



SEVENTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**ILO Human Resources Strategy:
Summary of developments**

1. A paper reporting on implementation of the ILO Human Resources (HR) Strategy has been presented to each session of the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee (“the Committee”) since the Governing Body adopted the Strategy in November 1999. The present paper summarizes developments in implementing the Strategy since March 2004. A proposal for revising the overall Human Resources Strategy will be submitted to the Committee at its March 2005 session.

Response to external audit

2. Progress has been made on implementing the external audit recommendations. In particular, more performance indicators are being developed to evaluate the impact of the Strategy. The learning and development pilot programme will help address concerns regarding the need to improve management capacity throughout the Office. The paper that will be submitted to the Committee in March 2005 will include a detailed response to each of the audit recommendations.

Collective bargaining

3. The Governing Body, at its session in March 2004,¹ was informed of a new Collective Agreement on conflict prevention and resolution and approved consequential amendments to the Staff Regulations. The Office, in consultation with the Staff Union, has since taken action to prepare for implementation of the new procedures. This has included establishing revised terms of reference for the Mediator, identifying a team of sexual harassment investigators and making arrangements for the secretariat of the Joint Advisory Appeals Board (JAAB). Appointments are being made in relation to the positions of JAAB chairpersons. Sexual harassment investigators and the Mediator have already been appointed. Training and information programmes are being delivered to those having particular functions under the new procedures as well as to line managers and staff in general. The new procedures became operational on 1 October 2004.

¹ GB.289/PFA/18.

4. The Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) has begun reviewing the Collective Agreement on a procedure for recruitment and selection (2000) in accordance with the workplan adopted for 2004. Negotiations are expected to continue until the end of the year. Within the framework of the JNC, the Office has expanded its consultations with the Staff Union on matters of common concern, notably in relation to matters under consideration by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and other United Nations system inter-agency bodies.

Job classification and grading

5. The Office continues to implement measures for reducing its grade average and to develop a rational and balanced organizational and grading structure. This will require the downgrading or suppression of some posts following the retirement of incumbents. The number of staff forecast to retire during the next few years will also provide opportunities for the Office to make inroads to meet its staffing objectives of improved gender diversity and recruiting more young professionals.
6. HRD has begun its work towards implementing the New Master Standard for classifying Professional and higher grades.² Two two-day workshops were organized in May 2004 with the participation of experts from the ICSC to familiarize a number of line managers in headquarters. Similar activities will be continued to inform managers and staff in general on the New Master Standard. The first stage of developing ILO-specific illustrations to be associated with the New Master Standard has been completed and HRD is now in the process of consulting with managers, the Staff Union and staff before finalizing them.

Prospection, recruitment and selection of staff

7. Competency-based interview skills training was piloted for senior management and HRD staff involved in interview panels; other workshops are scheduled to train line managers and other staff who sit on such panels. An external review is being undertaken to examine how effective assessment centres have been a tool for development and selection; the findings will feed into the review of the Collective Agreement. Two measures are being introduced to strengthen prospection and selection. A planning mechanism will identify posts and announce them for mobility purposes (on the basis of in-grade transfer) before competitions will be considered. Secondly, an updated version of the electronic job applicant tracking system is now in operation; amongst other benefits, this is expected to provide the Office with a means to automate the “first cut” in short-listing candidatures and provide line managers with candidatures in electronic format.
8. Work is continuing to strengthen recruitment and selection mechanisms. In this regard, prospection efforts continue to be expanded, including identifying more clearly feeder routes. Consolidation of the competitive procedure across the Office, including systematizing the interview process and mechanisms to handle local recruitment in field offices, requires further examination. The average number of days taken to fill vacancies continues to fall, in line with the 2004-05 target of a reduction to five months. Better planning relying on the staffing review mechanism is expected to reduce further average durations.
9. The Office is examining the setting of recruitment targets to reduce the number of member States which remain under and non-represented and to increase diversity across regions

² See GB.289/PFA/18.

while at the same time ensuring that staff meet ILO competency requirements. Detailed staffing composition figures will be submitted to the Governing Body at its March 2005 session.

10. The Office continues the process of integrating onto regular budget-funded positions those Professional staff who were recruited under the Young Professionals Career Entrance Programme (YPCEP) in 2001 and 2002. By October 2004, 17 of the 20 staff members concerned have now been integrated onto permanent positions, and the remaining officials have been given assignments pending regularization.

Gender equity

11. Following up on the work of the informal working group,³ HRD has developed a draft policy document in consultation with the Staff Union Committee to promote the employment of persons with a disability in the ILO. The policy paper addresses the issues of recruitment, retention in employment and career advancement for persons with a disability. In addition, the draft paper addresses the issue of workplace adaptations necessary to permit persons with a disability to remain in employment in the ILO, as well as the need to facilitate access to the workplace.
12. The percentage of women in the Professional level category has been rising steadily in the last five years. In 1999, 32.3 per cent of all Professional staff were women; in August 2004, there are almost 38 per cent of women overall in the Professional grades. Since the end of 2002, female staff accounted for slightly more than half of ILO staff at P4 level and below. The percentage of women at senior levels (P5 and above) also rose from 22.7 per cent at the end of 1999 to 26 per cent at the end of 2003. The Office's commitment as expressed in the Programme and Budget for 2004-05 to increase the number of female staff at senior levels to 33 per cent by the end of 2005 remains high but it is a challenging target. To this end, more vigorous succession planning for the filling of positions at P5 level and above is being pursued. Internal female staff having potential for career progression to senior management levels are being identified for accelerated development.

Staff development

13. Following discussion in the Senior Management Team, HRD has commenced a review of the Office's Learning and Development Strategy (LDS), which will continue into 2005. The review is being undertaken to identify new organizational needs and competency gaps so as to align the future LDS more closely to achieving the ILO's strategic and operational objectives. The review will assess learning and development needs against the principles of the new United Nations Organizational Learning Framework recently agreed to by the Chief Executives Board. The review will also position the strategy and associated new/revised programmes to respond effectively to the greater emphasis likely to be placed on learning and development activities in 2006-07.
14. As part of the Director-General's initiative on "Strengthening management for delivery and results", a pilot programme on management and leadership development, funded from the 2000-01 surplus, was launched. The programme is directed towards reinforcing the capacity of managers at all levels to meet the challenges of the future and to increase their effectiveness in promoting the vision, objectives, policy priorities and strategy of the Organization, thus placing the ILO at the forefront of global action in relation to issues

³ GB.289/PFA/18, para. 35.

covered by its mandate. The programme is not a one-off, stand-alone event, but a learning programme consisting of a number of interrelated activities over the period up to the end of 2005. Sixty participants have been selected from amongst D1 and P5 managers. One-third are from field offices and the remainder from headquarters. The programme will be monitored and evaluated and adjustments made with a view to an eventual roll-out to all staff with managerial responsibilities.

15. HRD is undertaking an external evaluation of the Personal Development Plan (PDP) process that will also provide recommendations on how the PDP tool can best be linked to the Office's performance appraisal system. The Collective Agreement on Personal Development Plans provided for the setting up of a Joint Training Council (JTC), involving representation from both the Office and the Staff Union, to provide advice in relation to the strategic direction of the Office's policies and programmes on staff learning and development and related issues. The terms of reference and composition of the JTC have now been agreed and its first meeting will take place shortly. The Collective Agreement is due for review by the JNC in 2005.

Staff mobility

16. During 2004, HRD developed a comprehensive framework for geographical mobility that has been agreed with the Staff Union and is awaiting final consideration by the Senior Management Team. The draft policy defines clearly the Organization's objectives for geographical mobility, identifies a series of general principles applying to all staff, and establishes modalities for implementation, including the respective roles and responsibilities of managers, staff and HRD. The draft policy also specifies supportive policies and the various incentives available to encourage and facilitate staff mobility.

Work-life agenda

Domestic partners

17. In March 2004, the Committee was informed⁴ that the United Nations Secretary-General had issued a bulletin (ST/SGB/2004, 20 January 2004) on "Family status for purposes of United Nations entitlements", according to which all marriages and domestic partnerships recognized as valid under the law of the country of nationality of a staff member would qualify that member to receive the entitlements provided for eligible family members. The bulletin became the subject of intense debate in the extended session of the 5th Committee of the United Nations General Assembly which met in March 2004. Subsequently, on 24 September 2004, the United Nations Secretary-General issued a new bulletin on "Personal status for purposes of United Nations entitlements" (ST/SGB/2004/13). The new bulletin, which abolishes bulletin ST/SGB/2004/4, entered into force on 1 October 2004. It removes all reference to marriages and domestic partnerships and reaffirms the United Nations practice of determining the personal status of staff members for purposes of entitlements by reference to the law of nationality of the staff member concerned. The Office is currently in the process of analysing the implications of the new bulletin and consulting with other common system organizations. It may refer this issue back to the Governing Body for further consideration in March 2005.

⁴ GB.289/PFA/18, para. 36.

Field security review

18. In response to heightened security threats targeting United Nations personnel and premises worldwide, the Office has stepped up efforts to raise staff awareness of safety and security issues and to ensure compliance at all field offices with United Nations security standards. A comprehensive ILO policy statement has been issued to clarify responsibilities for security and accountability at all levels. The attention of staff members has also been drawn in separate policy statements to residential security, media relations and clearance procedures for travel. Authorization for official travel of staff has, in particular, been linked to successful completion of an interactive course on basic security in the field produced by UNSECOORD.
19. Financial resources made available by the Governing Body under the 2000-01 surplus⁵ have been provided to field offices to assist them to reach compliance with the United Nations Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) as soon as possible. MOSS requirements have continued to be updated in light of a deteriorating worldwide security situation. At the present time, 29 external offices have attained full MOSS compliance and full compliance is being pursued at all remaining offices within the shortest possible period.
20. Security-awareness training for all officials is proceeding for the regions and headquarters covering disaster preparedness, critical incident stress management and medical arrangements including evacuation. ILO local and regional security focal points, as members of the security management team at their duty stations, received regular training updates from UNSECOORD. At headquarters, additional emphasis has been placed on travellers' safety, including the security of family members. A revised ILO security web site contains up-to-date travel advisories, access to the basic security training module, explanations of rules and procedures, and a comprehensive listing of security contacts at every duty station, together with a systematized compendium of security addresses.

Communication

21. In March 2004, HRD launched a new Intranet site, organized according to user needs and featuring regularly updated copies of the rules (Staff Regulations, Circulars, Standards of Conduct of the international civil service, etc.). It contains frequently asked questions, concise explanations of relevant topics, and links to the rules and to administrative forms. There is a new section on field security and a bimonthly Gazette. The number of hits recorded has more than doubled since site launch to more than 1,600 per day. Monthly meetings have been held with line managers to improve internal communications and increase the flow of information.

Monitoring and evaluation

22. Committee members have regularly raised the issue of targets and the need to include quantifiable indicators against which the success of the HR Strategy can be measured. Targets are being reviewed as part of the 2006-07 programme and budget preparation and these will be communicated to the Committee in due course.

⁵ GB.285/PFA/9.

23. In response to requests by members of the Committee, HRD is undertaking a study to examine the cost and benefits of implementing the original HR Strategy. The study is expected to be completed by the end of 2004. A proposal for an overall review of the HR Strategy will be submitted to the Committee at its March 2005 session.

24. *The Committee may wish to:*

(a) note progress made in implementing the Human Resources Strategy; and

(b) request a further detailed report on the overall implementation of the Strategy for its March 2005 meeting, including a proposal on its review.

Geneva, 12 October 2004.

Point for decision: Paragraph 24.