



General Assembly

Distr.: General
11 June 2020

Original: English

Seventy-fifth session

Item 147 of the preliminary list*

Joint Inspection Unit

Review of staff exchange and similar inter-agency mobility measures in United Nations system organizations

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled “Review of staff exchange and similar inter-agency mobility measures in United Nations system organizations” (see [A/75/85](#)).

* [A/75/50](#).



I. Introduction

1. In its report entitled “Review of staff exchange and similar inter-agency mobility measures in United Nations system organizations” (see [A/75/85](#)), the Joint Inspection Unit examines the functioning of inter-agency staff mobility and assesses whether policies and mechanisms respond to contemporary needs.

II. General comments

2. Organizations welcome the report and find it offers a useful overview of the opportunities and challenges in the use of inter-agency mobility in the United Nations common system, in addition to providing a list of practical solutions to overcome existing obstacles.

3. Organizations are generally supportive of increased inter-agency mobility and agree that mobility should connect to the overall strategic purposes of the organizations, including their respective human resources policy frameworks.

4. While recognizing that a business case for inter-agency mobility has already been made, entities support the Inspector’s view that a review of existing policies and arrangements would be fruitful to assess the effectiveness of the current process and identify strategies for improving the approach and process with regard to inter-agency mobility, as suggested in recommendation 6.

5. The report is particularly relevant for the United Nations Secretariat and its Development Coordination Office, since the latter is involved in revamping the United Nations resident coordinator system and the United Nations country teams.

6. Organizations note that the report presents certain challenges, including in terms of suggested deadlines for the implementation of some recommendations, as a wide consultation process will be required within the High-level Committee on Management in some cases.

7. Even though mobility is limited in technical organizations, owing to the specific nature of the work and programmatic requirements, better coordination and consistent application remain relevant.

III. Comments on specific recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Secretary-General should instruct the Director of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) secretariat to take measures by the end of 2021 to develop standards for the systematic collection, monitoring and consistent reporting of staff mobility relevant data, including inter-agency mobility, in order to give concrete shape to the support already expressed for this concept by CEB in its response to an earlier Joint Inspection Unit recommendation on the topic.

8. Organizations partially support this recommendation.

9. Organizations note that the CEB secretariat already reports to the Secretary-General and that there are well-established working methods.

10. Organizations also observe that the annual collection by CEB of data on personnel statistics already comprises a range of pertinent data and suggest identifying any missing and/or potential additional elements to be included in the

current reporting and applying a standardized approach to the compilation of the expanded data sets.

Recommendation 2

Executive heads should, by the end of 2021, review all administrative issuances to clarify how inter-agency mobility is treated in each of those contexts.

11. Organizations partially support this recommendation. The deadline for its implementation may prove challenging as this review would best be undertaken through a harmonized approach in the context of the Human Resources Network of the High-level Committee on Management as it is part of an inter-agency framework.

Recommendation 3

Executive heads of organizations party to the Inter-Organization Agreement concerning Transfer, Secondment or Loan of Staff among the Organizations Applying the United Nations Common System of Salaries and Allowances (hereinafter referred to as the “2012 Agreement”) should not apply the practice of asking incoming staff to resign instead of agreeing to transfers in view of its corrosive effect on the integrity of the inter-agency mobility regime and the immaterial impact of these transfers on the management of long-term employment-related liabilities, and decide by the end of 2021 to accept benefits and entitlements on the basis stipulated in the Agreement.

12. Most organizations support this recommendation.

13. While they support a harmonized approach that does not disadvantage staff members when transferring from one entity to another, organizations recognize that for the 2012 Agreement to work efficiently, the principle of reciprocity is crucial to avoid an imbalance in staff mobility with regard to the ratio of secondments to transfers across organizations.

14. Organizations recall the importance of validating the after-service health insurance entitlement under the applicable health insurance scheme of the receiving organization.

15. Organizations suggest that this matter be reviewed in the context of the task force on the future of the United Nations system workforce of the High-level Committee on Management.

Recommendation 4

Executive heads should, by the end of 2021, revise the 2012 Agreement to specify procedures for the handling of allegations of misconduct by staff who have moved to another organization under the terms of the Agreement.

16. Organizations support this recommendation and note that these procedures should be aligned with the United Nations system-wide Clear Check initiative and the related implementation process. The revision of the 2012 Agreement should be subject to a comprehensive review by the respective legal departments of the organizations that are parties to the Agreement.

Recommendation 5

The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), in consultation as required with members of CEB, and with the assistance of the CEB secretariat for data collection, should by the end of 2021 assess if there are factors that impact on the participation of women in inter-agency mobility and

that should therefore be taken into account in the formulation of policies or other measures related to it.

17. Organizations support this recommendation and stand ready to assist in providing any data and information needed.

Recommendation 6

The Secretary-General, in coordination with other executive heads in the framework of the High-level Committee on Management, as he considers appropriate, should, by the end of June 2022, articulate the business case for inter-agency mobility by setting out what it should accomplish for the organizations as well as how it contributes to human resources management objectives and to the delivery of programmatic results.

18. Organizations support this recommendation and acknowledge the importance of articulating a strong business case for inter-agency mobility as a key tool for career development knowledge-sharing and innovation.

19. Organizations underscore that, for a renewed business case to work effectively, the terms provided for in the Agreement must be applied systematically and organizations must encompass inter-agency mobility in their human resources strategies and career development policies.

Recommendation 7

The Secretary-General, working with other executive heads, should assess the impact of the United Nations system leadership framework on the development of a common management culture supportive of a One United Nations mindset and report to the Economic and Social Council at its 2022 session in the context of his report on the work of CEB.

20. Organizations partially support this recommendation.

21. They note that there are many different elements of the United Nations reform process that have an impact on the development of a common management culture, supportive of a One United Nations mindset. It may be difficult to isolate the specific role played by the United Nations system leadership framework. Furthermore, culture change requires time, as does the embedding of the United Nations system leadership framework within each organization.

22. Organizations will consider tasking the Human Resources Network of the High-level Committee on Management with assessing the impact and make recommendations on the United Nations system leadership framework.

Recommendation 8

Executive heads should enable all United Nations system staff members to compete for vacant posts on a basis equal to that established for their own staff, while considering downsizing contexts, the abolition of posts and positions, and the administration of rotational placements.

23. Organizations do not support this recommendation.

24. This is the long-term vision and would require consultations among all relevant stakeholders and possible changes to the respective human resources policy frameworks. However, it should be noted that, under the current staff selection system, the United Nations Secretariat applies the same policies and procedures to internal and external candidates, including staff from other United Nations organizations.

25. Given the different internal rules and governance frameworks, organizations deem the proposed recommendation to be a long-term vision and they are unable to commit to the outcome proposed in this recommendation.

26. Organizations consider giving it further consideration in the context of the One United Nations or mutual recognition initiatives and taking into account the specific legal framework applicable in each organization.

Recommendation 9

The Secretary-General and other executive heads who are members of CEB should, by the end of 2021, define how the mutual recognition of rules and procedures will be applied to overcome regulatory and procedural barriers to inter-agency mobility, and report on measures taken to the Economic and Social Council at its 2022 session in the context of the annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of CEB.

27. Organizations partially support this recommendation.

28. They suggest that the matter be given further consideration in the context of the High-level Committee on Management, taking into account the specific legal framework applicable in each organization.

29. Others note that the implementation of this recommendation would require consultations among all relevant stakeholders and its implementation may go beyond 2021.

Recommendation 10

The General Assembly should request the International Civil Service Commission to examine periodically the status of inter-agency mobility and the degree of its integration into the human resources management policies of organizations, to make recommendations to organizations accordingly and to report its findings to the General Assembly in the context of its consideration of the United Nations common system.

30. Organizations note that this recommendation is addressed to the General Assembly. However, they note that it may be more practical and efficient to request heads of CEB organizations to periodically review the progress of inter-agency mobility and discuss it in the context of the Human Resources Network of the High-level Committee on Management.
