DRAFT WHO Mobility Framework

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I. INTRODUCTION

This Mobility Framework defines the concept of mobility in WHO and it sets out the core principles to be applied across the Organization which will be further detailed in the different policies which will support the various forms of mobility (e.g. geographical, functional, movement from General Service (G)/National Professional Officer (NPO) staff to staff in the Professional category and above, hereinafter referred to as “International Professionals” or “IPs” etc.). These policies will describe in what form mobility will apply to different categories of staff members.

The Mobility Framework provides the foundation for an Organization-managed mobility scheme while encouraging staff members to take initiative for their own mobility.

Why mobility?

The WHO Programme of Reform aims to ensure that the Organization is better equipped to address the increasingly complex health challenges of the global population in the 21st century. A highly globalized world, undergoing continuous and rapid change, raises the demand for a multi-skilled, flexible and mobile workforce. Mobility is recognized as a key element for staying relevant in a competitive environment. To remain “fit for purpose” in order to fulfil its operational needs and to deliver the best results in the most efficient way, WHO must be able to place its staff members in positions around the world, where they are most needed, based on their qualifications, experience and performance.

Pillar II of the Human Resources Strategy, “Retaining Talent”, provides the foundation for a workforce that has the skills and experience necessary to carry out the Organization’s evolving work and is ready to be deployed to carry out its mandate. Mobility is an integral part of career development, as it provides opportunities for new experiences and learning in different locations. It helps create a corporate identity and foster “One WHO”. Furthermore, having staff with diverse experiences and exposures will enrich both individual staff members and the Organization.

For individuals this means that they will be expected to move, between teams, functions, locations or countries where the programmes are delivered and implemented. It also means that they will need to think continuously about how to develop, maintain and enhance the competencies, skills, knowledge and experience necessary to respond to the realities and demands of a rapidly changing Organization and working environments and in line with the possible career paths that may be available.

**Mobility is therefore an organizational requirement for staff members in order to remain relevant, competitive and employable as much as it is an opportunity for professional growth and career evolution.**

A well-functioning mobility programme that is fully integrated into the workforce planning process and the human resources strategy will ensure that WHO skills and capabilities are in the right place and at the right time to achieve the mandate of the Organization. Mobility is crucial in securing and increasing staff efficiency and competence within the Organization.

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1 The Joint Inspection Unit report (JIU/REP/2012/6 paragraphs 93 to 95 and recommendation 9) which was presented to the EB in January 2013 (EB132/5 Add.6) underlines the need for a global mobility scheme with concrete targets and a monitoring mechanism.
II. PURPOSE

The objectives of mobility at WHO are:

a) **To support WHO’s operational and strategic goals** by building and maintaining a flexible cadre of outstanding professional talent within the Organization who are able to effectively and efficiently deliver a high level of service to all stakeholders. Mobility will also enable a more strategic placement of staff through a holistic view of the Organization’s needs, instead of filling positions one at a time, on an ad hoc basis;

b) **To strengthen the power of “One WHO”** by facilitating stronger working relationships and greater knowledge sharing and transfer between relevant functions and levels across the Organization; develop a truly global, dynamic, multi-skilled and adaptable workforce with a strong corporate identity better equipped to meet the increasing demands and challenges that WHO faces;

c) **To ensure a more effective and high-performing Organization** by staffing WHO country, regional and headquarters offices with the best qualified and competent individuals with the highest standards of performance who understand the realities of the work at all three levels of the Organization;

d) **To ensure that staff members are provided with opportunities for varied experience, career-building challenges and professional growth** and that there is an equal sharing of the burdens associated with service in hardship and non-family duty stations.

III. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

All WHO staff members, both IPs and locally recruited, either on a continuing or fixed-term appointment, are expected to be mobile and to undertake a variety of assignments over the course of their employment at WHO in order to build their professional skills and enhance their career prospects.

IV. DEFINITIONS

In this Framework, mobility refers to a variety and/or a combination of changes:

- A change of duty station;
- A change of post within the same duty station;
- A change of functional area;
- A change of post category;
- A move outside of WHO\(^2\) without or with a right of return to a specific WHO position and if such a return is in the interest of the Organization.

WHO defines mobility either as a lateral or vertical move.

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\(^2\) For example, a move to another United Nations common system entity, other intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations, or national public sector.
**Lateral**: defined as the reassignment of a staff member to another post normally at the same grade level but in a different team, department or location. Typically, these staff members could be in two different posts within the same field of work\(^3\) or functional area but have the similar knowledge and skills-set that allow each to perform the other’s functions.

**Vertical (promotion)**: defined as a move to a higher grade post.

Mobility can take place in one or more of the following main categories, as represented in the table below:

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<td>Geographical Mobility</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Change of duty station for IPs on continuing and fixed-term appointments</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Change of office or location for locally recruited staff members within the same duty station</td>
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<td>• Relocation of position with incumbent to another duty station</td>
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**Geographical**: defined as the movement of staff members between geographically different duty stations for IPs, in most situations requiring movement to a different country.

Geographical mobility may also apply to those staff members who have to relocate to another duty station as a consequence of their position being moved to a different entity or location to meet the interests and needs of the Organization.

**Within country reassignment**: defined as the movement of locally recruited staff, both General Service (G) and National Professional Officers (NPOs), between offices or locations within the same duty station. The movement may take the form of a lateral reassignment without competition, or may follow a competitive selection process.

For **locally recruited staff members** mobility may also mean a move between different WHO entities within the same duty station (e.g. from a WHO Country Office to a Regional Office).

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\(^3\) **Field of work**: a specific, technical area of work with a similar nature which groups together different jobs (e.g. Financial Management; HR Management; Medical Specialists). Within a field of work further sub-divisions exist such as Financial Analysts, Budget Management Specialists, HR Planning Specialists, Epidemiologists, Family Health Specialists etc.).

\(^4\) **Entity**: some duty stations may have more than one distinct office or location – e.g. SEARO and WHO Country Office in New Delhi; APOC and WHO Country Office in Ouagadougou.
**Functional:** defined as reassignment of staff members within the same or to a related job family or even across job families in the same duty station.

**Mobility between post categories:** defined as a reassignment from the General Service (G) to National Professional (NPO) or to the International Professional category (IP) and from the National Professional (NPO) to the International Professional (IP), through a competitive process.

**Mobility outside WHO:** defined as a WHO staff member moving to another Organization within the United Nations Common System or a staff member finding a job opportunity outside of WHO and the UN Common System.

While each of the above moves is a type of mobility, they may well be combined: for instance, a change of post (functional mobility) may be combined with a change of duty station (geographical mobility) or within country reassignment; the move from G/NPO to IP category may be combined with a change of duty station (geographical mobility).

The diagram below represents the way in which the different types of mobility may be interrelated:

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5 **Job family:** a group of professions of a comparable nature and with a professional interconnectivity (e.g. Dental, Nutrition, Medical, Nursing and Veterinary Specialists; Administrative Specialists; Social Scientists).
V. PRINCIPLES

The core set of principles underpinning the WHO Mobility Framework are:

a) Mobility as a condition of service

Staff Regulation 1.2\(^6\) states that any staff member may be assigned to any of the activities or offices of the Organization whenever it is in the interest of the Organization. Refusal by a staff member to accept a reassignment may be grounds for terminating the staff member’s appointment.

A person, who applies for an IP position in WHO is applying for a position in a global Organization that has operations in different geographical locations. He/she is therefore expected to move geographically in the course of his/her employment with WHO. Geographical mobility for IPs will be detailed in a specific policy.

Locally recruited staff members are also encouraged to be mobile and ready to take on new professional challenges as the organizational needs require.

b) Staff member’s professional growth and career development

Mobility is an integral part of career development. For international professionals, service in a number of duty stations or positions provides an opportunity for staff members to develop additional skills and gain experience in different parts of the Organization, allowing greater knowledge transfer among Headquarters, regional and country offices.

As a consequence, this will broaden personal and professional perspectives and enhance staff members’ competencies and employability. Mobility will constitute a basis for potential career advancement as geographical mobility will be an eligibility criteria (either essential or desirable) for vacancies of international positions.

Performance management, as a continuous dialogue between WHO managers and their staff, will be the starting point for discussion and documentation of mobility interests of staff members. The performance management development plan will support these interests (including technical, managerial and language needs) while focusing on the enhancement of staff members’ competencies and skills.

c) Balance of assignments

So far as practicable, mobility will allow IPs to be provided, during their career with WHO, with a balance of assignments in difficult and less difficult duty stations with differing living and working conditions, e.g. hardship and headquarters duty stations.

WHO also attaches great importance to inter-regional mobility as well as mobility between functions and program areas to vary and balance assignments.

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\(^6\) All staff members are subject to the authority of the Director-General and to assignment by him/her to any of the activities or offices of the World Health Organization. They are responsible to him/her in the exercise of their functions. In principle, the whole time staff members shall be at the disposal of the Director-General.
VI. SUPPORT MEASURES

To support the implementation of mobility across the Organization in its various forms, a set of measures will be made available to staff members and their families, ranging from learning and development initiatives (e.g. career paths) to family support services and various orientation sessions, language and cross-cultural training programmes.

In relation to geographical mobility, assistance to family needs will include information on schooling, day-care, employment opportunities for working spouses and domestic partners recognized by WHO and support to integration into the community, such as coaching and host-country mentoring, with the aim of preparing the family for the challenges they will face in moving to a new duty station.

Under the Mobility and Hardship scheme implemented by the UN common system, staff members are entitled to financial incentives depending on the category of the duty station, the staff members’ grade and their personal status (e.g. single, married with or without dependents). These incentives are set out under the Mobility and Hardship Scheme, danger pay provisions, and other entitlements in the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules related to mobility.

VII. ENTRY INTO FORCE

The present Framework will enter into force on 1 July 2015\(^7\). Transitional measures for currently serving staff members, when needed, will be detailed in the specific policies and their implementation plans.

VIII. IMPLEMENTATION

This Framework will be subject to policies detailing the modalities and processes for the different types of mobility:

- Geographical mobility
- Lateral moves within the same duty station
- Mobility between post categories
- Mobility for locally-recruited staff
- Inter-agency mobility

Mobility, in particular geographical mobility, will be implemented initially through transitional arrangements.

The Framework’s implementation will be monitored and reviewed during the first three years and assessed against several factors, including organizational effectiveness, cost effectiveness, sustainability and impact on gender balance and diversity.

\(^7\) Provided that amendments to the Staff Rules and Regulations are approved.