

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE THIRD MEETING OF
THE HUMAN RESOURCES NETWORK**

UN, New York, 17-19 July 2002

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I. ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND WORK PROGRAMME

1. The agenda as adopted is attached in annex I and the list of participants in annex II.

II. ISSUES UNDER CONSIDERATION BY ICSC

A. Framework for Human Resources Management

(a) Review of the pay and benefits system

2. The Network decided to inform the ICSC that:

Over the past two years, organizations' representatives and the CEB secretariat had been heavily involved in focus groups, working groups and retreats set up by ICSC to provide impetus to this matter. More than three hundred experts from national civil services, academia and other international organizations, senior line managers, HR specialists, staff representatives and others, had brought to the Commission their best wisdom as to how the compensation system of the international civil service might be reformed. The reform of the system that underpinned common system pay and benefits was one of the most important issues that the Commission would tackle since its creation. The reform of that system was intrinsically linked to the Framework for Human Resources Management which had been approved by ICSC at its fifty-second session and endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 55/223. Already in 1995 the General Assembly called on the Commission to take a more pro-active approach in supporting more modern approaches in the management of human resources. In its resolution 51/216 of 18 December 1996, it requested the Commission to take the lead in analyzing new approaches in the human resources management field so as to develop standards, methods and arrangements that would respond to the specific needs of the organizations of the common system.

3. The Network recognized that organizations had done much to improve their organizations' performance, and they wanted to do more. But efforts were being impeded by the monolithic pay system, the outmoded classification system and inadequate means of recognizing competencies and contribution. If the human resources management reforms being undertaken by organizations were to succeed, they must be accompanied by modernization of that system for which ICSC was the trustee. The goals of the current reform laid emphasis on the need, *inter alia*, to improve organizational performance, to provide competitive conditions which would enable organizations to attract and retain staff of the highest quality and to strengthen management capacity. The current complex, rigid, outdated system must therefore be replaced with a streamlined competitive system which will strengthen the independence and impartiality of the international civil service, permit greater flexibility to reward staff on the basis of merit and competence, and be responsive to the ever evolving mandates, and changing nature of work, across the organizations of the common system.

4. Turning to the specific proposals contained in the document, the Network concluded the following:

The Noblemaire Principle

- In accordance with the conclusions by ICSC at its fifty-fourth session, no proposal was contained in the ICSC document to update the Noblemaire Principle although it was one of the Tier I items to be considered in 2002. Organizations were competing more than ever before with a broader array of institutions with far better conditions of employment. As the Network had repeatedly said in the past, the updating of the Principle – the foundation of the pay and benefits system – should be an integral part of the reform process. The Secretary-General and other Executive Heads had repeatedly called for the need to ensure greater competitiveness and improved conditions of service. The Framework for Human Resources Management underscored the need for an integrated holistic approach. Thus, a piece-meal approach should not be taken. The Network therefore decided to request the Commission not to postpone the review of the application of the Noblemaire Principle.

Job Classification

- The Network had repeatedly said that the current Master Standard was in need of fundamental overhaul. It therefore supported finalization of the proposals described in the document so that the new Standard could be promulgated next year by the Commission under article 13 of its Statute.

Broad-banding

- The Network considered that a broad banded pay system was desirable for the Common System. As Executive Heads had said for many years, the monolithic grade system failed to respond to the needs of organizations. A broad-banded approach would be more responsive to the management of work within individual organizations. A broad-banded approach would also enable organizations to respond to the fast pace of change in the nature of work which characterized today's world. Options on banded structures should be kept open at this stage in view of the need to accommodate the diversity in the system; organizations' structures, sizes and complexity differed significantly so this was clearly one area where one size should not be imposed on all. Furthermore, this was an area where some organizations should be able to pilot certain approaches in the first instance before they were adopted.

Reward for contribution

- The Network considered that a system of reward for contribution was not only desirable but necessary for the effective management of the organizations. It was essential to support organizations' efforts to modernize their performance management systems and bolster organizational performance. One of the most fundamental criticisms of the current system – by management and staff alike - was that a pure rank in post approach did not provide the means for differentiating pay in terms of levels of contribution. Organizations were developing and introducing competency-based approaches and ensuring that their performance management systems were robust. Further developmental work should therefore be urgently pursued.

Senior Management Service (SMS) & Dual Career Ladder

- In view of the key role of managers in driving organizational change – and the need to professionalise management throughout the system – the Network decided to urge the Commission to propose to the General Assembly later in the year the introduction of a SMS, including the following:
 - the criteria (definition of the nature of the work) for membership;
 - the set of core management competencies which could be ‘fleshed out’ by each organization so as to align them more specifically with its culture and job profiles;
 - the proposal to create a dual career ladder which would distinguish senior line managers from senior individual contributors and would recognize the value of senior specialists by providing career progression without the assumption of managerial responsibilities.

Strategic Bonuses

- The Network believed that a system of recruitment/retention/relocation bonuses should be developed and introduced. Targeted strategic bonuses were considered a priority by several, especially field-based organizations, particularly when staffing positions in less desirable locations. An inter-agency working group had already taken shape and would continue to collaborate with the ICSC secretariat on the specific modalities for such bonuses so as to ensure that they were clearly targeted to areas of need, and that cost containment considerations were effectively built into the proposals.

ACTION TAKEN BY ICSC

The Commission decided that:

- ◆ **Job evaluation system** – (i) the conceptual model should be further developed and its validity assessed at ICSC’s fifty-sixth session, (ii) organizations should be strongly encouraged to proceed with the development of monitoring, training and accountability measures in tandem with the current reform of the system and report to the Commission on these measures in conjunction with the implementation of any new system and (iii) as part of its 2003 work programme it would include the possible promulgation of the new Standard under Article 13 of its Statute;
- ◆ **Broad-banding and related pay for performance system** – (i) organizations should provide the Commission with quantitative and qualitative data on their performance management systems and a critical analysis of their ability to differentiate levels of performance, (ii) a pilot study should be conducted of **one** broad banded model* and related pay for performance system (based on the confluence approach) at two volunteer organizations, (iii) the ICSC secretariat should consult with the organizations on the modalities for the study, (iv) the modalities for the study should be presented to the Commission at its next session, (v) approval of a broad-banded system for the common system and the related pay for performance system was contingent on the successful results of the pilot study, and (vi) the General Assembly should be informed that while a broad banded model and related pay for performance systems could have value, the hypothesis needed to be proven through a rigorous test;
- ◆ **Senior Management Service** – (i) the introduction of the SMS had merit in building leadership and management capacity, (ii) it should not constitute a new subsidiary organ, advisory group or category of staff, (iii) it would not require a special pay and benefits package, (iv) it would consist only of high-level managerial positions, (v) posts would be identified for inclusion based on criteria approved by the ICSC, (vi) a common set of core competencies would be applied for recruitment, selection, development and performance management, (vi) the Executive Heads would be responsible for selection, evaluation of other aspects of managing the members of the SMS and (vii) it would monitor the implementation of the modalities and report to the General Assembly thereon.

* Although the Commission decided that a pilot study should be conducted of only **one** broad banded model, it did not determine a specific model in response to the request of the spokesperson of the HR Network to allow time for consultation thereon.

(b) Contractual arrangements

5. At its fifty-fourth session, the Commission had concluded that, while there was a need to take into account recent changes in contractual arrangements, it was important to establish a more consistent framework by reducing the number of different contracts and by standardizing their description. It therefore requested that its secretariat work in close cooperation with the organizations to prepare an in-depth analysis of the current situation reflecting the comments of the Commission, the needs of the organizations and staff for clarity, and, to the extent possible, more complete and structured information for its 55th session. The Network:

- expressed appreciation for the intensive consultations which the ICSC secretariat had undertaken with the organizations on this highly complex issue before preparation of the document;
- stressed that contractual arrangements must meet the organizations' diverse business needs and the nature of work to be performed and, most importantly, were governed by changing financial realities and the views of each organization's legislative body;
- noted that a number of organizations had already streamlined their contractual arrangements;
- supported - in general - the various types of arrangements set out in the document;
- also supported the need for indefinite appointments and probationary periods but continued to stress the need for flexibility in these areas, especially in terms of the time conditions;
- decided to urge the Commission to adopt a general framework on what should be the minimum conditions of service for employing staff. Rather than to adopt a more prescriptive approach, this would be consonant with the first guiding principle under the HR Framework that "contractual arrangements should be flexible so as to respond to organizational needs";
- believed that among the principles in this framework reference should be made to improved transparency and fairness and to the need for some mechanism to ensure accountability of management, including regular review, monitoring and reporting.

ACTION TAKEN BY ICSC

The Commission deferred consideration of this item to 2003.

(c) Mobility

6. At its fifty-fifth session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 55/258, requested ICSC to conduct a comprehensive review of the question of mobility and its implications for the career development of staff members in the United Nations system. While the documents prepared by the ICSC secretariat on the issue provided much food for thought of what was a highly complex issue, the Network noted that:

- The complexity of the issue was exemplified by the fact that the documents raised many more questions requiring investigation and analysis. Moreover, the data reproduced in the tables of the ICSC document did not adequately capture this complexity.

- The issue of inter-agency mobility had been on the agenda of the then CCAQ/PER agenda for a long time. One of the initiatives it had taken along with its sister committee, ISCC, was the development of the Participating Agencies Mobility System.
- A number of organizations were working on systems of “managed mobility” across –
 - occupations
 - organizational units
 - duty stations and
 - organizations
- A substantive consideration of mobility must recognize that organizations’ policies – first and foremost – must be linked to the business needs of the organizations as
 - mobility was not an end in itself;
 - for some, mobility was an issue of organizational effectiveness and survival;
 - for others, it was linked to efforts to develop a multi-skilled workforce.
- It was clear that much work needed to be done to facilitate mobility, especially with more supportive programmes in the area of work/family – for example, by facilitating spouse employment. For younger generations, this would be a greater impediment to mobility. There was also an important link to the reform of the pay system: for example, by offering further incentives through strategic bonuses.
- Turning to the specific proposals in the document, the Network believed that much more work needed to be accomplished before the Commission could consider all the implications of the proposals in the document.

ACTION TAKEN BY ICSC

The Commission requested its secretariat to develop a programme of work for the future which addressed *inter alia* links between career development and mobility, and provided an analysis of the advantages, disadvantages and obstacles to mobility both for the organizations and staff members.

B. Conditions of service of the Professional and higher categories

(a) Evolution of the UN/US net remuneration margin & base/floor salary scale

7. The Network:

- noted that as was foreseen, the 2002 margin would fall below 110;
- strongly supported the restoration of the margin to the mid point of 115 in accordance with the normal functioning of the approved methodology;
- preferred that a differentiated approach be taken in restoring the margin to the mid point in light of the General Assembly’s and the Executive Heads repeated requests that the margin imbalance be addressed;
- emphasized that this was a question of equity, and was all the more important at a time when all partners agreed on the importance of strengthening managerial capacity;

- recalled that over the years organizations had consistently supported March implementation dates to allow adequate time for financial/payroll systems to take into account the changes once approved by the General Assembly;
- recalled also that while each organization must take action in accordance with the responsibilities they have assumed in adhering to the Statute of the ICSC, it was understood that organizations would do so in the context of their respective budgetary processes.

ACTION TAKEN BY ICSC

The Commission decided

- ◆ to recommend to the General Assembly that the margin be restored to its desirable mid-point of 115 by granting a differentiated salary increase for the Professional and higher categories for implementation effective 1 March 2003.

(b) **Draft agenda for the twenty-fifth session of the Advisory Committee on PostAdjustment Questions (ACPAQ)**

8. The Network:

- Took note of the agenda for the twenty-fifth session of ACPAQ scheduled for 27 January to 3 February 2003.

ACTION TAKEN BY ICSC

The Commission

- ◆ Approved the agenda as proposed for ACPAQ.

(c) **Review of the level of the education grant**

9. The Network:

- expressed appreciation for the analyses prepared by the CEB secretariat; it fully supported the proposals to increase the levels of the education grant in 7 currency areas or countries, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, United Kingdom, Italy, United States and the US dollar area outside the United States; it also endorsed the proposed increases in the flat rates for boarding; and it agreed to recommend continuation of the special measures in effect in the US\$ outside the USA area in China, Indonesia, Russia and Romania;
- while recognizing that the proposals were fully in accordance with the methodology established by the ICSC and endorsed by the General Assembly, expressed concern over the second trigger mechanism introduced by ICSC in 1997 which required that at least five claims must exceed the existing maximum admissible expenses; this appeared to operate to the detriment of currency areas with very few claims; the Network would revert to this issue in the context of the future review of the methodology;

- noted the disparities in the financial burden for staff whose children when educated in the US\$ outside USA area which contained a large number of economies and currencies; it also considered that clearer guidelines should be developed for the operation of the special measures mechanism;
- agreed that while the methodology was rigorous and had served well over the past twelve years, the time had come to streamline it *inter alia* to take into consideration the alignment of the Euro-land countries to the extent possible;
- requested the CEB secretariat to continue to refine the computer application that organizations were required to use for the biennial reporting of education grant claim data.

ACTION TAKEN BY ICSC

The Commission decided to

- ◆ recommend to the General Assembly the increases in the levels of maximum admissible expenses and maximum grant in Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, UK, United States and the US dollar area outside of the USA and the flat rates for boarding to be applicable as from the school year in progress on 1 January 2003;
- ◆ maintain the special measures for China, Indonesia, Romania and Russia;
- ◆ request organizations to ensure the compatibility of their computer systems and applications for the purpose of reporting on their education grant data.

C. Hazard Pay

10. The Network:

- recalled that at the Commission's fifty-fourth session the organizations had supported in principle an increase of hazard pay to locally-recruited staff but needed some time to consult amongst themselves on the parameters of the increase;
- agreed that the level of hazard pay of locally-recruited staff be adjusted by a factor of 50 per cent (i.e. from 20 to 30 per cent of the mid point of the local salary scale);
- continued to support the view that the level of hazard pay of internationally recruited staff should be updated;
- reiterated the position that the current criteria for the granting of hazard pay should remain unchanged and that the linkage between hazard pay and local salary scales was the only equitable means of ensuring a uniform relativity between base salary and hazard pay.

ACTION TAKEN BY ICSC

The Commission

- ◆ Decided that the level of hazard pay granted to locally-recruited staff should be increased to 30 per cent of the mid-point of local base salary scales;
- ◆ Having considered the situation with regard to UNRWA area staff and the legal opinions, concluded that the Commissioner-General of UNRWA had full authority to deal with this matter by applying the relevant procedures in place for area staff.

D. Mission subsistence allowance

11. At its 54th session, the Commission requested its secretariat in cooperation with the organizations to collect additional information and consider the possibility of harmonizing the approach to this issue and present the updated information on the practices of the organizations at its 55th session. Reviewing the new information presented in the ICSC document, the Network:

- considered that the current arrangements being applied by organizations which had been developed in a highly collaborative manner were working satisfactorily and with optimum harmonization;
- emphasized the need for flexibility so as to meet the diverse operational requirements of the organizations;
- decided to inform the Commission that there was need to analyse these arrangements in conjunction with the reform of the pay and benefits systems, particularly with the view to improving the benefits package for non family duty stations.

ACTION TAKEN BY ICSC

The Commission deferred consideration of this item to 2003.

E. Paternity leave

12. At its fifty-fourth session, the Commission agreed in principle that paternity leave could be introduced in the common system but that it should be provided under a uniform policy and be of reasonable duration taking into account the needs of the organization and of the family. It therefore requested its secretariat, in consultation with organizations, to prepare specific proposals for consideration at its 55th session. Reviewing the additional information and proposals set out in the document, the Network:

- reiterated that initiatives to introduce paternity leave - an important feature of changing organizational cultures - must be viewed in light of organizations' reform agendas, the policies adopted by the Executive Heads in 1995 on Work/Life and Improving the Status of Women as well as the Beijing Platform for Action which acknowledged the shared role of both parents in the family;
- expressed concern that the proposals in the document were not sufficiently substantiated with empirical evidence and rationale and raised questions which went well beyond the issue of paternity leave, in particular in respect of adoption leave; the proposals were in effect regressive, particularly with respect to the duration of paternity and adoption leave;
- noted that many organizations had granted 8 weeks adoption leave under their special leave provisions for many years and encouraged those organizations who had not yet established this practice to do so;

- decided to inform the Commission that the organizations believed that it would be unfortunate, indeed unacceptable, to reduce existing arrangements and to urge it to review this issue in a holistic manner along with a range of family-related arrangements (e.g. maternity leave, time off for breast feeding, payment of travel for child to accompany staff member on duty travel).

ACTION TAKEN BY ICSC

The Commission deferred consideration of this item to 2003.

F. Conditions of service of the General Service and other locally recruited staff

(a) Survey of best prevailing conditions of employment for the General Service and related categories in Geneva and Vienna

13. These items were not discussed by the Network; organizations' representatives with staff at the duty station would directly intervene in the debate in the Commission.

III. MATTERS RELATED TO THE AGENDA OF HLCM

A. Exchange of views on issues to be considered by HLCM

14. The Network was briefed by the Secretary of HLCM on the HR implications of the issues which HLCM would take up at its forthcoming session.

**IV. FOLLOW UP TO PREVIOUS DECISIONS
TAKEN AT THE INTER-AGENCY LEVEL**

A. Matters arising from the meeting of the Inter-agency Security Management Network

15. Participants were briefed by representatives of UNSECOORD on the status of the overall security management system and the conclusions and recommendations of the *Ad hoc* Inter-agency Meeting on Security which took place in May 2002, in particular with respect to recommendations set out in a document (CEB/2002/HLCM/12) on new residential security measures and procedures; these would be incorporated into the revised Field Security Handbook. Reiterating the position that the security and safety of staff must not be compromised, the Network:

- welcomed the new approach to residential security which was more in line with what was actually happening at the field level;
- agreed - in principle - that organizations should assume responsibility for bearing the entire cost of the determined minimum residential security measures of internationally recruited staff subject to consideration of the financial implications;

- looked forward to receiving from UNSECOORD a cost estimate so that financial implications could be evaluated and a final decision taken by correspondence before the end of the year;
- noted that the majority of organizations were not in favour of a lump sum approach in this area, particularly at the start up of the new arrangements and also in view of the organizations' liability as employers, but recognized that if additional information were made available, the case might be made for a lump sum approach based on an assessment of the local situation;
- requested that the situation of female spouses be included along with female staff in the threat/risk assessment and determination of Minimum Operating Residential Security Standards (MORS) at duty stations;
- deferred consideration of extending some elements of the residential security measures to locally-recruited staff; this would entail a significant change in policy and have significant financial implications; thus, it preferred to await operational experience with the new measures before contemplating their extension.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Information and Communications Technology

16. Participants were informed by the Secretary of HLCM of a request made at a meeting of the ICT Network in May 2002 (CEB/2002/HLCM/10, para. 39) that HR managers consider in conjunction with the reform of the pay and benefits system appropriate compensation arrangements for 24/7 support requirements; the ICT Network had also asked that attention be paid to the recruitment and retention of specialized ICT staff and the possibility of non-management career tracks for ICT specialists.

B. CRANET Survey 2002 on Comparative HR Policies and Practices in International Organizations

17. Participants were requested to send their reply urgently if they had not already done so to the communication from the CEB secretariat of 20 May 2002 on their organization's participation in the follow-up to the 1999 survey in which 21 organizations from within and outside the UN family had participated. It was anticipated that a larger number of AHRMIO member organizations would participate in this second round which would greatly enhance the comparative analyses and provide a broader range for bench-marking purposes.

ANNEX I – Agenda as adopted on 17 July 2002

I. Adoption of agenda and work programme (CEB/2002/HLCM/9/Rev.1)

II. Issues under consideration by ICSC:

A. Framework for Human Resources Management

- (a) Review of the pay and benefits system (ICSC/55/R.2)
- (b) Contractual arrangements (ICSC/55/R.3)
- (c) Mobility (ICSC/55/R.4)

B. Conditions of service of the Professional and higher categories:

- (a) Evolution of the UN/US net remuneration margin (ICSC/55/R.5)
- (b) Base/floor salary scale (ICSC/55/R.6)
- (c) Draft agenda for the twenty-fifth session of the Advisory committee on Post Adjustment Questions (ACPAQ) (ICSC/55/R.7)
- (d) Review of the level of the education grant (CEB/2002/HLCM/11; ICSC/55/R.8)

C. Hazard pay (ICSC/55/R.13)

D. Mission subsistence allowance (ICSC/55/R.11)

E. Paternity leave (ICSC/55/R.12)

F. Conditions of service of the General Service and other locally recruited staff:

- (a) Survey of best prevailing conditions of employment for the General Service and related categories in
 - Geneva (ICSC/55/R.10)
 - Vienna (ICSC/55/R.9)

III. Matters related to the agenda of HLCM:

A. Exchange of views on issues to be considered by HLCM

IV. Follow up to previous decisions taken at the inter-agency level:

A. Matters arising from the meeting of the Inter-agency Security Management Network

V. Other business

A. Information and communications technology

B. CRANET Survey 2002 on comparative HR policies and practices of international organizations

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