

Dear Colleagues,

One of the many internal challenges in the UN is the myriad of contract types. Staff members doing similar work can often hold different contracts with different benefits. The UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Staff Council and staff representatives in the field have often conveyed concerns on this issue.

Over the last few years, there have been concerted efforts to untangle the complexity and harmonize the conditions of service for all staff members working for the United Nations Secretariat, Funds and Programmes. This work culminated in the General Assembly adopting in December last year resolution A/RES/63/250 on Human Resources Management [[published in February 2009](#)].

Who does the GA resolution apply to?

Contractual reform applies to staff members serving in the United Nations Secretariat, Funds and Programmes, including UNDP. This includes international and national staff; professional and general service staff; UNDP staff on secondment, loan, exchange, assignment in another UN organization, and special leave without pay (SLWOP); and staff whose appointments are administered by UNDP on behalf of other organizations.

The reform *does not* apply to personnel on non-staff contracts such as Special Service Agreements (SSAs), Service Contracts and UNV Volunteer Service Agreements

What does the GA resolution mean for you?

The GA resolution approved new contractual arrangements, effective 1 July 2009. Instead of the 11 different contract types currently in use, in the future there will be 3 types of appointment. Instead of three different sets of Staff Rules, there will be one common set of Staff Rules.

The reform aims not only to rationalize the current contractual arrangements, but it also provides an opportunity to facilitate inter-agency mobility.

What will be the 3 new types of appointment?

Under the new Staff Regulations and Rules only three types of staff appointments will be distinguished:

- **Temporary Appointment (TA)** – which may be granted to appoint staff for seasonal or peak workloads and specific short-term requirements for **less than one year** with an expiration date specified in the letter of appointment. It may be renewed for up to one additional year when warranted by surge requirements and operational needs related to field operations and special projects with finite mandates. Under no circumstances can a TA exceed two years and it does not carry any expectancy of renewal or conversion to another type of appointment.
- **Fixed -Term Appointment (FTA)** - may be granted for a period of one to five years, to persons recruited for service of a prescribed duration having an expiration date specified in the letter of appointment. The benefits and allowances for Fixed-Term contracts will be similar to those of Fixed-Term Appointments under the current 100-series of the Staff Rules. The Fixed-Term Appointment under the new Staff Rules can be renewed multiple times, as determined by the needs of the organization, but, irrespective of the length of service, it does not carry any expectation, legal or otherwise, of renewal or of conversion to any other type of appointment. This principle was emphasized by the General Assembly in the abovementioned Resolution and is reflected in the new Staff Regulations that the General Assembly adopted last week.
- **Continuing Appointment (CA)** - is an open-ended appointment without an expiration date specified in the letter of appointment.

What contract types will be phased out?

As of 1 July 2009, the 100 -, 200- (L-contract) and 300- (ALD) series appointment types under the current Staff Rules will no longer be offered.

How will UNDP implement the changes?

The changes have many policy, legal, budgetary and system implications which are far-reaching. It will be especially challenging for UNDP because we have a large number of staff members and administer staff on behalf of other agencies, we are more decentralized than others, and there is greater variety in the sources of funding on which our contracts are based.

While the transition will be challenging, to make it work in a pragmatic manner, we will implement a two-tier approach:

1. All new staff who join UNDP on or after 1 July 2009 will be offered new types of appointment under the new set of Staff Rules.
2. Current UNDP staff will be gradually transitioned, subject to requirements for their functions, to the new contractual framework upon expiration of their contracts on or after 1 July 2009. Current appointments will be honored until their expiry dates, unless terminated by the organization or staff member for reasons not related to contractual reform, in accordance with the applicable UN Staff Regulations and Rules and applicable UNDP policies. The rights of permanent contract holders will be preserved.

How will I know which contract I will get?

In principle, UNDP intends to use the three types of appointments. However, the General Assembly is still reviewing the modality of the Continuing Appointment and so no such appointments can be considered or granted before 1 January 2010. Thus at this point in time it is not possible to determine the full implications and further course of action for UNDP.

If you are currently a staff member, the conditions under which each new type of appointment will be offered will be based on the new UN Staff Regulations and Rules. The drafting committee headed by the UN Secretariat, including UN Funds and Programmes, to which UNDP actively contributes, is finalizing the draft of the new Staff Rules for provisional entry into force in the 1 July 2009 and submission to the UN General Assembly in the Fall 2009. In order to implement the UN Staff Rules, UNDP has the flexibility to establish eligibility criteria and policies for each type of appointment, taking into account the operational needs and funding conditions of the Organization.

What happens next?

The revised Staff Regulations reflecting the new contractual modalities were approved by the General Assembly last week. They will be published by the Secretariat very soon, for an entry into force on 1 July 2009. As soon as we have further details on the content of the new Staff Rules and the conditions of service applicable to the new contracts, we will provide you with more information on the implications of the reform, details of the transition, and updates on upcoming changes.

I regret that the time between decision-making and effective date of implementation, as decided by the General Assembly is as short as it is. It puts an extra burden on the organization and, most importantly, will no doubt lead to many questions from your side.

In the near future management and human resources representatives will hold meetings and discussions to answer your questions. We are also working on a webpage on the intranet and Q&As will be prepared. In the meantime, you should feel free to contact Ms. Henrietta Debeer, Policy Advisor, henrietta.debeer@undp.org should you have further questions.

Our contracts are vital to all of us and therefore I want to have this important change handled with utmost care. Many discussions have taken place amongst senior management, as well as with the Staff Council, to make sure that changes are implemented as smoothly and transparently as possible.

We should view these changes as an opportunity to bring more order and fairness into the system. I count on your cooperation and patience to make it happen.

Regards,

Ad Melkert