which vacancies are filled by staff serving in an organization. Commonly refers to internal filling of vacancies as distinguished from external recruitment.

**REABSORPTION OF STAFF** — Return of staff members from inter-agency secondment and their assumption of appropriate duties/functions in the releasing organization.

**RECRUITMENT** — System of attracting, assessing and selecting candidates external to the organization in order to fill vacancies. This process is distinct from the one whereby serving staff are selected to fill vacancies. (see *definition for Placement*)

**SECONDMENT (INTER-AGENCY)** — Movement of staff members from one organization to another for a fixed period (generally not exceeding two years) during which they are normally paid by and are subject to the staff regulations and rules of the receiving organization, but retain their rights of employment in the releasing organization.

**STAFF REPRESENTATIVES** — Staff members duly elected by the staff at large to represent their interests relating to staff welfare, including conditions of work, general conditions of life and other personnel policies.

**SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENTS** — Practice whereby some Member States have sought to supplement the salaries of some or all of their nationals in the service of the United Nations common system, which is illegal under the organizations' staff rules.

**TRANSFER (INTER-AGENCY)** — Movement of a staff member from one organization to another under conditions which do not give a right to return to the releasing organization.

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