



21 March 2003

Administrative instruction

Special post allowance for field mission staff

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/1, promulgates the following to implement staff rules 103.11 and 303.7 with regard to the granting of special post allowance to mission staff:

Section 1

Scope and definitions

Scope

1.1 The present instruction shall apply to staff members appointed under the 100 or 300 series of the Staff Rules serving in a peacekeeping or other field mission, including:

- (a) Professional staff members, up to and including the D-1 level, who are on assignment to a field mission or whose conditions of service limit their appointment for service with a specific field mission;
- (b) Staff in the Field Service category or staff members appointed at the Field Service level for service limited to a specific mission;
- (c) Staff members from the General Service and related categories who are detailed or assigned to a field mission;
- (d) Locally recruited staff in the General Service and related categories.

Definitions

1.2 For the purposes of the present instruction, the following definitions shall apply:

- (a) "Mission" shall refer to a peacekeeping or other field mission administered by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations;
- (b) "Established mission" shall refer to a mission recognized as an official parent duty station where assignments of one year or longer give rise to an assignment grant;

(c) “Special mission” shall refer to a mission where a mission subsistence allowance is payable, and where the assignment of a staff member on mission detail does not entail a change of official duty station;

(d) “Temporarily vacant post” shall refer to a post that is blocked for the return of a staff member on special leave or temporary assignment to another mission or to an established office in the Secretariat. Temporarily vacant posts are normally not advertised for placement and promotion purposes;

(e) “Vacant post” shall refer to a post that is not blocked for the return of a staff member and that is subject to advertisement for purposes of recruitment, placement and promotion in accordance with the established procedures.

Section 2

General provisions

2.1 Under staff rules 103.11 and 303.7, 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. Nevertheless, payment of a non-pensionable special post allowance (SPA) is authorized by the same rules in exceptional cases when a staff member is called upon to assume the full duties and responsibilities of a post at a level that is clearly recognizable as higher than his or her own level for a temporary period exceeding three months.

2.2 An SPA is a discretionary grant, for which staff members may be considered when the conditions set out in staff rules 103.11 and 303.7 and section 4 below are met. An SPA is not intended as a substitute for, or a first step towards, revision of level or promotion to the encumbered post. Consideration for granting an SPA shall be given in accordance with the procedures set out in section 5 below.

2.3 An SPA may be granted only to one level higher than the personal level of the staff member assigned to higher-level functions in his or her own category, whether the higher-level functions are one or several levels higher than the personal level of the staff member. A staff member in the General Service and related categories who has been authorized to temporarily assume the functions of a post at the Professional level may receive an SPA to the P-1 or P-2 level, in accordance with the provisions of section 10 below.

Section 3

Temporary assignments within a specific mission

3.1 Temporary assignment to a vacant post or a temporarily vacant post in the Professional, Field Service or General Service category shall be made by the head of mission or the chief of administration after considering all mission staff possessing the qualifications, experience and capabilities required for the post. Due regard shall be given to the need to broaden career development opportunities for women. For that purpose, when there are one or more women candidates, the temporary assignment shall be filled by one of those candidates, provided that her qualifications meet the requirements of the post and are substantially equal or superior to those of competing male candidates.

3.2 The personnel section of each mission shall identify positions that may be filled temporarily for a period expected to last for three months or longer through the internal assignment of staff within the mission, and shall notify staff of such

vacancies so as to provide eligible staff with the opportunity to compete for these positions. The procedures for eliciting interest in temporary vacancies may vary, taking into account the size and operational requirements of the individual mission. Normally, the notification should be posted through e-mail or electronic bulletin board to all mission staff or, if that is not possible, in areas easily accessible to all personnel. Staff should be allowed a minimum of one calendar week from the date of posting of the vacancy to express their interest in the position. Staff members may express their interest in the vacancy by e-mail reply, or by fax or memorandum to the chief civilian personnel officer, briefly stating why they believe that they are qualified for the position under consideration. In all cases, the chief civilian personnel officer shall maintain a roster of staff interested in being considered for higher-level positions that are to be filled through the temporary internal reassignment of staff within the mission.

3.3 The supervisor of the functions to be performed shall prepare a written comparative review of the candidates and recommend one of the submitting candidates to the head of mission or chief of administration for the selection of a candidate for temporary reassignment.

Requirement to inform the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of changes of assignment

3.4 The mission shall inform the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the proposed assignment or reassignment of a staff member to higher-level functions prior to the assumption of higher-level duties.

3.5 The temporary assignment of a staff member in the General Service category to a Professional post requires prior approval by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Section 4
Eligibility for special post allowance

Staff members who have been temporarily assigned to the functions of a higher-level post in accordance with the procedures set out in section 3 above shall be eligible to be considered for an SPA when they meet all of the following conditions:

(a) They have at least one year of continuous service with the Organization under either the 100 or the 300 series of the Staff Rules;

(b) They have performed, or are expected to perform for a period exceeding three months, the full functions of a post that (i) has been duly classified pursuant to a job classification notification (for established missions), or has been determined by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to be at a higher level than their own level on the basis of the job description (for special missions) and (ii) is budgeted at a higher level than the staff member's own level;

(c) They have demonstrated their ability to fully meet performance expectations in all the functions of the higher-level post.

Section 5

Consideration and decision

Local SPA panel

5.1 Depending on the reporting lines in each mission, the head of mission or chief of administration shall appoint a local SPA panel to review requests for SPA and advise him or her on the decision regarding whether an SPA should be granted. The local panel shall comprise:

(a) One or more officials nominated by the administration/management. The chief of administration shall not be a member of the local panel or otherwise take part in its deliberations;

(b) An equal number of representatives designated by the staff of the mission, at an appropriate level, depending on the level of the SPA requested;

(c) The chief civilian personnel officer, or his/her representative, acting as a non-voting member in an ex officio capacity.

5.2 The rank of the members of the local panel shall not be below the level for which the SPA is being considered.

5.3 A request for SPA shall normally be initiated by the staff member's supervisor. Should a staff member believe that he/she meets the conditions for an SPA, he/she may submit a request to that effect, through the supervisor, to the local SPA panel.

5.4 In considering SPA requests, the local panel shall apply the eligibility criteria set out in section 4 above and shall confirm whether:

(a) The duties and responsibilities of the post, as set out in the job classification notification in the case of established missions or in the job description in the case of special missions, are clearly at a level higher than the staff member's own level;

(b) A post budgeted at the higher level is vacant or temporarily vacant and, for vacant posts, that the post has been advertised, unless the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has determined that a vacancy announcement should not be issued due to exceptional circumstances, such as the anticipated closure of the mission in the near future;

(c) The staff member possesses the qualifications, experience and capabilities required to perform all the functions of the post;

(d) There is sufficient justification for the selection of the recommended staff member for the higher-level functions, including evidence that other interested staff members were given an opportunity to express their interest in performing higher-level functions and that due consideration was given to their candidature;

(e) The supervisor has indicated the date of assumption of higher-level duties and whether the staff member has demonstrated since that time the ability to fully meet the performance expectations of all the functions of the post.

5.5 The chairperson of the local panel shall record the panel's recommendation as to whether an SPA should be granted and, if so, for how long, and the reasons for its recommendation. The report of the panel shall be submitted to the head of mission through the chief of administration.

5.6 The head of mission shall forward the recommendations of the local panel to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for approval, together with a statement indicating whether he/she endorses these recommendations and, if not, a written explanation of the reasons for non-endorsement.

5.7 Missions shall arrange for the local panel to meet on a regular basis. The panel shall not accumulate its cases but shall normally meet as soon as requests are received, and in any case at least once every three months. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations shall not consider recommendations that have not been reviewed by the local SPA panel, except in the cases specified in sections 5.8 and 5.9 below.

Granting of SPA without review by a local SPA panel

5.8 In missions where there are not sufficient staff at the appropriate levels to constitute a local SPA panel, the head of mission or chief of administration may recommend to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations the granting of an SPA without reference to a local panel.

5.9 Recommendations for the granting of SPA to the D-2 level shall be transmitted to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations by the head of mission. The decision to grant an SPA at this level shall be taken by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations after consultation with the Office of the Secretary-General.

Section 6

Effective date of SPAs

General

6.1 The following provisions are applicable to all missions. Special provisions for established missions are set out in section 6.3 and for special missions in section 6.4.

6.2 An SPA may not become effective before:

- (a) The Department of Peacekeeping Operations has been informed of the change in assignment pursuant to section 3.5 above;
- (b) A post budgeted at a higher level is available; and
- (c) For posts reclassified upwards at established missions, the effective date of the classification decision.

In no event may an SPA be granted retroactively for a period of more than one year from the date on which the supervisor signed the original request for the SPA.

Established missions

6.3 The earliest date from which an SPA may be paid for staff serving in established missions shall normally be the beginning of the fourth month of service at the higher level. However, the SPA may be made effective as of the date of the assumption of higher-level duties in the following circumstances:

- (a) Where a staff member in the General Service category is required, and authorized pursuant to section 10 below, to serve in a higher-level post in the Professional category;

(b) Where a staff member in any category is required to serve in a post classified more than one level above his or her level.

Special missions

6.4 In special missions, the SPA will normally be made effective as from the date on which the staff member assumed the full functions of the higher-level post.

Section 7

Duration and extension of SPA

7.1 An SPA shall be granted for a specific period, which may not initially exceed one year. Afterwards, the SPA may be extended by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations without reference to the local panel upon the supervisor's certification that the staff member continues to satisfactorily perform the full functions of the higher-level post and, for vacant posts, the mission's confirmation that every effort has been made to fill the vacancy in accordance with established procedures.

7.2 An SPA may be extended by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for a maximum of one additional year, after which continuation of the SPA will be subject to review by the local SPA panel. However, longer extensions without review by the local SPA panel may be made in the following situations:

(a) SPAs to temporarily vacant posts may be extended until the end of the period during which the post is blocked for the return of the incumbent;

(b) When it is anticipated that a mission will close in the near future, SPAs in that mission may be extended until its closure.

Section 8

Discontinuance of SPA

8.1 The SPA shall be discontinued from:

(a) The date on which a staff member ceases to perform the full functions of the higher-level post at the mission where the SPA was approved;

(b) The date of departure from the mission area on completion of mission assignment; or

(c) The first day of absence for a period of leave of three months or longer.

8.2 Staff members shall revert to their regular salary level upon discontinuance of an SPA. The period for which the SPA was paid shall be credited as service for the purpose of determining the date of the next salary increment at the regular level, where applicable.

Section 9

Computation of SPA

9.1 For staff holding appointments under the 100 series of the Staff Rules, the SPA shall be computed in the same manner as a promotion under staff rule 103.9. For staff holding appointments of limited duration under the 300 series of the Staff Rules, the amount of the SPA shall be equivalent to at least one additional step of the service allowance received by the staff member before the special post allowance was granted.

9.2 The following compensation elements, where applicable, are affected by the granting of SPA:

(a) For 100 series staff: base salary, staff assessment, post adjustment, dependency allowance, mobility and hardship allowance, medical and dental insurance premiums and subsidies, language allowance, overtime compensation, night differential, daily subsistence allowance and rental subsidy, where applicable;

(b) For 300 series staff: base salary, staff assessment, service allowance, including family element, medical and dental insurance premiums and subsidies, and daily subsistence allowance, where applicable.

9.3 The elements not affected by SPA for 100 and 300 series staff, where applicable, are contributions to the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, termination indemnity, commutation of annual leave, payment of compensation under appendix D to the Staff Rules, life insurance premium, repatriation grant and surviving dependants' benefits under staff rules 109.10 and 306.4.

Section 10

Special provisions concerning staff in the General Service and related categories assigned to functions in the Professional category

10.1 Temporary assignment of a staff member in the General Service or related categories to the functions of a post in the Professional category shall normally be limited to vacant mission posts at the P-1 or P-2 level or to higher-level posts temporarily vacant for extended periods. Placement of a staff member in the General Service category against a Professional post must be approved in advance by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and such written clearance of the placement must be included in the presentation to the local panel.

10.2 An SPA to the Professional level does not affect the status of locally recruited staff members.

10.3 General Service staff members in receipt of an SPA to the Professional category shall not be entitled to compensation for overtime while serving at the Professional level.

10.4 General Service staff members in receipt of an SPA to the Professional level are not entitled to receive accelerated increments, which are limited to staff recruited under the system of desirable ranges.

10.5 If a staff member passes a language proficiency examination while in receipt of an SPA to the Professional level and would have received a language allowance under the applicable administrative instruction on language proficiency and language incentives, the amount of the SPA shall be recalculated accordingly.

Section 11

Final provision

The present instruction shall enter into force on 1 April 2003.

(Signed) Catherine **Bertini**
Under-Secretary-General for Management