



**Governing Council  
of the  
United Nations  
Development Programme**

Distr.  
GENERAL

DP/1986/41  
25 March 1986

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-third session  
2-27 June 1986, Geneva  
Item 6 of the provisional agenda  
UNFPA

P O L I C Y

UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES

Report of the Executive Director on personnel management  
policies and practices of UNFPA and recommendations thereon

Summary

At its thirty-second session in June 1985, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to submit to the Council at its thirty-third session a comprehensive report on personnel management and recommendations thereon, including a study of the link between the work-load and personnel structure in the United Nations Fund for Population Activities; priorities to be set in order to strengthen specific areas of the Fund, according to paragraph 6, section III of Governing Council decision 83/17; career development; feasibility of redeployment of posts and rotation of personnel between the field and headquarters; and recruitment policies. This report contains chapters on human resources planning and management; recruitment; promotion; career development; orientation and training; link between work-load and the personnel structure; priorities to strengthen specific areas of the Fund according to paragraph 6, section III, of Governing Council decision 83/17; and 118 conclusions and recommendations for the consideration of the Council.

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## INTRODUCTION

1. This review of personnel management policies and practices of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) has been prepared in compliance with the request of the Governing Council at its thirty-second session as reflected in decision 85/20 I, paragraph 4, which requested "the Executive Director to prepare a comprehensive report on personnel management and recommendations thereon to be submitted to the Governing Council at its next session (1986), including a study of the link between the workload and personnel structure in the United Nations Fund for Population Activities; priorities to set in order to strengthen specific areas of the Fund, according to paragraph 6, section III of Governing Council decision 83/17; career development; feasibility of redeployment of posts and rotation of personnel between the field and headquarters; and recruitment policies."

### I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2. The personnel policies which UNFPA has developed over the decade and a half of its existence are not unique to the organization. They follow essentially the patterns and practices in the field of personnel management which have evolved out of the 40 years of experience of the United Nations common system. Two years after its creation as a Trust Fund by the Secretary General in 1967, UNFPA was placed in 1969 under the administrative oversight of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which laid down the basis for the personnel policies and practices of the Fund in a manner which conformed closely to those of the United Nations and UNDP. UNFPA staff members have, from the beginning, been governed by the United Nations Staff Regulations and the applicable Staff Rules of the United Nations and UNDP. They continue to be employed under UNDP contracts.

3. In 1972, as a result of General Assembly resolution 3019 (XXVII), which placed UNFPA under the authority of the General Assembly and named the Governing Council of UNDP as the governing body of UNFPA, the constitutional status of the Fund was significantly altered; however, with respect to personnel matters, the situation was very little changed. The Personnel Division of UNDP was, from the beginning, responsible for all aspects of personnel management as they applied to UNFPA. Later, in 1979, the General Assembly by its resolution 34/104 further clarified the status of UNFPA by declaring "that the United Nations Fund for Population Activities... is a subsidiary organ of the Assembly in terms of Article 22 of the Charter..." In due course, UNFPA established a small Personnel Branch of its own, within its Administration and Finance Division, to assist the much larger Personnel Division of UNDP in handling a number of personnel functions. Concurrently with this development, UNFPA undertook to reimburse UNDP for personnel and other services rendered to it by UNDP, the personnel component of this payment amounting to \$888,100 out of a total of \$2,988,200 budgeted by UNFPA for 1986-1987. In recent years, while the major role in matters of personnel administration has continued to rest with UNDP's Division of Personnel, UNFPA has taken on an increasingly more important share of day-to-day responsibility for personnel management. Throughout this gradual evolution, the Personnel Branch of UNFPA has endeavoured to ensure that the personnel policies and practices under which UNFPA operates continue to be consistent with those of the United Nations

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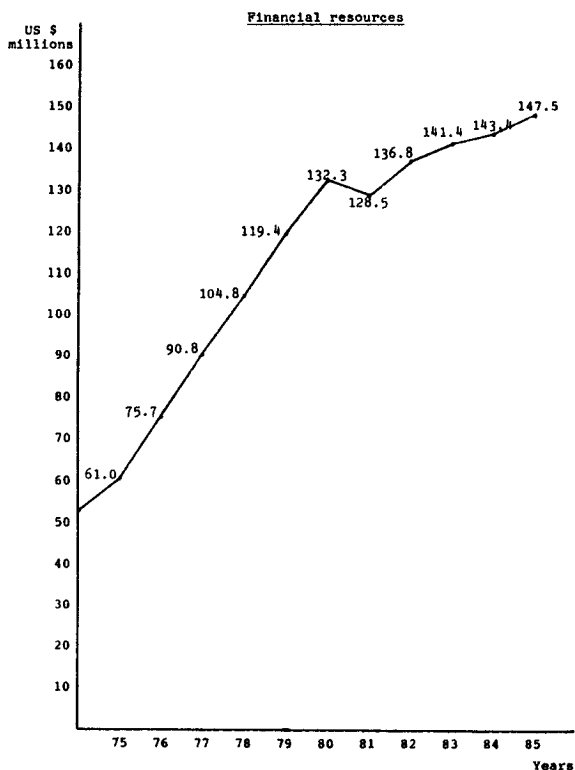
and UNDP, as prescribed in the applicable Staff Regulations and Rules. These basic provisions are supplemented further by the UNDP charter on personnel policies and practices (UNDP/ADM/HQTRS/296 of 23 March 1977), which applies equally to UNFPA and provides, inter alia, that the organization "is committed to the development of an international career service based primarily on merit and designed to ensure the most effective management of the Programme in the interests of the developing countries".

4. Throughout the years, while these changes have been taking place, the Fund has remained a relatively small organization in relation to its mandate and to the magnitude of its yearly level of resources, amounting to approximately \$140 million in 1985. The historical record of growth in terms of financial resources and personnel is illustrated graphically on the following page. While the number of Professional personnel has increased over the years and now stands at 153 (including regular and project staff both at headquarters and in the field offices), UNFPA's ratio of Professionals to budgeted expenditures continues to be low and ranks among the best in comparison with other United Nations organizations. The world wide implications of the organization's mandate are attested to by the fact that about one third of the Professional staff of the Fund is serving away from headquarters. The nature of the programme demands in its staff unusual versatility as well as professional competence both at headquarters and in the field.

5. The UNFPA Personnel Branch is small, staffed by a nucleus of three Professional officers and five General Service support staff, all of them at headquarters. In addition to the 98 Professionals and 124 supporting personnel which staff the divisions and branches at headquarters (including the Geneva Liaison Office) as of June 1986, the Executive Director is assisted in the execution and implementation of the substantive programme in the field by the UNDP resident representatives in those countries to which UNFPA is providing assistance. These resident representatives, as part of their normal responsibilities, serve also as UNFPA representatives. As such, they are responsible for the management and administration of the UNFPA programme in their respective areas of jurisdiction and for field co-ordination between the UNFPA programme and those of other agencies. The 33 deputy representatives and senior advisers on population (DRSAPs), whose function is to serve as advisers to the Resident Representative on population matters, are responsible to him/her as well as to the headquarters of the Fund.

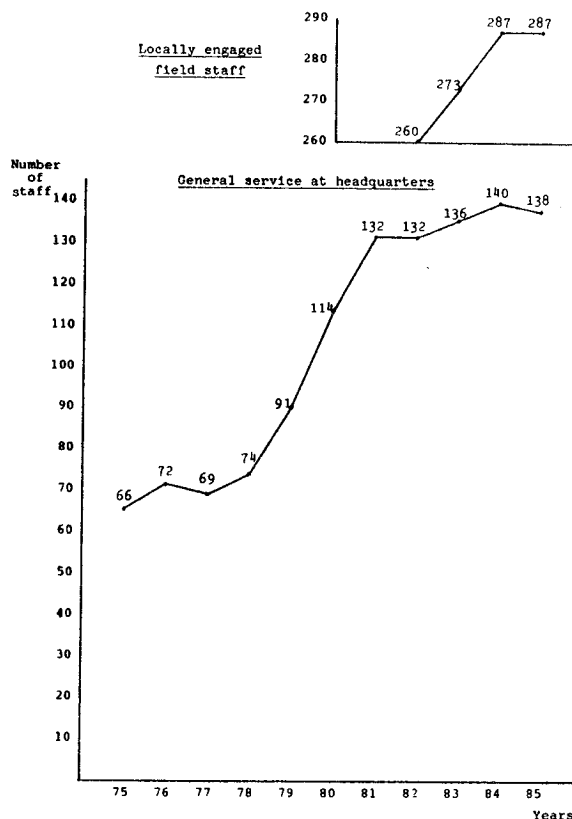
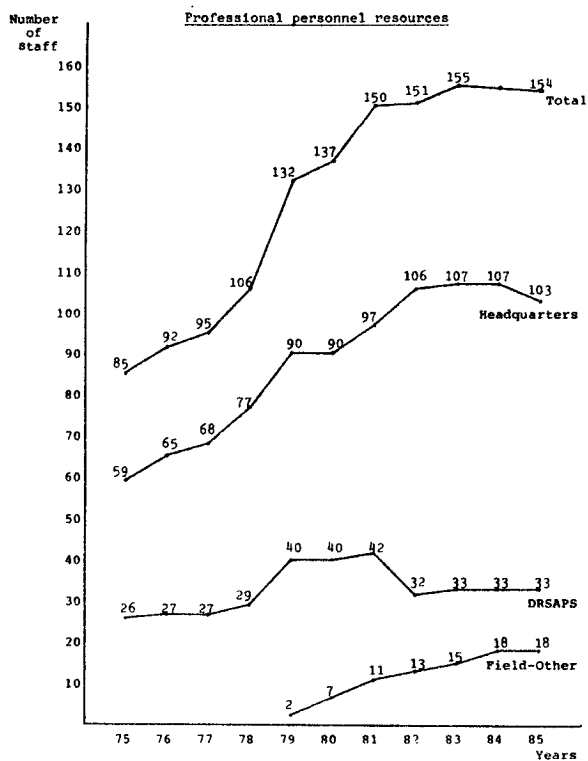
6. The nature of the linkages between UNDP and UNFPA at both the field and the headquarters level has been spelled out in a series of memoranda of understanding, signed by the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNFPA in early 1977, in December 1982 and most recently in October 1985. These agreements seek to clarify the working relationship between UNFPA headquarters, the UNDP Resident Representative and UNFPA field staff, as well as to make it possible for UNFPA Professional and local staff to have access to expanded opportunities for job-related training and career development and advancement on a basis of equality with their UNDP counterparts.

Historical growth of financial  
and personnel resources of UNFPA



Historical financial resources of UNFPA  
(Thousands of U S dollars)

Year	U.S. Dollar Value of Pledges Paid	Interest and Misc.	Trust Funds Multi-Bi and Special, inc. Interest	Total
1985	135.9	5.4	6.2	147.5
1984	132.5	6.0	4.9	143.4
1983	130.2	4.5	6.7	141.4
1982	128.7	2.2	5.9	136.8
1981	120.8	4.7	3.0	128.5
1980	126.3	2.4	3.6	132.3
1979	113.3	3.8	2.3	119.4
1978	102.5	2.2	.1	104.8
1977	86.1	3.0	.9	90.8
1976	73.5	1.6	.6	75.7
1975	58.1	2.9	-	61.0
1974	49.6	3.7	-	53.3
1973	42.6	2.4	-	45.0



## II. HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

7. Human resources planning and personnel management in UNFPA are, quite properly, the concerns of the management and supervisory staff at all levels. Providing the full range of personnel services to staff at headquarters and in some 71 countries, with responsibility for providing support to programmes in 134 countries and territories, is a formidable challenge to the organization. The responsibility for the immediate execution of personnel actions and for providing personnel services to the staff of the Fund is shared by the Personnel Branch of UNFPA with the Division of Personnel of UNDP.

8. The general objective of human resources planning in UNFPA is to meet the staffing needs of the organization for achieving the objectives of its mission, to facilitate the most effective use of the skills, abilities and potential of staff members, and, at the same time, to take into account, as far as possible, each individual staff member's career aspirations. In the case of UNFPA, human resources planning involves such matters as (a) the analysis and estimate of staffing needs for the intermediate and longer-term requirements of the organization; (b) the determination of appropriate grade levels of posts for which recruitment should be undertaken; (c) the extent to which posts should be filled from internal or external sources; (d) possible shifting of functions; (e) potential rotation of staff between headquarters and field, between field duty stations and between units at headquarters; (f) review of training requirements to enhance performance and to prepare staff members for advancement; (g) training to improve the quality of supervision; and (h) improving management methods and making more effective use of advanced office equipment. In planning the optimum use of its human resources, management must offer fair and equitable treatment to all staff and be sensitive at all times to the concerns of individuals.

9. Senior UNFPA staff members in all divisions and branches need to exercise their best judgement in identifying, analysing and forecasting the occupational specializations needed and estimating the approximate numbers of posts or persons which will be required for the intermediate and longer term. This is not an easy task since resource growth is difficult to forecast in an organization which is entirely dependent upon year-to-year voluntary contributions for its resources. An analysis of experience in the levels of pledging and actual contributions over a substantial period of time helps in estimating resources that may be available in the future. The results of such an analysis, although useful, are subject to revision and amendment to reflect changes in circumstances, such as the reduction or increase in resources. It may be noted here that there is a certain inconsistency in a situation where expenditure budgets are planned over a period of two years or longer while at the same time contributions are pledged only on an annual basis. Human resources planning would benefit greatly if longer-term resource commitments were possible.

## III. RECRUITMENT

10. UNFPA recruitment policy is aimed at obtaining the services of well qualified staff members, at both the Professional and other levels, who will be

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most effective in helping to achieve the objectives of the organization. The Fund seeks to attract the best qualified and most suitable candidates available for the posts that have to be filled, in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules, in particular staff regulation 4.2 which states that "the paramount consideration in the appointment, transfer or promotion of the staff shall be the necessity for securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity". Since the Staff Regulation (4.4) also require that, "without prejudice to the requirement of fresh talent at all levels, the fullest regard shall be had, in filling vacancies, to the requisite qualifications and experience of persons already in the service of the United Nations", first priority is normally given to filling any vacancies which arise from internal staff resources, thus linking recruitment to opportunities for promotion and career development. This is in conformity with the UNDP charter on personnel policies and practices which, as mentioned in paragraph 3 above, stipulates that the organization "is committed to the development of an international career service".

11. While UNFPA, being an agency that is financed through voluntary contributions, is not subject to a strict geographical quota system, it endeavours to maintain a broad geographical distribution among its staff. Staff are recruited from developing and developed countries alike as well as from recipient and contributing countries, especially those having a wide experience and involvement in programmes which the Fund is assisting. Experience has demonstrated that these are usually the best sources of qualified candidates. As a result of the Fund's efforts to achieve as wide a geographical distribution as possible, it may be noted that, as of the end of December 1985, a total of 102 nationalities were represented on the staff of UNFPA.

12. In relation to recruitment policies, UNFPA attaches particular importance to those resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly which call for an increase in the proportion of female staff members serving in the Secretariat, especially at the more senior levels. UNFPA has made a special effort to increase further the proportion of women among the Professional staff and to promote them to higher-level positions. With a ratio of 36 per cent of all Professional posts being filled by women, the Fund is one of the most successful United Nations organizations in striving for equal participation of men and women in the execution of its objectives. It will continue its efforts to achieve the goals which have been set forth in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

13. The planning of a long-term recruitment policy for UNFPA must obviously take into account any immediate short-term difficulties and constraints, such as temporary limitations on financial resources that may arise from time to time. However, it is important not to lose sight of the long-term objective of staffing the Fund with personnel who have the potential of developing into highly qualified, adaptable and resourceful staff members, even though a considerable period of time may be required following recruitment before these staff members become fully productive. Recruitment of younger, adaptable staff members with the potential to grow and develop is essential if the Fund is to be successful in advising and assisting Governments in need of assistance in solving their population and

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development problems. For these reasons the Executive Director considers it important to continue to recruit a reasonable proportion of young highly motivated staff members who are well qualified in one or more of the major fields of work of the Fund and who are adaptable to training which will enable them to assume responsibilities in other subject matter areas as required. Such an approach has obvious implications for a training programme which is discussed elsewhere in this report.

14. The modalities of recruitment in UNFPA as elsewhere are affected by the volume of recruitment, the difficulty of locating and identifying well qualified candidates and the need to diversify in terms of nationality, region, sex and other factors. Candidates most likely to be considered are those who have completed studies in academic disciplines bearing on population (public health, social sciences, demography and development economics) and those with long professional and practical experience in related fields. The Fund has over the years established extensive and close contacts with various Governments, institutions, research centres, professional associations and universities in both developed and developing countries. These have been found to be excellent recruitment sources, and contacts with them are constantly being strengthened.

15. UNFPA also receives a number of direct applications for Professional posts in response to announcements of vacancies or newly established posts which are circulated widely to Governments, United Nations agencies and United Nations field offices. Applicants are screened and interviewed in UNFPA by the appropriate branch or division and, if necessary, by the Personnel Branch prior to review by the joint UNDP/UNFPA Appointment and Promotion Board which makes its recommendations to the Executive Director (see para. 21 ).

16. In view of the limited volume of recruitment, paid advertising of vacancies is seldom, if ever, used because of the expense of utilizing this medium on a world wide basis. Nor does UNFPA maintain a full fledged formal roster system except for the recruitment of consultants. Rosters are relatively expensive to maintain in terms of the time and attention they require. To be effective they must be kept current and this requires periodic updating involving inquiries to provide information on any change of position or address and any additional training or other qualification in professional advancement. In the case of Professional vacancies UNFPA does not have more than a few to fill per annum, and, as a result, the maintenance of a formal roster system for such limited use appears to be uneconomical and therefore not advisable. However, the recording of data on promising individuals who become known to the organization and whose qualifications are outstanding is encouraged, especially at headquarters. Linking up with roster systems maintained by larger United Nations organizations may be desirable and deserves consideration.

17. It is important to define accurately not only the duties and responsibilities but also the qualifications requirements of posts to ensure that UNFPA staff are able to deal effectively with all the functions which need to be performed at headquarters and in field offices. The ministries and institutions of Governments, of both developed and developing countries, are increasingly staffed

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with individuals who are highly trained, many of them with graduate degrees from the best institutions of learning. Therefore, it is essential that UNFPA's Professional staff members who are to work with persons from such ministries and institutions be highly qualified in at least one of the disciplines related to population problems. The situation demands further that an adequate level of maturity in dealing with significant problems must be demonstrated if the advice and guidance is to be effective. In addition to the above the need for appropriate linguistic skills for all staff, especially those recruited for field posts, needs to be stressed.

18. Most UNFPA posts also have a requirement for management and administrative abilities as well as development assistance experience. For example, the majority of posts in the field, in particular those at the DRSAP level, involve, in addition to programming experience, the management of a field office, the supervision of staff and responsibilities relating to financial and other matters. In addition to management ability and other specific requirements of the post, an adequate knowledge of the United Nations socio-economic development system is essential, especially at the senior levels. Junior and other staff are recruited with these considerations in mind and should have the potential to advance to higher levels of responsibility.

19. In general, UNFPA's recruitment standards may be summed up as follows:

(a) The mission of the Fund involves issues to which individuals, families, social and religious groups and nations are extremely sensitive. Therefore, staff members must have a high degree of sensitivity, tact and judgement in order to deal with problems and issues which are of a very delicate nature;

(b) Staff members at all levels must possess a high level of motivation, versatility, resourcefulness and a sense of creativity and innovation. In the field they will frequently face difficult and unforeseen situations with no subject-matter specialist immediately available to provide advice and assistance. They must have sufficient knowledge of other subject areas to be able to deal with a wide range of problems;

(c) It is essential that UNFPA staff be recruited with the ability to impart and share information and guidance and to communicate effectively with government officials at various levels and of different cultural backgrounds. They should have or acquire a full understanding of the management and administration of technical co-operation programmes.

(d) Junior staff members must have the potential and the ability to advance to positions of higher levels of responsibility. Therefore, recruitment of a reasonable proportion of staff at or near the entrance level is an essential ingredient of a career system, and a career service is essential if the impartiality and effectiveness of the international civil service is to be maintained. The above applies equally to Professional and General Service staff at headquarters and in the field.

(e) Language requirements are similar to those of other United Nations organizations. A knowledge of one or more of the official languages is essential and knowledge of other languages highly desirable, especially with respect to posts in the field. As between candidates who are otherwise equally well qualified, the candidate with a knowledge of at least two official languages is given preference in selection.

20. At the time of recruitment of Professional Staff, the Fund intends to make it clear to persons who are highly specialized in one discipline that if they are to be considered for other career opportunities which the Fund may have to offer either at headquarters or in the field, they will need to acquire an adequate degree of familiarity with other subject-matter areas in which the Fund is involved. The total number of Professional posts available to UNFPA is too limited to allow many highly specialized staff to be recruited unless they are at the same time unusually adaptable and mobile. The Fund has, therefore, decided on implementation of the policy that all newly recruited staff members should expect to serve in the field either immediately or during the course of their careers, although a few exceptions may be required for posts involved in certain highly specialized or technical areas. UNFPA's policy of rotation and the posts which are affected will be made clear to all new recruits for Professional posts in order to avoid later misunderstandings.

21. The administrative mechanisms for reviewing recommendations for appointment and for the review of suitability of staff members for probationary appointments conform to those adapted by UNDP and are governed by the revised guidelines for the appointment and promotion bodies (UNDP/ADM/PER/169/Rev.1, 16 December 1982). These guidelines provide for the creation of an appointment and promotion board for Professionals and a General Service Panel with jurisdiction over both UNDP and UNFPA staff. The Board, together with the Panel, is an advisory body established by the Administrator of UNDP in consultation with the Executive Director of UNFPA, under the provisions of United Nations staff rule 104.14, for the purpose of making recommendations in respect of all staff members under the 100 series of Staff Rules and those under the 200 series who are assigned to regular staff functions either at headquarters or in the field. The Board and Panel have a membership selected jointly by management and staff of both UNFPA and UNDP and act as an advisory body to the Executive Director on matters affecting the recruitment and promotion of UNFPA personnel. Final responsibility for selection rests in all cases with the Executive Director. The procedures and guidelines were developed by and for UNDP but, with appropriate amendments, especially with regard to representation as agreed by the heads of the two organizations, are equally applicable to UNFPA.

22. Procedures for the recruitment of General Service and other local staff in the field are similar to those described above for headquarters. Local Appointment and Promotion Panels consisting of nominees of UNDP, UNFPA and staff are established by the Resident Representative to advise on recruitment in most, if not all, field offices where UNFPA local staff are employed. Recruitment is normally at the more junior General Service levels in order to provide opportunities for staff to advance eventually to higher levels, once sufficient experience and on-the-job training have been acquired. The same procedures for review of qualifications, experience and suitability are followed by the local panels as by the Board and Panel at headquarters.

#### IV. PROMOTIONS

23. A fair and equitable promotion policy is an essential part of forward looking human resources planning and personnel management. The United Nations Staff Regulations, as quoted in paragraph 11 above, emphasize the importance of ensuring that in filling vacancies, consideration should not be given exclusively to candidates from outside the Secretariat, but that the qualifications and experience of staff members already in service be given the fullest attention. Opportunities for promotion, which offer new and different kinds of experience to qualified staff members, open the door to career development and contribute in a major way to the maintenance of a high level of staff morale which is essential to the successful achievement of the organization's objectives. In recognition of this important fact, UNFPA endeavours to ensure that, whenever vacancies occur, the responsible appointment and promotion bodies remain constantly alert to the possibilities of promotion from within the service, and follow the procedures for the appointment and promotion of staff which are set forth in the revised guidelines for the appointment and promotion bodies already referred to in paragraph 21. The standards applied for promotion, in the case of both Professional and General Service staff, are those which are set out in the guidelines and which are applied to UNFPA staff on the same basis as for UNDP personnel by the joint UNDP/UNFPA Appointment and Promotion Board and Panel.

#### V. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

24. The objectives of career development (also known as staff development) were defined in a bulletin (ST/SGB/166) issued on 18 May 1978 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations which stated that the system should be organized along occupational lines and have two closely related objectives:

(a) The systematic development of the potential of staff members to perform the current and anticipated functions of the organization;

(b) The satisfaction of the needs and legitimate aspirations of staff members for challenging and rewarding careers.

25. Career development in UNFPA is concerned not only with promotion to higher grade levels, but also with job enrichment, benefits derived from training and providing opportunities to transfer to other assignments which may be broader and more diverse and which facilitate personal and professional satisfaction and advancement. An effective career development system assumes the ability to make reasonably accurate forecasts of resources and requirements which is difficult in an organization dependent upon voluntary funding.

26. UNFPA is a relatively small organization in comparison with other United Nations bodies, and this is a limiting factor in evolving an effective career development system, especially since it has a great diversity of occupations. Given the size of UNFPA there is a requirement for more ingenuity and investment in effort and resources per capita than in the case of a large organization to achieve

the same result. In addition to this, UNFPA is a relatively young organization in comparison with the United Nations and most other organizations in the United Nations system. These elements, together with the fact that the rate of staff turnover is low and the world economic situation not conducive at this time to greatly increased contributions leading to rapid growth, make it difficult to provide adequate career opportunities for UNFPA staff. The introduction of job classification with its accompanying rigidities has the tendency also to inhibit to some extent the aims and aspirations of a personal career system. All of these factors strengthen the need to search for other measures to improve career prospects.

27. At its inception, the Fund found it necessary to become operational very quickly. Therefore, it was not possible to consider the possibility of recruiting staff members at junior levels and investing three to five years in training to enable them to assume responsible posts at headquarters or in the field. The course followed was, at the time, a logical one, i.e., to recruit more experienced individuals who could already function at the required level of responsibility within the shortest possible time; this meant recruiting generally at the P3/P4 grade level and sometimes above. This was perhaps necessary at the time, particularly with respect to recruitment for posts in the field, for in the field offices government officials needing advice and guidance for resolving population problems expect and deserve to obtain it from authoritative sources, and this mandated that relatively senior grade levels be assigned to field posts to provide the required level of expertise.

28. UNFPA has endeavoured to develop co-operative arrangements with other organizations, especially UNDP, for the transfer or secondment of staff to meet the needs of the organization and to satisfy career requirements and objectives of UNFPA staff. While there has been some movement of staff from UNFPA to UNDP, a greater degree of reciprocity in the exchange of staff should be encouraged. UNFPA staff are employed under UNDP contracts and UNDP's Division of Personnel plays a major role in implementing personnel policies of UNFPA. An integrated plan for staff development could be of benefit to both organizations. Such an approach might also be pursued with other organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund and several of the specialized agencies which are actively concerned with population questions. Apart from agreement in principle to exchange staff between and among organizations, details of the conditions need to be elaborated. These include the issue of return rights of individuals to the same or an equivalent post and the duration of the periods of secondment. In UNFPA the problem of meeting career expectations of staff is exacerbated by the different employment conditions between its headquarters and field staff. Because of differences in the past in the recruitment and employment status of headquarters and field personnel, staff members who have been recruited for headquarters posts have in practice not been required to transfer to posts in the field. As pointed out in paragraph 20, this situation will now change for newly recruited personnel but until the policy of redeployment is recognized as applicable to staff members generally little further improvement in the prospects for meaningful career development within UNFPA itself is likely.

29. Despite the impediments referred to in the preceding paragraphs, career development can be improved in UNFPA if a number of measures are agreed upon and implemented. These include greater emphasis on recruitment at the junior levels so as to provide greater opportunities for flexibility in staff development; and increased attention to lateral transfers from one function (or one branch) to another. The performance evaluation system is also a critical factor in career development. The Fund's performance evaluation system is based on that which is used by the United Nations and UNDP: it seeks to make provision for identifying the various levels of performance, but its operation leaves much to be desired. Unless performance evaluation is carried out with the greatest care, supervisors, in making their evaluations tend not to discriminate sufficiently between excellent, satisfactory and inadequate performance. In this respect, UNFPA is not in a unique position. The same situation exists in most, if not all, United Nations organizations. Supervisors at all levels should be encouraged to rank and rate their subordinates realistically and responsibly. This will not only ensure that excellent performance is recognized but also facilitate efforts to identify and deal with mediocre or inadequate performance and to search for causes and have constructive exploratory discussions with staff members in an effort to motivate, and improve performance and productivity. The Executive Director considers that this is a joint responsibility of supervisors in the substantive units and the Personnel Branch. It requires extensive and close consultation with staff members to identify strengths and weaknesses in levels of performance, to identify subject matter interests and to search for the highest potential in the individual staff member.

30. Career development must be a part of an integrated personnel programme. It is dependent upon effective recruitment and is closely related to training, a promotion programme and a valid performance evaluation system. To this end, the substantive divisions and branch chiefs, with the active support of the UNFPA Personnel Branch will, as a matter of active policy, encourage and facilitate to the maximum extent possible the movement of staff to areas where their knowledge and experience can be further developed.

#### VI. ROTATION - TRANSFER OF STAFF BETWEEN HEADQUARTERS AND FIELD OFFICES

31. A continuing concern of any organization with a field programme is to ensure a high level of integration and an adequate degree of responsiveness at headquarters to the needs of the field offices to assist them in executing their mission. In order to improve such responsiveness and to facilitate career development most organizations have found it necessary to have an organized system of staff rotation or transfer between headquarters and the field. UNFPA is no exception. With many of its field projects being executed by Governments, UNFPA has had to assume an additional backstopping role which has placed increased responsibility both on headquarters and on its field offices. In the past, service in the field was not required nor anticipated and employment contracts and initial briefings placed no specific obligation on staff members recruited for headquarters to serve in the field. When posts in the field needed to be filled, individuals were generally recruited specifically for such assignments, with the result that two distinct and separate categories of staff have now evolved in UNFPA - those at headquarters and those in the field.

32. The Governing Council's approval at its thirty-second session of the Executive Director's recommendation to convert some field posts to the 100 series staff rules represented an important first step in coping with this problem by making it easier to effect transfers between field and headquarters. Some time will be required for the full benefit of this step to be realized. It should be recognized that an important constraint that has to be taken into account in effecting transfers between headquarters and the field relates to the conditions of service which were in effect when staff members were originally appointed. Despite the fact that paragraph 1.2 of the Staff Regulations clearly states that "staff members are subject ... to assignment ... to any of the activities or offices of the United Nations", there is, in most cases, no specific stipulation at the time of appointment that UNFPA staff members may be required to transfer from headquarters to the field or visa versa. Various considerations affecting individual staff members have to be taken into account, e.g., home ownership, children of school age, employment of spouses, etc. These factors cannot be ignored when reassignments to the field are considered. Careful consultation and counselling on this subject with staff members is essential, and this will need to be emphasized in implementing any rotation programme.

33. As stated in his report to the thirty-second session of the Governing Council (DP/1985/38 para. 30), the Executive Director intends to emphasize and encourage more frequent transfers and reassignments of Professional personnel at more regular intervals, not only between headquarters and the field, but equally between field posts. While no arbitrary limits can or should be set for the length of time a field officer should remain in a given post, it is the Executive Director's opinion that such staff members should normally be able to anticipate transfer to another field or headquarters post approximately once every four years. Such reassignments must, of course, conform to certain generally accepted standards and criteria, including, the following:

- (a) The reassignment should, in each case, match carefully the knowledge, skills and aptitudes of the staff member with the requirements of the new post;
- (b) The post should offer to the staff member being transferred an opportunity for growth and varied experience;
- (c) The post should conform to an equitable and balanced pattern of career development.

34. While in principle all Professional personnel at headquarters, regardless of the branch to which they are attached, should be eligible for rotation, some posts and branches undoubtedly lend themselves better than others to interchange with the field and offer the most favourable prospects for the development of a rotation system, because of the close relationship of the respective functions at headquarters and in the field. As part of the job classification exercise, posts at headquarters which are subject to rotation have already been identified. With this first step already completed, the establishment of an effective rotation system will require the development of an orderly plan and close consultation with staff members. In view of the numerical imbalance of staff and grade levels between the headquarters and field establishment, only a limited number of transfers from headquarters to the field will be possible, and these will necessarily have to be carefully selected. Care must be exercised to ensure that the action to transfer

staff members to and from the field is fair and seen to be fair. The plan to be adopted should provide for a periodic examination of possible direct or indirect interchanges of staff members, especially whenever a vacancy occurs in the field or at headquarters. In order to fill a single vacancy a number of transfers between posts may have to occur to achieve effective rotation. It is unlikely that it will be possible at all times to place staff members in a post at the appropriate grade; therefore, some flexibility in the reassignment policy and practices will have to be provided, such as that which is in effect in UNDP and which permits reassignment to one grade level above or one grade level below that which is actually held by the staff member being transferred.

35. The responsibility for introducing, encouraging and administering a system of rotation of staff between headquarters and the field, between units at headquarters and between units in the field needs to be concentrated in the organization at a central point to ensure that effective implementation is undertaken. The logical place for this to be located is the UNFPA Personnel Branch. However, the directors and senior officers of each organizational unit within UNFPA need to be aware and to react to every opportunity as it becomes imminent. The action officer at the central point will act as the facilitator. The vacating of any Professional post should stimulate action to review whether a lateral transfer, promotion or recruitment should take place. This implies the need for personnel records that are current, complete and readily available, for which a link-up with the UNDP data base would be desirable.

## VII. ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

36. Staff orientation and training are essential elements of good personnel management in any organization which seeks to improve the productivity and quality of performance of its staff. Opportunities for on-the-job training, participation in seminars, workshops and other forms of training are essential features of any sound personnel policy. It is vitally important for supervisors to encourage and motivate their staff to participate in such training. Successful training should facilitate personal growth, job enrichment, greater job satisfaction and eventual recognition in the form of opportunities to move laterally or by promotion to posts where completed training will have relevance. The initiative of the staff member is obviously an important element in the process.

37. A rapid evolution of UNFPA's programme in the last decade has transformed its role and placed substantial new demands on its staff. Up to the present time, UNFPA has not been in a position to give sufficient attention to the training needs of its staff. The Personnel Branch of UNFPA does not have the staff or the resources to maintain its own separate training unit. With the resources available, UNFPA has encouraged training, especially in the programme area, in order to improve performance and help staff members to advance their career prospects and also for personal growth. It has also, through the use of its own staff, provided useful training through workshops for staff members at headquarters as well as special workshops organized by headquarters staff for field staff, region by region. Language training has been provided through the United Nations, whose facilities have been utilized extensively by the Fund. Collaboration and

co-operation with the Training Section of UNDP has also been encouraged, although this has been of limited value inasmuch as the training needs of the two organizations are not, in all respects, identical; nor does the assistance which UNDP has been able to provide obviate the need for more UNFPA input in the way of resources and commitment.

38. Within the limitations of staff and budgetary resources, UNFPA gives priority to the following training programme areas:

(a) In-service training courses/workshops under which special courses in the field of programme operation and management, financial policies and procedures, programme policies, and project design, monitoring and evaluation are conducted. A total of 35 staff from field offices and headquarters have participated in the courses and workshops conducted in the 1984-1985 biennium.

(b) Field office training programme whose primary aim is to provide local training to upgrade language and job-related administrative skills of local staff required for efficient operation of field offices. UNFPA supported this category of training programmes to the tune of \$60,199 and \$41,866 in 1984 and 1985 respectively.

(c) Education assistance programme under which UNFPA, like UNDP, assists staff members, both General Service and Professional, to undertake part-time courses related to their work in the Fund at accredited institutions. This programme offers 50 per cent reimbursement of outside tuition costs upon successful completion of the course. A total of 63 staff members have participated in and benefited from this programme in the biennium 1984-1985 at a cost of \$54,497.

39. DRSAPs, Programme Development Officers and Programme Officers will normally have expertise in one or more of the disciplines relevant to UNFPA's programme, but it cannot be expected that they will have competence in all of the disciplines for which the host country may have need. An organized training programme to broaden their competence and exposure to other disciplines would undoubtedly make the field programme more effective and also provide job stimulation and satisfaction to the staff members who would benefit from the programme. More training in supervisory and management skills and administrative procedures for both field and headquarters staff is also a prime requirement. Within the limits of its resources, UNFPA plans to extend its activities in this field, taking advantage of the facilities available through other organizations such as the United Nations and UNDP, whenever possible.

40. There is a need to strengthen the orientation and briefing of staff when first recruited. Regardless of whether they are recruited from other United Nations organizations or from other sources, newly appointed staff need to be briefed thoroughly on the mission and objectives of UNFPA, especially if they are to assume assignments in the field where they will not be in close contact with headquarters, as well as on the characteristics of the country of their assignment. The latter is equally important for serving staff upon transfer to a new country.



41. Another area where training and orientation serve a most useful purpose is to improve effectiveness and efficiency in the use and operation of modern office equipment. But this will be effective only if Professional staff, especially those with supervisory responsibilities, become familiar with the potential benefits which training in office automation can yield, and if they are fully aware of the kind of training which their subordinates have had and make it a point to ensure that the new skills are put to use. In the absence of the above, training efforts may well be non-productive. There must also be a sufficient number of machines available to ensure easy access to them by all staff members whose duties and responsibilities would benefit from their use. Modern office equipment, if put to effective and efficient use, has the potential to improve performance and to increase productivity. UNFPA has already made a beginning in this field and has a continuing programme of in-service training which has already begun to produce promising results in the up-grading of staff skills. It plans to continue and enlarge upon this programme as supervisory staff-time and resources permit.

42. Training, like every other personnel management function, involves every staff member but especially supervisory and managerial staff. Supervisors are being urged to be alert constantly to training needs of their subordinates. The identification and inventory of training needs should not require extra manpower resources. The identification is the responsibility of each supervisor who then has the responsibility of passing the information along to the UNFPA Personnel Branch for inventory and consolidation and arranging for training courses.

#### VIII. LINK BETWEEN WORK-LOAD AND THE PERSONNEL STRUCTURE

43. Any institution, unless it consists of a single person or a very limited partnership, must establish from the outset of its operations the framework of a basic organizational structure. Such a structure is typically hierarchical in nature, topped by a policy-making element to provide broad guidance and direction, with functional units clustered around it at the centre to administer the policies that are decided upon and to implement the substantive aspects of the organization's programme. In the case of organizations with a world-wide operational mandate such as UNFPA, the implementation function is a shared responsibility of the central unit or units concerned with the substance of the programme and the field offices which reach out to implement the programme or to monitor its implementation at the local level. Even when organizations function on a decentralized basis in this way, the hierarchical principle continues to prevail.

44. In order for such an organizational structure to operate, personnel must be put in place at each strategic point throughout the structure to carry out the function which is required at that point. The resulting personnel structure corresponds essentially to the organizational structure, and regardless of the organization's size a minimum number of posts and personnel is essential to the performance of the organization's functions at even the minimum level. In the case of UNFPA, units for disparate functions must be set up, each of which must have a responsible officer-in-charge, with qualified personnel sufficient in number to cover the occupational areas which are vital to the purpose of the unit. In administration, there must be a minimum number of staff members competent in the

fields of budget, finance and accounting, personnel, automation, records maintenance and general services to advise and assist, even though in the case of UNFPA these functions are shared with another organization. In all the substantive branches at headquarters there must be a level of expertise sufficient to enable the units to deal with problems in the fields in which the respective units are involved. The number to be employed in carrying out any particular function is therefore determined not only by the work-load, but also to a significant extent by the organizational and personnel structure itself.

45. Geographical decentralization is also a factor which has a bearing on the organizational and the personnel structure, and heavily influences the distribution of the work-load and the number of staff required. The programme of UNFPA in the field is carried out on a country or regional basis which argues in favour of a geographically oriented pattern of geographical bureaux or branches at headquarters, which is characteristic of the structure of other United Nations agencies with which UNFPA co-operates closely, both at headquarters and in the field.

46. Once the personnel structure has been established, the determination of the numbers required to carry out the function of any particular unit must be made on the basis of an analysis of the relevant work-load. This is essential in order to arrive at a minimum but adequate level of staffing required to execute the mission of the organization. Work-load analysis, in the case of UNFPA, can be applied most readily to the Programme Division with its geographical branches and must take into account such factors as the number, volume and complexity of individual country programmes, the number, size and complexity of projects; the distinctive characteristics of the countries concerned; and numerous other related elements. The number of monitoring reviews and evaluations is also a factor affecting the work-load of the Programme Division's branches, the Evaluation Branch and the offices in the field. Every effort has been made by UNFPA to quantify and apply objective standards of measurement to assess the work-load both at headquarters and in the field. At the time of budget preparation, work-load assessments are carried out by each organizational unit in order to determine and justify staff requirements. In the early part of 1986, a special work-load analysis of the Finance Branch of the Administration and Finance Division was carried out in connection with the problems arising out of staff reductions. In all of this, it must be recognized that a high degree of subjective judgement must be exercised to determine the level of staffing because of the highly variable nature of the elements which are relevant to determining the level of UNFPA work-loads.

47. Fortunately, it would not appear to be necessary for UNFPA to attempt to formulate for itself a separate set of modalities for determining personnel needs in relation to work-load and personnel structure. UNDP has already made a study of its field offices, with identification and measurement of relevant elements which could, in the Executive Director's opinion, be adapted, with minor modifications, to UNFPA's needs. Particular elements to be taken into account in the case of UNFPA include such factors as the priority status of a country in terms of population problems, its readiness to take necessary action (or conversely its need to be motivated to act), the number of projects and their complexity, the

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infrastructure of the recipient country, the overall volume of expenditure and the number of other United Nations agencies involved. The results of the UNDP study have already been approved by the Governing Council and, with minor modifications, the formulation which was developed could, in the opinion of the Executive Director, measure the numbers and levels of staff required for UNFPA activities in the field.

48. In addition to work-load measurement as an important element in the determination of personnel requirements, each post must be given a grade level that corresponds appropriately to the function which is to be carried out. In this matter, UNFPA has conformed to the standards established for Professional and General Service posts by the International Civil Service Commission and applied in a joint exercise with UNDP on the same basis to UNFPA as to UNDP personnel. Approval of the new job classification structure was given by the Governing Council with the understanding that the Professional posts would be classified on the basis of the Master Standard of the International Civil Service Commission and the Tier II standard as applicable. A classification standard was also developed for the New York-based organizations for the General Service category under the aegis of the International Civil Service Commission. It was necessary to integrate job classification with the personnel programme already in existence, since neither classification nor any other personnel function can operate in isolation from other parts of the personnel programme and the basic elements of the career and promotion programme, for example, have been retained.

49. The classification of posts for UNFPA has now been largely accomplished. The process has involved a review of the functions and work-load of each organizational unit and the preparation of job descriptions for each individual post. Job descriptions in prescribed formats were approved by the job holders, their supervisors and at a higher managerial level. The posts were graded by position classifiers in the Personnel Division of UNDP and then reviewed by a classification panel consisting of representatives of management, staff and classification specialists. Both UNDP and UNFPA were represented on the panel. Position classifiers from the UNDP Personnel Division participated as the secretariat of the panel and assisted in the interpretation and application of the classification standards.

50. In a dynamic organization, the duties and responsibilities of posts will require revision as changes in the mission and resource levels of the organization occur. The maintenance of the classification system will function much like the initial review. It is the responsibility of management to establish the organizational structure and to allocate functional responsibilities to units and to individuals. Each position should be a unit which constitutes a full day's work consisting of duties and responsibilities as homogeneous as is feasible in terms of kind and level. The grading of the posts requires the participation of specialists experienced in applying the classification standards approved by the International Civil Service Commission to ensure equity and consistency in the grading of the posts. The duties and responsibilities of posts will require revision as changes in the organization occur.

## IX. PRIORITIES TO STRENGTHEN SPECIFIC AREAS

51. In decision 85/20 I, paragraph 4, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to include in this present report a study of "priorities in order to strengthen specific areas of the Fund, according to Governing Council decision 83/17 III, paragraph 6". The Council decision to which reference was made requested the Executive Director "to give increased emphasis to the programme objectives in the technical and planning and the policy and evaluation areas and divisions".

52. The Executive Director wishes, in this connection, to refer members of the Council to the proposals which he put forward in document DP/1985/38, with respect to the basic manpower requirements of UNFPA covering the period 1986-1989. These proposals were in two parts - those relating to the staff in the field, and those relating to the headquarters establishment.

53. The Executive Director's proposals relating to the field may be summarized as follows:

(a) Conversion of 33 DRSAP posts and 18 other Professional posts for internationally recruited programme and programme development officers from the 200 to the 100 series of Staff Rules and their inclusion in the regular administrative and programme support services budget;

(b) Inclusion of 287 locally recruited staff in 71 field offices, who are already eligible for appointment under the 100 series of Staff Rules, in the regular administrative and programme support services budget;

(c) Provision for five additional DRSAP posts, with 20 support staff, to be included in the regular administrative and programme support services budget for 1986-1987;

(d) Provision for four additional DRSAP posts, with 15 support staff, to be included in the regular administrative and programme support services budget for 1988-1989.

54. The Governing Council, in its decision 85/20 I, paragraph 6, gave its approval to the proposals contained in paragraph 53(a) above, with the exception of 9 of the 18 Professional posts for internationally recruited programme and programme development officers, but took no action or deferred decision on the other recommendations to the thirty-third session of the Council.

55. With respect to basic manpower requirements at headquarters, the Executive Director put forward in document DP/1985/38, paragraphs 59-96, a number of important proposals relating to strengthening of various divisions and branches of the Fund. In particular he put forward specific proposals relating to the two divisions concerned with technical, planning, policy and evaluation functions which were in direct response to the Council's request contained in decision 83/17 III. As summarized in table three of that report, recommendations were made to

strengthen each of the divisions concerned. The Executive Director requested the addition of three Professional posts (2 P-5, 1 P-4) and four General Service posts to the establishment of the Technical and Planning Division in 1986-1987; and one additional P-4 post together with one general service post to each of the Policy and Evaluation Division's branches in 1986-1987.

56. At its thirty-second session in June 1985, the Council approved the five Professional posts recommended for these divisions by the Executive Director for 1986-1987 and deferred until its thirty-third session consideration of the additional General Service posts requested. The Executive Director continues to believe that the recommendations which he put forward to the Council at its thirty-third session represent the minimum staff required in these headquarters divisions of UNFPA and urges that the remaining six General Service posts recommended for 1986-1987 be approved.

#### X. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

57. This review of UNFPA personnel management has been conducted in order to comply with Council decision 85/20 I, paragraph 4, and for the purpose of developing a more effective personnel policy for the organization. As requested by the Council, the Executive Director is presenting a number of recommendations for the Council's consideration. In doing so, he recognizes and wishes to emphasize the fact that UNFPA, as a subsidiary organ of the United Nations, is an integral part of the common system and functions within the broad policy framework in personnel matters which has developed over the years under the common system. The proposed actions, which are outlined under the headings which follow, must be seen within this framework. They involve continuing some current practices and shifting emphases and introducing some changes, but no fundamental deviations from the policies which animate the common system. A substantial period of time will be required to effect a number of the more significant adjustments especially in practices such as rotation of staff and training which are ongoing processes. In an effort to improve the current personnel practices of UNFPA and to initiate action which will lead to improve operations in the future the Executive Director proposes the following guidelines of policy which are designed to continue and strengthen the basic framework of personnel management within which the United Nations and its subsidiary organs, including UNFPA, have functioned throughout the 40 years of its existence:

##### Recruitment

58. UNFPA will continue to recruit individual staff members trained and experienced in specialized subject matter areas but will endeavour to ensure that through experience and training staff members prepare themselves for a career that meets the multidisciplinary requirements of UNFPA, especially in the field, rather than limiting themselves to a career in a narrowly specialized field.

59. In order to provide better opportunities for career development and advancement as part of its long-term human resources plan UNFPA will, as future openings become available, seek to recruit an appropriate number of Professional staff at junior grade levels - the objective being to create a career ladder which will offer opportunities for advancement at each grade level.

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60. UNFPA will continue its efforts to increase the representation of women on the staff, especially at the more senior levels, and to maintain the policy of having balanced representation of staff from developing and developed countries and from contributing and recipient countries.

61. UNFPA will continue and develop further its already close contacts with interested Governments and institutions such as universities and professional associations likely to be able to refer promising candidates as an aid to effective recruitment.

#### Career development and rotation of professional staff

62. Professional staff members generally, but especially those who are newly recruited for headquarters posts, will be made aware that they may be required to serve at some time in the field as part of the career development and rotation policies of UNFPA.

63. UNFPA will institute and implement, over time, a policy of staff rotation to ensure that so far as practicable key Professional posts at headquarters are filled by staff members with recent relevant field experience. Similarly, it will be UNFPA's policy that key field posts should be filled by staff members who have recently served a reasonable period of time at headquarters. The overall objective of the rotation policy will be to improve the inter-action between headquarters and the field, and thereby improve the quality of headquarters support to the field programme and the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation activities.

64. At the same time that it is implementing its headquarters-to-field rotation programme, UNFPA will also develop plans for the staff to broaden and enrich their experience by lateral transfers including transfers at the same grade level, for the purpose of providing staff members with a variety of experience. This may include transfers within headquarters and from one field post to another as well as from headquarters to the field and vice versa.

65. It will be the objective of UNFPA to ensure, so far as practicable, that Professional staff members recruited for duty in the field are given the opportunity, after four years service in a field post, to serve for a similar period at headquarters. Under similar circumstances opportunities to serve for a period in the field will be offered, whenever practicable, for Professional personnel at headquarters, especially newly recruited staff members and those whose posts have been identified in the classification exercise as eligible for rotation.

66. UNFPA will endeavour to improve and expand cooperative arrangements with other United Nations organizations to exchange personnel in order to enhance career development opportunities. In so doing, UNFPA will ensure that the details of any such arrangements will be worked out carefully with regard to such matters as the nature of the duties to which the seconded staff member will be assigned, the duration of his period of service, and the protection of the staff member's right to return to the same post which he or she left or to one of equivalent rank.

Orientation, training and staff development

67. UNFPA recognizes the need to strengthen the orientation programme to ensure that newly recruited staff are given a thorough understanding of the Fund's objectives and programme and of their career prospects with the organization.

68. UNFPA will conduct an inventory of training needs in co-operation with the Training Section of UNDP and develop or arrange for training courses to meet such needs.

69. UNFPA will endeavour to provide or arrange for more intensive supervisory training in order to improve efficiency and productivity and to assist staff in dealing with personnel and management problems.

70. UNFPA will continue to encourage relevant individual studies through the education assistance programme referred to in paragraph 38.

71. UNFPA will encourage all staff members, both General Service and Professional, to acquire or improve their skills in the use of modern office equipment in order to ensure the most effective use of such equipment, with the object of improving efficiency and productivity and economizing on utilization of human resources.

Miscellaneous

72. The operation of the performance evaluation system will be reviewed with the object of ensuring that evaluations are realistic, that they distinguish between unacceptable, acceptable, good and outstanding performance and that they are based on strict standards of impartiality and objectivity. Supervisors will be expected to discuss performance reports with individual staff members and, in doing so, to review with them individual training needs and career prospects.

73. UNFPA will adapt and apply the formula developed by UNDP for the grading of field posts and for evaluating and determining the optimum level of staff for individual field offices.

74. UNFPA will endeavour to ensure that all aspects of the Fund's personnel programme are fully integrated, e.g., that the recruitment policy and practices take into account the need to provide opportunities for advancement through training and acquired experience and that the training programme is realistic and geared to provide opportunities for job enrichment by preparing staff members for transfers to more challenging and interesting jobs and for advancement to higher grade levels.

75. UNFPA will continue its efforts to eliminate progressively the discrepancies in conditions of service between Headquarters and field staff through the conversion of field posts from the 200 series to the 100 series of Staff Rules, where appropriate and justified.

