



Date: 21 September 2022

Dear Colleagues,

We the Staff Unions representatives have met with the management representative to discuss the draw of the "mobility scheme" coming very soon. The proposed policy can be read [here](#) and is summarized below. In summary:

- It affects all P, D staff and FS staff in all functions. Only ASGs/USGs, staff in the SG's office, YPP and language staff in their first five years, and staff on temporary appointments are exempted.
- It will run in parallel with the staff selection system (vacancy management), which will continue to be the only way to get a promotion.
- All staff subject to mobility policy (see below) will be required to move laterally to another duty station every 2 to 5 years (depending on duty station hardship level). Ninety-three percent of all posts are classified as rotational positions. The remaining seven percent includes project posts and those that are highly specialized and cannot be found in other duty stations.
- The mobility exercises will be annual. Staff who have reached their time limit on post (2 to 5 years) will be placed in the compendium. They must express interest for posts in that compendium in another duty station. If they do not get any of the posts they want, they may be matched to other positions.
- The policy applies to all staff who joined after May 2021. The policy will also apply to staff who joined prior to May 2021 as soon as they apply and are selected against a rotational position through a lateral move or promotion.
- A special constraints panel will be set up to consider appeals from staff members who do not want to / cannot move to the proposed position.
- There is no credit for past geographic moves.
- The first mobility exercise will begin shortly.

We were informed by management on 9 September that the mobility policy was with the Office of Legal Affairs for review with a view to its promulgation shortly. We raised concerns as this policy is very different to what was earlier discussed, and management has held back from holding a meaningful dialogue on this matter.

**We wish to stress we are not against mobility.** There is an expectation and desire by many who join the UN to change posts and duty stations at some point in a career. However, what is appropriate for statisticians is not appropriate for political officers and vice versa. We do not think that one size can fit all.

A mobility policy needs to be smart and tailored for different types of function. Functions with a high number of fungible posts in hardship locations will require more burden-sharing and more frequent mobility. Functions with more specialization and a low number of posts in hardship locations benefit from some but not too frequent mobility, as staff need to specialize more. A regional commission won't be much use if its entire staff changes every five years.

Further, this policy will rewind the important strides that the organization has been making on gender, mental health and work-life balance. With a requirement to move frequently regardless of function, couples will have to decide who has a career and who follows, while children will have to change school on a frequent basis. Moving an entire household is stressful, made more so when it isn't apparently necessary in all cases. While this may already be a reality in certain functions such as political affairs and in UNHCR, there is no need to spread these problems across the whole secretariat. This is why even foreign services are rethinking their policies.

Kind regards,

Mahamadou Nassirou Ba, President  
ECA Staff Union

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