DRAFT WHO
Geographical Mobility Policy

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WHO Geographical Mobility Policy

I. Purpose

1. This policy is based on the principles outlined in the Mobility Framework. It provides guidance to staff and managers on the process and timelines governing mobility of WHO staff members in the Professional and higher categories, (hereinafter referred to as “International Professionals” or “IPs”), and more specifically geographical mobility within WHO.

2. Mobility in WHO is a condition of service for all staff as set out in Staff Regulation 1.2. It is also an opportunity for career development. International professionals are joining an international Organization which has offices based at multiple duty stations, at country, regional and Headquarter levels. In order to understand and be exposed to the realities of the work at all three levels of the Organization, staff members are expected to take the initiative of their own mobility, including geographical mobility.

II. Scope of application

3. This policy applies to all IPs serving on continuing and fixed-term appointments. The terms “staff members” and “staff” in this Policy refers to this category of staff members, unless otherwise stated.

4. This policy is without prejudice to the Director-General’s authority to reassign IPs under Staff Regulation 1.2 outside the scope of this policy.

5. The following categories of staff members, while still being subject to executive decisions assigning them to any activities or offices of WHO, as stated in paragraph 4 above, are not subject to this Policy:
   a. Ungraded staff;
   b. Staff members within three years of their mandatory age of retirement;
   c. Individuals on secondment to WHO;
   d. Staff members with temporary appointments;
   e. Staff members assigned to the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and to WHO hosted formal partnerships, recruited solely for service in the partnership secretariat and who, as a result, have no right to be considered for reassignment or transfer to a WHO post outside of the partnership secretariat;
   f. Staff members of IARC (International Agency for Research on Cancer), ICC (International Computing Centre), PAHO (Pan-American Health Organization) and UNAIDS (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS);
   g. Staff members externally recruited to encumber posts advertised as time-bound).

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1. See paragraph 62 for a definition of time-bound post.
III. Designation of rotational and non-rotational posts

6. An international post is designated as rotational if the functions to be performed and competencies required for the post are identical or similar to other international professional posts in WHO duty stations at multiple locations, or if the mobile nature of a specific post is otherwise in the interests of WHO.

7. As a general rule, posts in the Professional and higher categories are designated as rotational. There will, however, be some posts which will exceptionally be non-rotational whose incumbents are therefore not subject to geographical mobility.

8. Director HRD, in consultation with Senior Management (Assistant Directors General for HQ and Regional Directors for regional and country offices) will establish the list of those posts which require a unique skill-set, hereinafter referred to as non-rotational posts. This list will be submitted to the Director-General for decision and will be reviewed every year following the same process.

9. Designation of a post as rotational or non-rotational will be specified in the post description, in the vacancy notices and in the letters of appointment or re-assignment.

IV. Length of service in the same duty station

10. Mobility relies on two notions in the context of this policy:

a. The standard duration of assignment (SDA) which represents the maximum period of time a staff member shall serve at a particular duty station before he/she is expected to be assigned to another duty station;

b. The time in post which is the minimum period of time that a staff member is required to stay in a post and corresponds to half of the SDA. The time in post requirement is meant to ensure organisational effectiveness, continuity and client focus.

11. Staff members encumbering rotational posts are subject to geographical mobility and are therefore expected to move from one duty station to another in accordance with their SDA with the exception of special circumstances in which the movement of staff members earlier than the minimum post occupancy limit is necessary for their health and safety or in the interests of the Organization. Staff members are expected to take the initiative for their own mobility once they have met the time in post requirement.

12. The SDA is determined by the hardship classification for that duty station, as established by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) according to prevailing living conditions. Under this classification, the SDA in WHO is guided by the following time frames:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICSC Classification of Duty Stations</th>
<th>WHO SDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“H”, “A” and “B” duty stations</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“C” duty stations</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“D” duty stations</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“E” duty stations</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-family duty stations</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Whenever the classification of a duty station changes, the SDA will be changed accordingly. However, any adverse impact of that change will be addressed in the manner most favourable to the staff member.

14. The calculation of the SDA is based on the date on which a staff member has started his/her IP assignment on a continuing or fixed-term appointment in a particular duty station.

15. Subject to paragraph 16 below, if a staff member is assigned in the same duty station from one post to another post through:
   a. an assignment at the same grade, he/she may stay in that duty station for a maximum of one extra half of the SDA;
   b. a competitive process resulting in an assignment at the same grade or a promotion, he/she may stay in that duty station for an additional full SDA.

16. The maximum length of time a staff member can stay in the same duty station is ten years, including the up to two-year waivers mentioned in paragraphs 22 and 36 below, except for those staff members who are in D, E and non-family duty stations where the maximum length of time in those duty stations is twice the SDA. At the end of the maximum ten-year period, served on rotational posts, staff members will be required to change duty station.

17. Extensions, if any, of a fixed-term staff member who has served less than ten years in the Organization on fixed-term appointments will not exceed his/her SDA.

18. It is expected that during their career within WHO IPs will serve in different types of duty stations, e.g. in country offices, regional offices and HQ, and will share, so far as practicable, the burden of more difficult duty stations (categorized as C, D, E and non-family).

19. Length of service in E hardship and non-family duty stations will be fully considered and taken into account when planning assignments, with priority given to staff members who are serving or have served in an E hardship or non-family duty station for two or more consecutive years. Efforts will be made to reassign staff members between family and non-family duty stations to ensure equitable work-life balance.
20. After five geographical moves during the course of their service with the Organization a staff member will no longer be expected to be geographically mobile except if he/she chooses to. He/she may remain in the last duty station.

21. Staff members, in some specific situations, may have their assignments deferred for a limited period of time, normally not exceeding two years for the same post (see paragraphs 22-25 and 34-37 below). At the end of the waiver period, the staff member is expected to be assigned to a new duty station. It is intended that waivers will be exceptional and few in number in any annual mobility exercise.

V. Management waivers

22. A supervisor, with the approval of senior management at Assistant Director-General or Regional Director levels, may request in writing a management waiver to delay mobility for a staff member. For succession planning purposes, this request will normally be submitted and decided one year before the staff member completes his/her SDA and in advance of the annual mobility exercise so that his/her post is not listed in the compendium of posts to be vacated the following year. However, unexpected circumstances may require the waiver to be submitted after the publication of the annual compendium, in which case if granted, the post will be removed from the compendium and the candidates who have expressed interest in it will be advised accordingly.

23. A management waiver may be granted on the grounds of organizational needs for up to a maximum of two years, in particular:

   a. if the staff member is performing critical functions and the delivery of the programmes would be seriously undermined as a result of his/her departure at the end of the SDA; or

   b. in cases where the simultaneous departures of staff from the same office/department/programme, as a result of the end of their SDA, would seriously impede the operations of the office.

24. The requests will be submitted to the Director-General, through the Assistant Director-General (for staff members at HQ), or to the Regional Directors, through the Director of Administration and Finance (DAF) (for staff members in regional and country offices) for their decision. A written approval of the Director-General or Regional Director is needed in order to grant a management waiver.

25. Each request for a management waiver must explain how favourable consideration of the request would be in the best interests of the Organization.
VI. Support to Mobility

Career progression

26. Mobility increasing staff efficiency and competence within the Organization, experience acquired in different positions, in different locations and at the different levels of the Organization will be made an essential or desirable requirement for ad hoc vacancies, thus supporting career progression of staff who have been mobile.

Financial support

27. Staff members receive financial entitlements under the Mobility and Hardship scheme implemented by the UN common system which vary depending on the category of the duty station and their own personal status (e.g. grade, single or dependent). These entitlements include:

   a. shipment of personal effects or relocation grant in lieu of, travel (lump-sum), home leave travel, family visit travel, education grant and education grant travel, and Rest and Recuperation (designated duty-stations);
   b. mobility, hardship and non-removal allowances depending on the hardship classification of the duty station, the number of geographical moves and according to the grade and dependency status of the staff;
   c. assignment grant for each new assignment involving change of duty station and official reassignment travel to the duty station paid by WHO to assist staff with their installation. This assignment grant consists in 30 days DSA (50% for each family member) plus a lump sum of one or two months’ salary paid depending on the length of assignment, duty station and removals entitlement;
   d. rental subsidy may be granted upon renting accommodation in the new duty station; in HQ duty stations the subsidy is discontinued after seven years in the same duty station.
   e. dependent spouse allowance for a staff member’s unemployed spouse or whose gross occupational earnings do not exceed the limits set in Staff Rules 310.5.1 and 310.5.2.

Staff members assigned to designated hardship duty stations may be eligible for additional entitlements, such as:

   f. additional Hardship Allowance (AHA) or Special Operations Living Allowance (SOLA) depending on the duty station and the entry-on-duty date of the staff member (before or after July 2011);
   g. travel entitlements: additional Education grant travel and Rest and Recuperation;
   h. danger pay as an additional monthly allowance, as approved by the International Civil Service Commission for certain duty stations where very dangerous conditions prevail;
   i. additional freight shipments and boarding costs.

Staff development and learning support

28. Support measures in the form of language training and staff development activities will be offered to staff members prior to and during their new assignment in a different duty station.
Spouse support programme

29. To support staff members and their families, WHO will participate in the UN System Dual Career and Staff Mobility Programme. This programme coordinates the work of the Local Expatriate Spouse Associations (UN/LESAs) which offer information, job search advice and practical on-site support in field and Headquarters duty stations in order to facilitate arriving UN staff and their families in settling into new duty stations (for information click on http://www.unglobalmobility.org).

30. WHO offices will, to the extent possible, assist spouses of international staff members seeking employment in WHO or other UN agencies. Staff Rules 410.3.2.1 and 410.3.2.2 allow spouses to work in the same office provided that there is no line of authority between the two staff members.

31. If both spouses are WHO staff members, the Organization will endeavour to assist them in securing assignments in the same duty station subject to the availability of posts compatible with the staff members’ qualifications.

Timing of placements

32. Following the notification of a new placement, the date of transfer(s) is agreed upon between the releasing and receiving managers, and with the staff member(s) concerned. The transfer should take place within six months of the notification upon agreement between the staff member, the releasing and the receiving offices.

33. To the extent possible, assignment to a different duty station shall take place at a time so as to minimize disruption to the duties involved and to facilitate linkage with leave and school calendar requirements or other personal requirements.

Personal waivers

34. A staff member may request in writing to the Director of HRD (if based at HQ) or to the Regional Director (if based in a regional or country office) to be granted a personal waiver to delay an assignment to another duty station for compelling personal reasons as listed in paragraph 37 below.

35. A personal waiver can be granted for one year and extended for one additional year in the following situations:

a. if a staff member or his/her spouse/recognized domestic partner or dependant child has a medical condition which requires immediate and/or periodic treatment at the current duty station and that the appropriate medical services are not available at the duty station identified for the new assignment;

b. if a staff member has a disability. Should the disability prevent the staff member from being assigned to any other duty station, that staff member will be exempt from being placed under this Policy;
c. if a staff member has a dependent, spouse or child, with a disability and he is in receipt of a special education grant under Staff Rule 355.

36. Personal waivers must be submitted before the year in which the staff member is required to be assigned to a different duty station or as soon as the compelling reasons, justifying the request for such waivers, are known.

37. The granting of a personal waiver for medical conditions and disability by the Director HRD or the Regional Director will be based upon the recommendations received by the Director, Staff Health and Wellbeing Services (SHW) at HQ.

VII. Non-placement at the end of the standard duration of assignment

38. Continuing staff members or fixed-term staff members entitled to reassignment under Staff Rule 1050, who have expressed interest in positions in the annual compendium the year before which they have to rotate as a result of their SDA, will continue to serve in their position for an additional year if they have not been placed in the annual mobility exercise. During that additional year, they will be considered for rotational posts for which they are qualified and are expected to proactively apply for other suitable posts.

39. Unless during that year they have secured a new position, they will automatically be placed in the following year’s global pool for placement and will be given priority consideration. As an alternative to a long-term placement, they may be assigned to any activity or office for terms shorter than the regular SDA if such short-term assignment is in the interest of WHO.

40. Pursuant to paragraph 17 above, staff members on fixed-term appointments with less than ten years of service and not entitled to any waiver or reassignment under Staff Rule 1050, will have their last contract extension coincide with the end of their SDA. They are encouraged to express interest in positions advertised in the annual compendium and apply for ad hoc vacancies. If they secure a new position, their fixed-term appointment will be extended according to the new position secured. If at the end of their SDA they have not secured a new position with WHO, their fixed-term appointments will end upon the expiry date without further extension and they will be separated pursuant to Staff Rule 1040 (completion of appointment). If eligible, they will receive an end-of-service grant based on the years of service (Staff Rules 375 and 1050.10).

VIII. Consequences of refusing an assignment

41. Staff members are expected to express interest in positions advertised in the annual compendium and accept the assignment decided by the Director-General following recommendations from the Global Mobility Committee (GMC) in accordance with Staff Regulation 1.2. If continuing staff members or fixed-term staff members entitled to reassignment under Staff Rule 1050 have compelling reasons for refusing the assignment identified for them (e.g. personal situation, medical, legal, security-related), they will be required to provide those reasons in writing with supporting documentation to Director HRD within the prescribed deadline upon notification of their assignment. This written justification will be reviewed by the GMC. If the reason is found acceptable, and if no alternative assignment for that year can be identified, the options listed in paragraphs 40,
41 and 42 will apply. If the reason is not found acceptable by the GMC, the staff members will be notified that unless they accept the assignment identified for them, they will be separated from the Organization and their appointments terminated in accordance with the provisions of Staff Rule .... (Staff Rules are being amended to reflect this principle).

42. If staff members on fixed-term appointments with less than ten years of service and who are not eligible for reassignment under Staff Rule 1050.3 refuse or fail to accept the assignment identified for them at the end of their SDA, contrary to the terms of appointment and their obligations under Staff Regulation 1.2, their fixed-term appointment will come to an end upon the expiry date without further extension and they will be separated pursuant to Staff Rule 1040 (completion of appointment).

IX. Placement process

43. There will be a centralized annual compendium of posts that are expected to be filled the following year. The compendium will include:

   a. positions to be vacated by staff members reaching the end of their SDA the following year and for which a decision has been made that they will be filled with the same or with different terms of reference;
   b. temporary positions expected to last twenty-four months that will be filled the following year;
   c. fixed-term positions of limited duration even though their duration may be less than the normal SDA.

44. As an alternative to placing a post in the annual compendium as a result of the end of the SDA of its incumbent, the DG for HQ positions or the RD for posts in their regions may decide to transfer that post with its incumbent to another duty station. To the extent possible, the identification of the other location should aim to foster cross-fertilization between regions or between HQ and regions. Such action would allow the incumbent to contribute to the Organization in a different environment while meeting the staff member’s mobility requirement.

45. There will be a global pool of staff members who need to be placed in the coming year because:

   a. they will have completed their SDA the following year;
   b. they were not placed during the previous year’s mobility exercise and as a result stayed in the same post for an additional year;
   c. their posts have been abolished;
   d. they will reach the end of their time-bound posts the following year and they have continuing appointments or fixed-term appointments of ten years or more.

46. The global pool may include the staff members who have expressed their interest in being assigned to a new position, even though their SDA is not ending in the coming year. They can express their interest in a new position as early as one year before reaching the time in post. However, they will need to complete their time in post before they can be assigned to a new position as part of the global mobility exercise.
47. Priority in placement will be given to continuing staff members or fixed-term staff members entitled to reassignment under Staff Rule 1050 who, at the end of their SDA, in spite of expressing interest in the positions advertised in the compendium, have not been placed and stayed in their position for an additional year. The same priority will be afforded to staff members who will complete their SDA the following year.

48. The Organization will make the staff member a reasonable offer of assignment. A reasonable offer of assignment is defined as an offer of a position at the same grade as the grade of the post currently occupied by the staff member (lateral moves) and for which he/she meets the minimum academic and work experience requirements and has the demonstrated competencies (unless paragraphs 51 and 52 below apply).

49. The GMC, with membership from both HQ and the regions, including staff representatives, will meet once a year to review all vacancies globally and provide recommendations on placements with the support of the technical/functional areas. A focal point for women will be present on each exercise as an ex officio member to ensure respect for gender equality. The final decision on the assignment of staff members will be taken by the Director-General in consultation with the Assistant Directors-General and Regional Directors.

50. An assignment to a position at a grade above the grade of the post which the staff member currently occupies will only take place following a competitive selection and recruitment process (ad hoc vacancies) which will also be open to external candidates.

51. If a staff member agrees to be reassigned to a post at a grade lower than the grade of the post he/she currently occupies, he/she will be able to retain the current grade on a personal basis. Upon completion of the assignment, the staff member will be placed on the list of staff members due for mobility for a future assignment at his/her personal grade.

52. If, for personal reasons, a staff member expresses an interest for and is assigned to a different post at a lower grade in accordance with Staff Rule 570.1.1, the net base salary of the staff member will be fixed at that step in the lower grade that corresponds to his/her current net base salary, or at the step nearest below if there is no exactly corresponding step.

53. Staff members who are assigned to another duty station will have no return right to the position which they previously encumbered (the post will not be kept for the staff member and will be part of the compendium if it is determined that the position is still needed) nor to the duty station to which they were previously assigned. However, they will have the possibility to return to their previous duty station if they apply and are selected to an ad hoc vacancy in that duty station or if they are assigned to a position through an annual mobility exercise in that duty station.

54. Depending on the hardship classification of the duty station where they will be assigned, staff members may be required to undergo a medical examination to determine their fitness for that duty station.

55. The Organization is fully committed to avoiding any of its staff members being put at risk as the result of discrimination, homophobia or transphobia in the countries of assignment. When making
placement decisions, the staff members’ concerns in relation to their personal situation, as long as they disclose this information, will be taken into account.

X. Posts that will be filled through competitive recruitment and selection process

56. The following posts will be advertised internally and externally and filled through the normal competitive recruitment and selection process:

   a. non-rotational posts;
   b. posts remaining vacant after the annual global mobility exercise;
   c. posts to be vacated by staff members who retire the following year and for which a decision has been made that they will be filled with the same or with different terms of reference;
   d. posts that become unexpectedly vacant and for which the relevant Assistant Director-General or Regional Director decides, in consultation with Director HRD, that they should not wait for the next annual global mobility exercise;
   e. newly established posts that cannot wait for the next annual global mobility exercise.

57. Those rotational posts that will be advertised and filled through a competitive recruitment and selection process will have the provision of geographical mobility and experience at the different levels of the Organization as an essential or desirable requirement. This provision aims at favouring those staff members who have experienced geographical mobility during the course of their careers.

XI. Non-rotational posts and posts with a maximum duration of service

58. Non-rotational posts will be assessed every three years to determine if their designation should remain non-rotational in the Organization’s interest.

59. Should their designation change from non-rotational to rotational, the incumbent will be given a two-year grace period before having to participate in the next mobility exercise.

60. Notwithstanding the fact that a post is non-rotational, its incumbent is encouraged to be functionally mobile within the same duty station or to express interest for posts outside that duty station.

61. Incumbents of non-rotational posts, who remain in the same duty station for more than ten years, will not be eligible for promotion via competitive recruitment and selection process or reclassification of their current position within that duty station.

62. Time-bound posts are posts with a maximum duration of service which are vacated once their incumbents reach their maximum occupancy limit.

63. Their incumbents will participate in the annual mobility exercise, taking place the following year, if they have continuing appointments or fixed-term appointments of ten years or more. However, if they are externally recruited, they will have their appointments coincide with the duration of the
time-bound post and they will be separated under Staff Rules 1040 (completion of appointment), unless they secure another post through a competitive process prior to the expiry of their appointment. Alternatively, they may express an interest to be part of the global pool of staff and be assigned to another post through the global mobility exercise.

XII. Entry into force and transitional measures for serving staff members

64. This policy will enter into force as early as 1 July 2015 and not later than 31 December 2015. It will apply to all staff under its scope of application, including currently serving staff members.

65. The entry into force of this policy will be subject to:

   a. the approval of relevant amendments to the Staff Rules by the Executive Board and to the Staff Regulations by the World Health Assembly;
   b. the design of the governance mechanism and the decision-making process, including the terms of reference of the GMC and the procedure by which staff are placed on positions advertised in the annual compendium;
   c. the establishment of the list of non-rotational posts;
   d. the elaboration of an implementation plan, including transitional measures for serving staff.