



**The United Nations System
in the
Islamic Republic of Iran**

**A Briefing Kit for
Newly-Recruited Staff Members**

December 2004 – Updated July 2007

www.un.org.ir

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Section One

The United Nations:

An Overview

This section provides a general background on the United Nations and contains some brief yet useful information on the history of the UN and how it works as an international organization, UN reform, the Millennium Development Goals, Common Country Assessments, the UN Development Assistance Framework and the UN Budget. For more complete information, please visit www.un.org, www.un.org.ir and www.undg.org.

Introduction

The United Nations is a unique international organization of 191 sovereign states, representing virtually every country in the world. All member states are bound together by the principles of the UN Charter, an international treaty that stipulates their rights and duties as members of the world community. The Charter spells out four purposes for the UN: to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations, cooperate in solving global problems and promoting respect for human rights, and act as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

Brief History

The history of the international organizations linked to the United Nations System goes back to the nineteenth century, when a number of countries established the International Telecommunication Union in 1865 and later the Universal Postal Union in 1874. Both are now UN specialized agencies. The forerunner of the UN was the League of Nations, an organization conceived during the First World War, and established in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles "to promote international cooperation and to achieve peace and security". The League of Nations ceased its activities after failing to prevent the Second World War.

In 1945, representatives of 50 countries met in San Francisco at the UN Conference on International Organization to draw up the UN Charter. Delegates deliberated on the basis of proposals worked out the previous year by representatives of China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States, and the Charter was signed on 26 June 1945 by the representatives of the 50 countries. Iran was one of the original signatory countries to the charter. The UN officially came into existence on 24 October 1945.

The name "United Nations", coined by US President Franklin Roosevelt, was first used in the "Declaration by the United Nations" of 1 January 1942, during the Second World War.

How the UN Works

The UN is not a world government, and it does not make laws; nonetheless, it does provide the means to help resolve international conflicts and formulate policies on matters affecting all humankind. All member states, with their differing sociopolitical systems and economies, have a voice and vote at the UN.

The UN comprises six main organs. Five of these organs; the General Assembly; the Security Council; the Economic and Social Council; the Trusteeship Council, and the

Secretariat, are based at UN Headquarters in New York. The sixth, the International Court of Justice, is located at The Hague in the Netherlands.

The UN carries out global efforts to find solutions to the problems that challenge humanity. More than 30 affiliated organizations – known together as the UN system – cooperate in this effort to promote respect for human rights, protect the environment, fight disease and reduce poverty.

UN Reform

In the past few years, the UN has enacted major reforms to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness. The pace of reforms accelerated dramatically during the first term of Secretary-General Kofi Annan (1997-2001), who set in motion the following reforms:

- reallocating resources from low priority areas and administrative services to higher priority areas identified by member states
- reducing administrative costs and using the savings for development activities
- organizing the UN's work programme into the four core areas of peace and security, development, economic and social affairs, and humanitarian affairs: and all these with human rights as a cross-cutting issue
- appointing a Deputy Secretary-General to oversee the day-to-day work of the UN and coordinate its reform efforts
- creating an Office of Internal Oversight Services, whose work involves audits, evaluations, monitoring, inspections and investigations
- establishing a cabinet comprising UN senior managers to speed decision-making and enhance coordination
- undertaking a major personnel reform aimed at improving management of staff at all levels.

Reform efforts continued with a review of all activities of UN departments, as well as such administrative issues as conference servicing, documentation and the process of resource allocation in preparing the UN budget. The aim is to ensure the optimum allocation of available resources by simplifying procedures, reducing duplication, improving efficiency, modernizing Secretariat functions and discontinuing activities that are no longer useful.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Since 1990, the UN system has sponsored a series of world summits and global conferences in order to lay out a comprehensive rights-based development agenda. In

September 2000, 147 heads of state and other representatives of 191 nations in total adopted the Millennium Declaration. This remarkable document constitutes an unprecedented agreement by the international community on a wide range of development commitments. The Declaration outlines peace, security and development concerns in the areas of environment, human rights and governance. It sets out interconnected and mutually reinforcing development goals in the form of a global agenda. By committing to the Declaration, world leaders agreed to a set of eight time-bound and measurable Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women, as follows:

1. eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. achieve universal primary education
3. promote gender equality and empower women
4. reduce child mortality
5. improve maternal health
6. combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. ensure environmental sustainability, and
8. develop a global partnership for development.

Quantitative targets have been set for each goal. Most goals are to be achieved over a 25-year period, between 1990 and 2015. Appropriate indicators have been selected to monitor progress on each of these targets. The MDGs incorporate most of the goals and targets agreed at the global conferences and world summits of the 1990s, as well as the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration.

The monitoring of MDGs will take place at both global and country levels. At the global level, the UN Secretary-General will report annually to the General Assembly on progress made towards the achievement of the MDGs, and more comprehensively every five years. These reports will support a dynamic campaign to help keep poverty issues at the centre of the national and global development agenda. At the country level, MDG reports will help to engage governments, civil society, communities, the general public and the media in a systematic follow-up to the global conferences and world summits of the 1990s.

The Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

The UN reform package, endorsed by the General Assembly, includes the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). These tools are designed to enhance the UN's collective analysis and programming in support of national goals and priorities, including the MDGs, in every country. Quality CCAs and UNDAFs should clearly demonstrate the linkages between UN system programmes and national poverty reduction strategies and plans.

The CCA is the common instrument of the UN system to analyze the national development situation and identify key development issues. Both a process and a product, the CCA takes into account national priorities, with a focus on the MDGs and the other commitments, goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration and international conferences, summits and conventions. Through the CCA, the UN and its partners identify areas requiring priority attention, based on a common analysis of key development challenges within each country. The CCA also serves as a stepping-stone towards the formulation of the UNDAF, which articulates a common UN system response to a selected number of challenges identified, and sets the foundation for joint programming by UN Agencies in a country.

In Iran, the first CCA was completed in August 2003, followed immediately by the preparation of the UNDAF for the country. This was completed in September 2004.

The UN Budget

The regular budget of the UN is approximately USD 1.3 billion per year. This funds UN activities and staff and basic infrastructure but not peacekeeping operations, which have a separate budget. All states of the UN are obliged by the Charter to pay a portion of the budget. Each state's contribution is calculated on the basis of its share of the world economy.

The UN system spends some USD 12 billion a year, taking into account the running expenses of the UN, UN peacekeeping operations and the various funds, programmes and specialized agencies excluding the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Just over half of this amount comes from voluntary contributions from the Member States; the rest is received from mandatory assessments on those states.

The UN and its funds and programmes – mainly the UN Children's Fund, the UN Development Programme, the UN Population Fund and the World Food Programme – spend nearly USD 6.5 billion a year on operational activities for development. In addition, the World Bank, the IMF and IFAD provide billions more annually in loans that help to eradicate poverty, foster development and stabilize the world economy.

Section Two

A Brief Introduction to the UN System in Iran

This section briefly introduces the UN system in Iran describing each agency's global mandate and the highlights of their programmes and activities in Iran. Contact details of each agency have been provided for those seeking more detailed information on the UN system in Iran.

Introduction

The United Nations has been working in Iran for over 40 years now and there are currently twelve UN agencies operating in the country. Together they make up the UN Country Team (UNCT) led by the Resident Coordinator (who is designated by the Secretary-General).

With one of the world's largest refugee populations in Iran, it is no surprise that much of the work is humanitarian in nature. At the same time, the UN system in the country is also helping to build the capacity of its partners for gaining national development objectives including promoting respect for human rights, protecting the environment, fighting disease, supporting development and reducing poverty. The UN is working with partners to improve access to health services, create jobs, expand food production and fight drugs and more specifically, to help the country reach the MDGs (already discussed in Section One) set by world leaders at the September 2000 Millennium Summit.

While each agency has a mandate and programme of its own, there are certain areas where they engage in direct cooperation together, i.e. interagency collaboration. The most significant of these collaborations is the agencies' work to follow up on the implementation of the MDGs and the commitments agreed upon in other international conferences and declarations. The UN system also works to prepare the CCA and the UNDAF (described in Section One) and find common approaches to cross-cutting issues. There are a number of UN theme groups, taskforces and teams composed of members from various agencies which are engaged in this collaboration.

The UN Resident Coordinator's Office

The overall task of the Resident Coordinator's Office, as in all such offices around the globe, is coordinating the operational activities for development of the UN system in Iran. To this end, the Resident Coordinator (RC) assumes overall responsibility for, and coordination of, UN operational activities at the country level.

As is the normal practice in all countries, the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme in Iran also serves as the RC. The Support Unit of the RC works to ensure coordination among the UN agencies through regular interagency meetings, Theme Groups and taskforces, and to follow up on joint activities. The unit further ensures a coordinated follow-up to global UN conferences and the CCA/UNDAF process. The Annual Report of the RC provides a comprehensive description of the activities run by the RC's Office.

For further details, please visit www.un.org.ir or contact the RC's Office at the UN Common Premises in Tehran: 39 Shahrzad Blvd, Darrou, Tel: +98 21 2860691-4, 2860925-8.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Achieving food security for all is at the heart of FAO's efforts – to make sure people have regular access to enough high quality food to lead active, healthy lives. Established in 1945, FAO serves in both developed and developing countries as a neutral forum where all nations meet to negotiate agreements and debate policy. FAO also serves as a source of knowledge and information helping developing countries and countries in transition to modernize and improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices and ensure good nutrition for all.

FAO's activities comprise four main areas: putting information within reach by working as a knowledge network, sharing policy expertise in devising agricultural policymaking and legislation, providing a neutral meeting place for poor and rich nations to build common understanding and bringing knowledge to the field.

With the growing population in Iran (particularly urban areas), FAO supports a wide range of activities in the country including agricultural and rural development, livestock, forestry and fisheries projects as well as projects in food safety and agricultural legislation. It further continues its efforts with partners towards promotion of food security, integrated management of land and water resources as well as promotion of women's livelihoods through small-scale activities.

For more information, please visit www.fao.org or contact:

Ministry of Jihad Agriculture, Keshavarz Blvd., Tel: +98 21 6123701-2

The FAO headquarters is in Rome.

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

The youngest UN body operative in Iran, UNAMA was established in 2002 to promote national reconciliation in Afghanistan and fulfil the tasks and responsibilities entrusted to the UN under the Bonn Agreement. The Mission is also mandated to manage all UN humanitarian, relief, recovery and reconstruction activities in the country in coordination with the Afghan Administration.

The UNAMA Liaison Office in Tehran has established close ties with Afghanistan's Regional Secretariat Offices in Tehran and Mashad and with UNHCR's programmes in Iran.

In 2003, the Mission supervised the election process of 11 representatives from among the Afghan refugee community in Iran for the adoption of Afghanistan's new constitution at the Loya Jirga.

For further details, please visit www.unama.org or contact the UNAMA Office at the UN Common Premises in Tehran.

The UNAMA headquarters is in Kabul.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDP, founded in 1965, is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. UNDP is on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and its wide range of partners.

World leaders have pledged to achieve the MDGs, including the overarching goal of cutting poverty in half by 2015. UNDP's network links and coordinates global and national efforts to reach these Goals. UNDP's focus is helping countries build and share solutions to the challenges of: democratic governance, poverty alleviation, crisis prevention and recovery, energy and environment, and HIV/AIDS.

UNDP has had a representative office in Iran since 1966 and has worked closely with its major development partners to promote sustainable human development in rural and urban communities. Dozens of UNDP-funded projects in such diverse areas as poverty alleviation, good governance, sustainable preservation of the environment, crisis prevention and recovery, trade, agriculture and education have been implemented successfully.

The UNDP Country Programme for Iran (2005-2009), which was prepared in 2004 through a series of extensive consultations with key development partners in the country, i.e. the Government, civil society, the international community and the UN system, focuses primarily on strengthening capacities and capabilities for achieving MDGs, enhancing good governance, improving economic performance, employment generation, sustainable development, disaster management and energy efficiency.

Caspian Environment Programme (CEP) is a regional umbrella environmental programme established by the five Caspian littoral states, i.e. Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation and Turkmenistan, and aided by the international agencies including EU/Tacis, the World Bank, the UNDP and the UNEP to meet a desire for regional cooperation towards the sustainable management of the Caspian Sea environment.

Under the first phase of the CEP from 1998 thru 2002 a regional environmental management mechanism was established based on a Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) in Baku in Azerbaijan. Under this phase a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) was carried out, a Portfolio of Priority Investment Projects (PIPs) was identified and 16 Matched Small Grants were awarded. Five National Caspian Action Plans (NCAPs), one in each country and a Strategic Action Programme (SAP) were developed and approved. Also the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea was produced and signed by all.

In 2003 the GEF approved a new project in support of the CEP, short titled as CEP-SAP, with an overall budget of \$ 6 millions which aims to provide support towards commencing the SAP in the priority areas of biodiversity protection, invasive species, and pollution monitoring and control. In addition to the CEP-SAP Project, the CEP includes three projects funded by the EU/Tacis namely Sustainable Management of Fisheries (SMF), Sustainable Development of Coastal Communities (SDCC) and the Land-based Sources of Pollution (LBS). The SMF and SDCC are already granted with a total of Euro 3.4 while the LBS with a budget of Euro 2.5 is under preparation.

CEP PCU moved in Tehran-Islamic Republic of Iran. The PCU is located at #63, Golestan Alley, Valliasr Ave., Tehran 1966733413, Islamic Republic of Iran. Tel: (+98-21) 204 2285, 204 2935, 205 9574 ,Fax: (+98-21) 205 1850 . E-mail: cep.pcu@undp.org. For further information, please visit CEP website at www.caspianenvironment.org or contact CEP/PCU.

For further details about UNDP, please visit www.undp.org.ir or contact the UNDP Office at the UN Common Premises in Tehran.

The UNDP headquarters is in New York.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO was founded in 1945 with an ambitious goal: to build peace in the minds of people. This specialized UN agency functions as a laboratory of ideas and a standard-setter to forge universal agreements on emerging ethical issues. The Organization also serves as a clearinghouse for the dissemination and sharing of information and knowledge while helping Member States to build their human and institutional capacities in diverse fields.

UNESCO is working to create the conditions for genuine dialogue based upon respect for shared values and the dignity of each civilization and culture. The world urgently requires

global visions of sustainable development based upon observance of human rights, mutual respect and the alleviation of poverty, all of which lie at the heart of UNESCO's mission and activities.

The UNESCO Tehran Office was established as a National Office in 1996, promoted to Cluster Office in January 2003 after an absence between 2001 and 2002. It serves the cluster countries of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office prioritizes and focuses its activities within 19 programmes in the fields of education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, communication and information. These programmes range extensively in nature and scope from Education for All, water resources, tangible and intangible cultural heritage to earthquake preparedness, ethics of science and technology, promoting freedom of expression and media access for all.

For further details, please visit www.unesco.org or contact:

Bahman Building, Saadabad Complex, Darband Square, Tehran, Tel: +98 21 2740141-3.

The UNESCO headquarters is in Paris.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

UNFPA is the world's largest international source of funding for population and reproductive health programmes. Since beginning operations in 1969, the Fund has provided nearly \$6 billion in assistance to developing countries. UNFPA works with governments and non-governmental organizations in over 140 countries, at their request, and with the support of the international community. Making motherhood safer for all women is at the heart of UNFPA's mandate.

UNFPA supports programmes that help women, men and young people plan their families and avoid unwanted pregnancies, undergo pregnancy and childbirth safely, avoid sexually transmitted infections (including HIV/AIDS) and combat violence against women.

UNFPA also assists governments in the world's poorest countries and those in need to formulate population policies and strategies in support of sustainable development. It further provides supplies and services to protect reproductive health during natural disasters and emergencies.

The main goal of UNFPA in its country programme in Iran is to enhance the quality of life for Iranians by improving their reproductive health status, achieving sustainable balance between the population, economic development and resources and reducing gender disparities.

For further details, please visit www.unfpairan.org or contact the UNFPA Office at the UN Common Premises in Tehran.

The UNFPA headquarters is in New York.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Established in 1950, UNHCR is mandated to lead and coordinate international action to provide legal protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees, returnees, stateless persons, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons worldwide. It promotes international refugee agreements, encourages harmonization of national asylum procedures and monitors government compliance with international refugee law. UNHCR further develops effective partnerships with other relevant organizations and fosters diplomatic initiatives focused on preventing and mitigating the conditions that cause refugee movements.

UNHCR's primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to seek long-term durable solutions by encouraging their voluntary repatriation if conditions warrant, by helping them integrate in their countries of asylum or resettle in third countries. In more than five decades, UNHCR has provided assistance to at least 50 million people.

Ever since 1983, UNHCR has been operating in the Islamic Republic of Iran, a host for one of the largest refugee populations worldwide during most of the last 20 years. UNHCR Representation in Iran is currently focused on facilitating the voluntary repatriation of Afghan and Iraqi refugees. Since the start of the Afghan repatriation programme in April 2002, over 1 million refugees – which amounts to more than half of the Afghan caseload – have opted to return to their country. As far as the Iraqi refugee population is concerned, more than 100,000 out of 202,000 have returned to Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. In addition, the Representation also helps ensure protection of refugees in Iran and concentrates on promoting the development of a legal framework to address the management of refugee issues within the country.

For further details, please visit www.unhcr.ch or contact:

5, East Emdad Street, North Shiraz Avenue, Vanak Square, Tehran, Tel: +98 21 8057201-11.

The UNHCR headquarters is in Geneva.

United Nations Information Centre (UNIC)

As a part of the worldwide network of UNICs responsible for spreading the UN message of peace and development, the UNIC office in Tehran is the principle local source of public information about the UN system. UNIC provides up-to-date information material on the aims and activities of the UN in all fields to a local audience comprising of government entities, the press/media, educational institutions, academia and NGOs.

UNIC also has a good and well-organized library with all relevant UN publications, reports, resolutions and other material. In addition, it takes a lead role in organizing and holding events such as UN Day, the International Day of Peace and so on with the prime objective of raising awareness about the UN system and spreading the message of global peace.

For further details, please visit www.unic-ir.org, available both in English and Farsi or contact the UNIC Office at the UN Common Premises in Tehran.

United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

Founded in 1946, UNICEF is mandated to advocate for the protection of children’s rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children’s rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children. UNICEF insists that the survival, protection and development of children are universal development imperatives that are integral to human progress.

UNICEF is committed to ensuring special protection for the most disadvantaged children: victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation and those with disabilities.

UNICEF is working towards the realization of children’s rights in Iran in partnership with the Government of Iran. The UNICEF Country Programme focuses on 12 districts in Sistan and Baluchistan, Hormozgan and West Azerbaijan provinces but also aims to promote child protection and juvenile justice on a national scale. UNICEF’s priorities are enabling adolescents to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS, to promote girls’ education and the quality of education, to protect children from abuse and to ensure young children’s health, nutrition and mental care.

UNICEF works with the Government to improve the national monitoring, coordination and reporting on child rights. UNICEF also responds to emergencies with supplies in the immediate aftermath and supports the rehabilitation of quality services for all in the medium term.

For more information, please visit www.unicef.org or contact:

216 Nezami Street, Ghoba Street, Shariati Avenue, Tehran 19449, Tel: +98 21 2594994.

The UNICEF headquarters is in New York.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

UNIDO helps developing countries in their fight against marginalisation in today's globalized world. Set up in 1966, it mobilizes knowledge, skills, information and technology to promote three key elements: productive employment, a competitive economy and a sound environment. UNIDO is a specialized UN agency that focuses its efforts on relieving poverty by fostering productivity growth.

As a global forum, UNIDO generates and disseminates knowledge relating to industrial matters and as a technical cooperation agency, it designs and implements programmes to support the industrial development efforts of its clients. The broad programmatic objectives and priorities of UNIDO are strengthening industrial capacities and cleaner and sustainable industrial development.

The UNIDO office in Tehran – established in 1999 – is currently supporting the implementation of several governmental projects in Iran with industrialisation priorities.

For further details, please visit www.unido.org or contact the UNIDO Office at the UN Common Premises in Tehran.

The UNIDO headquarters is in Vienna.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

UNODC was established in 1989 to fight against illicit drugs and international crime. The three pillars of the UNODC mission are research on drugs and crime issues, assisting states in the ratification and implementation of international treaties and development of domestic legislation on drugs, crime and terrorism and also technical cooperation projects to counteract illicit drugs, crime and terrorism.

UNODC works to educate the world about the dangers of drug abuse and to strengthen international action against drug production, trafficking and drug-related crime. UNODC also provides accurate statistics through its global assessment programme and helps to draft legislation and train judicial officials as part of its legal advisory programme.

The office became operational in Iran in 1999. Its current projects aim at strengthening the drug interaction capacities of the Iranian police force, working to develop national capacity to prevent and control drug consumption through introducing new methods for drug treatment and supporting research studies in the field of drug demand reduction. Furthermore, UNODC supports initiatives aimed at mobilizing civil society organizations in this regard and also disseminates information on the consequences of drug abuse and trafficking to the Afghan community repatriating to Afghanistan. Another UNODC project in Iran, is aimed at strengthening the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of Iran's judiciary.

Currently, a new UNODC strategic framework for Iran is being developed in the main areas of law enforcement, drug demand reduction and the rule of law. Future projects and activities will be based on this strategic framework. UNODC is also cosponsor of the joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS: UNAIDS.

For further details, please visit www.unodc.org/iran or contact:

45 Pardis St., Mollasadra Ave., Vanak, Tehran, Tel: +98 21 8795031-2.

The UNODC headquarters is in Vienna.

World Food Programme (WFP)

WFP is the food aid arm of the UN system. Food aid is one of the many instruments that can help to promote food security, which is defined as access of all people at all times to the food needed for an active and healthy life. The policies governing the use of WFP food aid are oriented towards the objective of eradicating hunger and poverty. The ultimate objective of food aid is the elimination of the need for food aid.

The core policies and strategies that govern WFP activities are to provide food aid to save lives in refugee and other emergency situations, to improve the nutrition and quality of life of the most vulnerable people at critical times in their lives and to help build assets and promote the self-reliance of poor people and communities, particularly through labour-intensive works programmes.

WFP in Iran provides food assistance to Afghan and Iraqi camp refugees through relief and recovery operations. This strategy includes the improvement of education, literacy and productive skills and feeding programmes for orphans. WFP also collaborates in the voluntary repatriation programme for Afghan refugees in coordination with UNHCR. WFP Logistic Unit organizes all transport, storage, handling and associated services of the commodities under WFP responsibility.

WFP also provides food aid to the most vulnerable populations during natural disasters.

For further details, please visit www.wfp.org or contact the WFP Office at the UN Common Premises in Tehran.

The WFP headquarters is in Rome.

World Health Organization (WHO)

WHO is the UN specialized agency for health, founded in 1948. WHO's objective, as set out in its constitution, is the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health which is defined as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

WHO's four strategic directions are reducing excess mortality, morbidity and disability, promoting healthy lifestyle and reducing risk factors to health, developing accessible health systems and creating an institutional environment for the health sector.

The priority areas of WHO collaboration in Iran includes health system's development, health information support, control of communicable diseases and reproductive health. WHO is promoting community-based initiatives with the objective to achieve a better quality of life in various communities. The organization also supports the country for disasters risk management before and after emergency situation to reduce avoidable loss of life and disability.

For further details, please visit www.who.int or contact:

WHO Representative Office in Iran, Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Simayeh Iran St., Phase 5, Shahrak Qods, Tehran, Tel: +98 21 8363979-80

The WHO headquarters is in Geneva.

Section Three

Basic Administrative

Issues

This section provides some brief information on issues that newly-recruited UN staff in Iran (only staff and not individuals on service agreements/contracts) should become familiar with. The topics described are only those which are common to all UN agencies in the country. This section is by no means inclusive and, hence, all staff members are advised to obtain the Human Resources Manual (which is the definitive source) from the Human Resources official of their agency.

Introduction

All staff members, by virtue of their appointment in the UN, are International Civil Servants (ICS). This means that they are international public officials and that their function and responsibilities are not national but international. However, the term “international civil servant” should not be confused with the term “internationally-recruited staff member”. While both locally-recruited and internationally-recruited staff members are considered international civil servants and both enjoy certain common privileges, their conditions of service are different.

The information provided in this section is primarily designated for locally-recruited staff members; nevertheless, a sizeable portion of it is also applicable to internationally-recruited staff members.

1. Recruitment

1.1. Appointment in the UN

There are different kinds of appointments, i.e. contracts varying from temporary to fixed terms. A locally-recruited staff member is either appointed in the General Services (GS) category (levels 1-7) or in the National Officer (NO) category (levels A-D). Each level consists of 13 steps.

1.2. Medical Clearance

One of the prerequisites for recruitment is the medical clearance. There are designated medical doctors who would conduct the required medical exams and advise the UN Medical Service whether the candidate is medically fit or not. All expenses incurred in this process are to be reimbursed by the agency concerned.

1.3. Completion of Forms

Upon recruitment, a staff member is required to fill out a series of forms for the Human Resources (HR) section. The purpose of these forms is to correctly establish the staff member’s entitlements, to clarify the medical insurance coverage under the Medical Insurance Policy (see hereunder) and to enable the UN to know whom to contact in the staff member’s family in case of an emergency.

All forms and documents must reflect the staff member's name as indicated in his/her national passport or birth certificate and the sequence of last name, first name and middle initial must be consistently applied.

It is of utmost importance for a staff member to report immediately to the HR section any changes in the information provided originally during recruitment (e.g. change of address, marital status, etc.).

1.4. Identity Cards

Uniform UN identity cards are issued to all staff members. Local staff members also have an identity card issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

1.5. Employment Policy on Family Relationships

Except where another person equally well qualified cannot be recruited, appointment shall not be granted to a person who bears any of the following relationship to a staff member: father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister. The spouse of a staff member may be appointed provided that s/he is fully qualified for the post for which s/he is being considered and that s/he is not given any preference by virtue of the relationship to the staff member.

A staff member who bears any of the above-specified relationships to another staff member shall not be assigned to serve in a post which is superior or subordinate in the line of authority to the staff member to whom s/he is related and shall disqualify himself/herself from participating in the process of reaching or reviewing an administrative decision affecting the status or entitlements of the staff member to whom it is related. The marriage of one staff member to another shall not affect the contractual statutes of either spouse but their entitlements and other benefits shall be modified.

2. Entitlements

2.1. Salary Scales

There is a local salary scale observed by all agencies and subject to revision periodically. Salaries are designated based on the level of their appointment (i.e. level and step).

2.1.1. Salary Increment

A within-grade salary increment is an increase in pay from one step to the next higher step within the staff member's existing level in the established local salary scale (13

steps). The award of a within-grade salary increment is subject to satisfactory performance of the staff member.

2.1.2. Salary Advances

Under very exceptional circumstances and subject to management approval, a limited salary advance may be granted to staff. These exceptional circumstances and conditions are:

- 2.1.2.1. Advance for major medical expenses in only exceptional circumstances may be granted under the MIP upon presentation of bills. The advance should be recovered within one month from the date of payment or upon settlement of the medical claim, whichever is earlier.
- 2.1.2.2. An emergency advance is granted for genuine urgent needs such as material losses due to fire and other disasters, home emergency repairs (but not construction loans) and serious illness or death in the immediate family circle. Such advances may not exceed two months of a staff member's net pay and should be repaid in equal monthly instalments over a maximum period of twelve months.
- 2.1.2.3. A special advance is up to one month of a staff member's net salary for ad hoc purposes related to the well-being of the staff member or his/her family.

2.2. Medical Insurance Plan (MIP)*

The staff member's participation in the medical and dental insurance plan (MIP) is voluntary but recommended. Applications must be made within 30 days of the date of entry on duty both for the staff member and eligible family members. It is a contributory medical and dental plan and the staff member's contribution is a percentage of his/her salary and varies according to the number of eligible family members participating in the plan.

* FAO applies a different medical insurance policy.

2.3. United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund

All staff members with contracts for six months or longer automatically become participants in the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund. The Fund provides withdrawal and retirement benefits, protection in the case of disability and benefits to surviving family members in the case of an employee's death.

2.4. Designation of a Beneficiary

A staff member can designate a person or persons as his/her beneficiary or beneficiaries in the event of his/her death. Payment to the beneficiary/ beneficiaries comprises outstanding salary, allowances and commutation of accrued annual leave (see hereunder) as at the time of death.

2.5. Pensionable Remuneration

Pensionable remuneration is the amount related to one's level and step used as the basis for the monthly contribution payable to the Pension Fund and the amount of the benefit a staff member will ultimately receive.

2.6. Dependency Allowance

This is an allowance paid in respect of the staff member's dependent children under the age of 18 as well as children aged 18-21 if in full-time school attendance. When both husband and wife are staff members, the spouse having the higher salary level will claim the dependency allowance.

For staff members having disabled children, a medical report from the attending medical doctor is required in order to establish the entitlement to a higher dependency allowance (i.e. twice the normal dependency allowance).

2.7. Language Allowance

A language allowance is payable for demonstrated proficiency in two of the official UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish and Russian) where the staff member's native language is none of the above six languages. Proficiency must be demonstrated by passing the UN language proficiency examination. This allowance is only payable to GS staff.

2.8. Special Education Grant

Staff members with a disabled child (children with special educational needs) are entitled to a special education grant. An updated medical report from the child's medical doctor is required to enable the UN Medical Director to approve the grant.

2.9. Types of Leave

Staff members are entitled to different kinds of leaves during their service in the UN.

2.9.1. Annual Leave

The annual leave is 2.5 days per month which may be accumulated up to a maximum of 60 days to be carried over to the following year.

2.9.2. Uncertified Sick Leave/Family Leave

Uncertified sick leave is a maximum of 7 days per year and not more than 3 consecutive days. A staff member may also use all or part of the maximum seven working days in a

year of uncertified sick leave as family leave for family related emergencies, e.g. in the event of the death of a member in his/her immediate family, or to take care of his/her child or an immediate family member who becomes ill.

2.9.3. Certified Sick Leave

If a staff member's sick leave has been certified by a licensed medical doctor, the certificate should be submitted to the HR section. For a sick leave exceeding 3 consecutive days, a certificate is mandatory.

2.9.4. Maternity Leave

Staff members who are pregnant are entitled to 16 weeks of maternity leave. This leave may begin within 6 weeks of expected delivery but not less than 2 weeks prior to the delivery date. In the latter case, a certificate from a licensed medical doctor is to be provided confirming that the staff member is fit to continue to work. Staff members continue to accrue annual leave while on this kind of leave.

2.9.5. Paternity Leave

A paternity leave may be taken at one time within the first year of the child's birth or in two periods provided the second period ends within the first year of the child's birth. The duration of paternity leaves varies in different agencies.

2.9.6. Adoption Leave

An adoption leave (again, the duration of which varies in different agencies) is applicable to both male and female staff members for adopting a child under 18 years of age.

2.9.7. Special Leave without Pay

Special leaves without pay are for compelling family or personal reasons (childcare, relocation of spouse, etc.). Staff members may be given lien against post for up to one year. To maintain Pension Fund and medical coverage, staff members may contribute both their own and the Organization's share of Pension Fund and MIP during this leave.

2.10. UN Official Holidays in Iran

Working days in the UN system in Iran are generally Sundays to Thursdays with Fridays and Saturdays being the weekend. There are ten official UN holidays throughout the year which are selected from among the annual bank holidays of the Iranian calendar and also the international holidays. These days are designated and announced to all UN staff before the beginning of the year. Staff must note that the Iranian bank holidays not observed by the UN are strictly regular working days in all agencies.

2.11. Compensation for Loss of or Damage to Personal Effects

Staff members are entitled, within the limits of and under the terms and conditions established by the Organization, to reasonable compensation in the event of loss of or

damage to their personal effects determined to be directly attributable to the performance of official duties on behalf of the UN. No compensation, however, will be paid for loss or damage which was occasioned by the claimant's negligence or misconduct.

3. Security

The nature of the work of the United Nations requires all staff to be well prepared for emergency situations of various kinds. Furthermore, there are security issues that have to be observed by all staff at all times (whether there is an emergency or not).

It is also mandatory for all staff members to review thoroughly a UN security training package (obtainable from the HR Official of each agency), complete the assignments therein and submit its completion certificate to the HR Official.

3.1. Security Plan

UN system in Iran has in place a country specific security plan. The aim of this plan is to outline duties of various security officials and put in place procedures to ensure staff safety in times of an emergency (be it the outcome of a natural disaster, conflict, etc.) or deteriorating security situation, which may require relocation/evacuation of all UN staff members from a state/region or the entire country. The Security Advisor maintains a countrywide security plan and also area-specific security plans in areas where UN maintains a permanent presence. The security plan is implemented through the global UN security phases (I, II, III, IV and V). Security phases correspond to a prevailing security situation in a particular area, region or the whole country. UN Security Plans are provided to all agencies and Area Security Coordinators. Staff members are expected to receive relevant extracts of the plan from their respective agencies. Important factors of the security plan are discussed below.

3.1.1. Warden System

The security plan is implemented through a warden system. It is the individual staff member's responsibility to advise his/her warden of his/her address of residence and contact details. Accordingly, wardens are responsible to account for all staff working in his/her area of responsibility. In Tehran, the warden system is agency based where few wardens may be given responsibility of international as well as national staff members.

3.1.2. Security Phase

It is also the individual staff member's responsibility to know the security phase status at all times. Information on security situation and security phase status can be obtained from the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). Security related information is passed to all staff members through agencies' security focal-points and/or the established warden system. Changes to the security phases are communicated to

Heads of Agencies and staff members through the Security Management Team's security advisories.

3.1.3. Area Security Coordinator

Apart from the capital Tehran, there are four areas of UN operation. Each is under the jurisdiction of an Area Security Coordinator (ASC). ASCs are responsible to prepare area specific security plan based on the country specific security plan and will establish their own warden system. All security clearances to travel within the country will be processed on line through DSS website www.dss.un.org with effect from 01 August 2007. These requests will be approved by the Security Advisor on behalf of the Designated Official for Security.

3.1.4. Relocation and Evacuation Plan

Iran security plan includes various contingencies that may necessitate relocation and/or evacuation of staff members. Evacuation/ relocation would be by air, road and sea depending upon the prevailing circumstances. Should there be a requirement; the Security Management Team would start the process as outlined in the plan to move the staff members and dependants to safer places.

3.2. Communications

Communications are the lifeline in times of trouble. Accordingly, all staff members should take time to become familiar with the radio equipment available within the UN system. The UN utilizes two radio systems in Iran: VHF walkie-talkies for short distances and HF radios for long distances. Each staff member should ensure that s/he is aware of the Sell Calls/Call Signs of the HF/VHF radios.

3.3. MOSS and MORSS Compliance

Considering the various security threats to the UN staff while at work or at home, a set of Iran-specific MOSS (Minimum Operating Security Standards) and MORSS (Minimum Operating Residential Security Standards) have been identified. These standards specify measures that staff members and their agencies need to take to mitigate security threats. They also include precautions against natural disasters. Each staff member must make sure that s/he complies with these standards at all times both at work and at other places.

4. Travel

In fulfillment of their tasks and duties, staff members might be required to travel overseas or to different sites within the country. For travel to an overseas destination, relevant advisory can be obtained from UN DSS website for the country to which the staff member is traveling. For travel within Iran, the Security Advisor issues travel advisories for various areas/ situations which the staff members are expected to follow for their own safety.

4.1. Domestic Travel

Before travelling beyond Tehran or outside the sub-office locations, staff should check the area-specific security measures and also the security phase of the area they wish to travel to.

A staff member should always seek Travel Authorization (TA) prior to their travel and carry that TA at all times during the mission. A TA would only be approved if security clearance has already been obtained from the UN Designated Official for Security. This clearance, which is in the form of a reference number, should also be with the traveller throughout the mission.

Staff members must inform their supervisor about their mission dates before their departure and should immediately notify the FSCO, ASC, or their warden of their arrival at their destination. It is also recommended that they keep in regular contact with the office in Tehran or the sub-office they work in during the mission.

4.2. International Travel

When travelling abroad on a mission, staff members should observe certain other rules in addition to those stated above (TA, security clearance, etc.). First and foremost, the staff member should be in possession of a valid national passport and/or also a valid UN Laissez-Passer (UNLP). The UNLP is a travel document and not a passport and the visa required to enter a country must be stamped on this document. However, for leaving and entering Iran and also for payment of airport taxes, the national passport must be used. The UNLP is property of the UN and must be returned by the local staff member after the mission.

4.3. Travel Expenses

A staff member receives a Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) to cover the costs of travel (both domestic and international). The DSA rate varies for different countries but remains the same throughout Iran for national staff. DSA has been calculated to suffice for appropriate accommodation and meal costs plus 20 percent extra for miscellaneous expenses. If certain other costs have been incurred during the mission which are directly related to the mission purposes (e.g. long-distance phone calls to the office), the staff could be reimbursed upon the submission of receipts.

DSA is not to be considered as an extra travel bonus or allowance of some sort; it is merely paid to the staff member or anyone travelling on a contract with the UN to cover subsistence expenses.

4.4. Personal Travel

The above procedures do not apply to a staff's personal travel. However, staff members are required to provide contact details of their residence at times of personal travels both inside and outside the country. This is merely for ensuring the welfare and security of staff at all times.

5. Secondment

Secondment is the transfer of the staff member from one agency to another for a fixed period, normally not exceeding two years, during which s/he is paid by and is subject to the staff rules and regulations of the receiving agency but retains his/her rights of employment in the releasing agency.

6. Separation from the UN

Separation is an action by which a staff member ceases to be employed by the Organization. There are different kinds of separation.

6.1. Expiration of Appointment

A fixed term appointment does not carry any expectancy of renewal or of conversion to any other type of appointment.

6.2. Resignation

A resignation within the meaning of staff rules is a separation initiated by the staff member. A prior written notice of resignation by the staff member is required (normally one month for a fixed term contract).

6.3. Retirement

Staff members are not retained in active service beyond the age of 60 or 62 (for all participants who entered the Pension Fund on or after 1st January 1990, the normal retirement age would be 62). The effective date of retirement is the end of the month in which the staff member reaches the age of 60 or 62.

6.4. Abandonment of Post

Abandonment of post is when a staff member leaves his/her duty station for an indefinite period without providing any approved prior notice of resignation.

6.5. Termination

This includes termination for abolition of post, unsatisfactory service, health reasons, disciplinary reasons and/or purposes in the interest of the Organization. In the event that the UN unilaterally decides to shorten the contract of a staff member, there are provisions for a termination indemnity. No termination indemnity will be payable if the appointment expires on the expiration date. In the event of summary dismissal for serious misconduct, there is no entitlement to either a period of notice or an indemnity payment.

6.6. Death of the Staff Member

Upon the death of a staff member, the dependent should contact the HR Official for necessary actions.

7. Grievance Panel on Sexual Harassment

The UN Charter sets high standards for the Organization and promotes the observance of these standards throughout the world. The UN places no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs. The UN has the duty to ensure that its staff is treated, and treats one another, with respect, dignity and due regard for personal privacy.

Any form of harassment, particularly sexual harassment, in the workplace is contrary to the provisions of the Charter and to the policy of the Organization. Any form of harassment is the violation of the standards of conduct expected of every international civil servant. Staff members are advised that sexual harassment in any form constitutes unacceptable behaviour and shall not be tolerated at UN Headquarters or in country offices and may lead to disciplinary action.

Abbreviations & Acronyms

The following is a list of the abbreviations and acronyms used in this briefing kit. This list is, however, by no means inclusive of all the abbreviations and acronyms used in the UN System.

ASC – Area Security Coordinator
CCA – Common Country Assessment
DOS – Designated Official for Security
DSA – Daily Subsistence Allowance
FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FSCO – Field Security Coordination Officer
GS – General Services
HR – Human Resources
ICS – International Civil Servant
IFAD – International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF – International Monetary Fund
MDGs – Millennium Development Goals
MIP – Medical Insurance Plan
MORSS – Minimum Operating Residential Security Standards
MOSS – Minimum Operating Security Standards
NO – National Officer
RC – Resident Coordinator
TA – Travel Authorization
UNAMA – United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNCT – United Nations Country Team
UNDAF – United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund (previously United Nations Fund for Population Assistance)
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIC – United Nations Information Centre
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund (previously United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund)
UNIDO – United Nations Industrial Organization
UNJSPF – United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund
UNLP – United Nations Laissez-Passer
UNODC – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (previously UNDCP: United Nations Drug Control Programme)
UNDSS – United Nations Department of Safety and Security
WFP – World Food Programme
WHO – World Health Organization