

Human resources update, including on the global internship programme

Report by the Director-General

INTRODUCTION

1. In addition to the workforce data as at 31 July 2018 made available on the WHO website on 24 October 2018,¹ this report provides an overview of the latest developments in workforce, succession planning and human resources policies. It also includes an annex on the global internship programme (Annex).

TRENDS IN THE WORKFORCE

2. As at 31 July 2018, the total number of WHO staff members was 7933 (see workforce data, Table 1), a slight decrease compared with the total as at 31 July 2017 (8029). Of that number, 30% are employed at headquarters, 25% in regional offices and 45% in country offices. Staff members holding long-term appointments in the professional and higher categories are distributed as follows: 51% at headquarters, 32% in regional offices and 17% in country offices.

3. The number of individuals hired on non-staff contracts (consultants and individuals on agreements for performance of work; see workforce data, Table 19) has decreased from 1173 full-time equivalents in January–July 2017 (14.6% of total workforce) to 1078 in January–July 2018 (13.6% of total workforce). The policy and procedures regarding the management and administration of consultants has been revised and is expected to enter into force on 1 January 2019. This is in direct response to JIU and audit recommendations that individual consultants be considered as part of the workforce and should hence be managed as an element of the Organization's human resources rather than as procurement of services. The introduction of systematic human resources certification for recruitment of consultants will ensure consistency of practice and compliance with WHO policy across the Organization.

4. For the period 1 January to 30 June 2018, staff and other personnel costs amounted to US\$ 442 million, or 40% of the Organization's total expenditure of US\$ 1107 million (compared with 38% for the same period in 2017).

5. As at 31 July 2018, women accounted for 44.7% of staff members in the professional and higher categories holding long-term appointments (see workforce data, Table 2), representing an increase of

¹ See <http://www.who.int/about/finances-accountability/budget/en/> (accessed 12 November 2018).

1% since July 2017 (43.7%). The commitment of senior management to gender balance, coupled with proactive efforts in outreach, selection, policy and accountability, have accelerated progress towards gender equity in staffing; in 12 months, the number of women in the professional and higher categories has increased by 1% and the number of women at the P4 grade and above has increased by 1.4%. As the result of the Director-General's commitment to gender parity, particularly at the senior level, as at 31 July 2018 women accounted for 35% of the staff at the D1 and D2 grades, an increase of 5% since 31 July 2017. Further efforts are being made to increase the number of qualified women on the roster of heads of country offices, which should help to improve gender parity; as at 31 July 2018, 33% of the heads of country offices were women.

6. As at 31 July 2018, 32% of Member States were either unrepresented or underrepresented (see workforce data, Table 3). Some 43% of staff in the professional and higher categories (including staff on temporary contracts) are from developing countries (41% for long-term appointments). Organization-wide, 31% of staff members at the D1 and D2 levels come from developing countries; at headquarters, representation at these levels is 13.8%, an increase of 1.3% since 31 July 2017. The Director-General has made one of his priorities the appointment to senior positions of nationals of developing countries. The Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023, sets a diversity target of at least one third of directors at headquarters being nationals of developing countries.

7. In addition to outreach efforts to attract more candidates, the selection process for international professional positions has been revised with a view to improving gender balance and geographical representation. A five-minute video on unconscious biases in selection designed by the International Organization for Migration is shown at the first meeting of selection panels. The assessment conducted during the selection process no longer leads to a numerical evaluation of the candidates but indicates for each candidate whether he/she is in the range: “not suitable”, “only suitable with improvements”, “suitable” or “strong”. All candidates in the same range are considered of equal merit. The final choice among candidates of equal merit can therefore take into account the possible gender and geographical underrepresentation of the Regional Office or headquarters cluster and address it. These measures have already prompted an improvement in gender balance and geographical representation, as can be showed from the appointments of five Directors at headquarters announced in October 2018 (not included in workforce data as at 31 July 2018), of whom three are women, one comes from an underrepresented country and two come from a developing country.

8. On 28 June 2018, after several years of negotiations, WHO and the United Nations Volunteers programme signed a memorandum of understanding that determines the conditions under which WHO will be able to deploy United Nations volunteers across all its offices in order to enhance its professional workforce. Since the signing ceremony and the sharing of information with all regional offices on how United Nations volunteers can best be recruited in their regions, there has been a general increase in interest from regional and country offices. The most notable action to date has been the current ongoing recruitment of about 100 national United Nations volunteers by the WHO country office in Pakistan linked to information-gathering and monitoring of a measles vaccination campaign. In addition, discussions are being held on the possibility of WHO collaborating with United Nations volunteers on the United Nations Youth Volunteers programme to build capacity for future leaders in the health sector by ensuring sustained succession planning.

SUCCESSION PLANNING OF RETIREES

9. In recent years, the Secretariat has been conducting annual succession planning exercises in which managers plan one year in advance what they will do with posts vacated by staff members retiring the following year. They may abolish the posts, replace them by posts with new profiles or downgrade them,

thereby allowing the Organization maintain agility in the alignment of its human resources plans with the new priorities of the Organization.

10. Resolution EB141.R2 (2017) confirmed amendments to Staff Rules 410 and 1020 that have been made by the Director-General with effect from 1 January 2019. Among other things, the amendments implemented the extension of the mandatory age of separation to 65 as of 1 January 2019. However, staff members who joined the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund before 1 January 2014 may remain until they reach 65 unless they prefer to exercise their acquired right to retire at the age of 60 or 62, which has remained unchanged in the rules of the Pension Fund. Therefore, before asking managers what they plan to do with positions vacated by staff retiring in 2019, headquarters and regional human resources offices contacted each staff member reaching their retirement age in 2019 to ask them when they planned to retire. The individual communication specified that if they did not respond to the questionnaire, it would be assumed that they intend to retire at the age of 65 unless they give three months' notice that they have decided to retire earlier.

11. Of the 170 staff members reaching their age of retirement under rules of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund in 2019, 34.7% responded to the questionnaire. Combining those staff members who responded that they chose to stay until reaching 65 with those who did not respond (on the assumption that they intended to stay until reaching 65 unless they gave three months' notice), 91.2% of the 170 staff members reaching their age of retirement in 2019 intend to stay until the age of 65 (155 of 170); 5.3% intend to retire in 2019 (9 of 170); and 3.5% intend to retire at a specified date between their retirement age of 60 or 62 and the maximum age of separation of 65 (6 out of 170).¹ In short, succession planning in 2019 will apply to 13 staff members who in 2019 either intend to retire (10) or will reach the mandatory age of separation of 65 (3).

12. Of the 207 staff members who have reached or will reach their age of retirement under the rules of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund in 2018, 29 staff members initially challenged the delay in implementing the extension of the mandatory age of separation to 65 on 1 January 2019 rather than on 1 January 2018 as set out in United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/244 (2015). After receiving a response to their requests for administrative review, 17 of those staff members then appealed to the Global Board of Appeal, which joined their appeals into a single proceeding which is pending. Subsequently, eight staff members filed additional requests for administrative review of their separation letters (six of whom are among the 17 staff members who have already filed appeals). In addition to challenging the delayed date of implementation, seven of the eight additional requests for administrative review include a claim of being unlawfully denied an exceptional extension beyond retirement age.

PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION²

13. In order to foster a culture of respect within WHO as its core value and strengthen the prevention of harassment, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation, two United Nations training courses have been made mandatory for all staff: a course on the prevention of harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority and a course on the theme "To serve with pride: zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse by our own staff". Current staff were given three months to take these two courses and the compliance rate is high (as at 1 October 2018, 94.80% for the first and 91.70% for the second). New staff members are required to take the two courses within three months of joining the Organization. An

¹ For more details by staff categories, by gender and by major offices, see workforce data, Table 9 (<http://www.who.int/about/finances-accountability/budget/en/>) (accessed 12 November 2019).

² See also document EB144/INF./3.

extensive communication campaign has been launched to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. In addition, the Secretariat will collaborate with the United Nations Global Center for Human Resources Services (OneHR) to ensure that candidates found guilty of sexual exploitation or sexual harassment are not offered any type of employment within the United Nations system, including WHO.

14. The revision of the 2010 policy on prevention of harassment and sexual harassment is awaiting the conclusion of the ongoing review by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, which is expected to endorse by end-2018 a model reference policy on the prevention of sexual harassment that will be adapted by each United Nations agency, including WHO. The policy drafting process, led by the Secretariat's Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics, will involve all stakeholders, including staff representatives, the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Department of Human Resources Management.

15. A United Nations-wide sexual harassment perception survey was launched in early November 2018. The survey was open to all employees of participating organizations, irrespective of their contracts, and administered and analysed by a leading firm of management consultants, which was awarded the contract by the United Nations Secretariat. More than 30 organizations participated in the survey, including WHO, PAHO and UNAIDS, on a cost-sharing basis. It was designed so that it could be benchmarked against other similar studies and aimed to identify: (a) the incidence of sexual harassment within the United Nations as well as perceptions of how incidents are handled within the United Nations; (b) the risk indicators, including vulnerable categories of personnel and potential high-risk environments; (c) the reporting rates, challenges and experiences; (d) the awareness level of staff and non-staff personnel regarding available reporting and support mechanisms; and (e) the ways in which the Organization could strengthen its prevention, protection and response efforts and more effectively serve the needs of those affected. The final report will be delivered to participating organizations at end-December 2018 and will enable them to enhance their prevention and response efforts on sexual harassment and plan and prioritize follow-up measures. The Secretariat will provide an update at the governing body meetings in January 2019.

MOBILITY

16. The number of staff in the professional and higher categories holding long-term appointments who have moved from one duty station to another for the period January–July 2018 (see workforce data, Tables 14 and 15) is 140 (6.5% of all the staff members in those categories), a slight decrease compared with the period January–July 2017 (165). However, there has been an increase of moves from one major office to another: 49% compared with 36% for the same period in 2017.

17. The Director-General is committed to promoting staff mobility and in October 2018, following discussions with senior team members, he provided guiding principles for the implementation of the mandatory phase of the mobility policy in the course of 2019, which formed the basis of discussions at the meeting of the Global Staff/Management Council. The Director-General has stressed that WHO will be better equipped to deliver its mission as more Secretariat staff gain broader experience; that greater mobility of staff will help promote diversity and the strengths that this brings to WHO; and that the mobility policy must serve the overall needs of the Organization by helping to increase country impact. Building on the 2016 policy and taking into consideration the evaluations of the first two years of the voluntary phase and feedback from the Global Staff/Management Council, the intention is to refine the policy and facilitate its gradual implementation in 2019, as follows: the rotation of international professional staff members who have overstayed their standard duration of assignment will be staggered to ensure business continuity in major offices; objective criteria will be established to determine who

among those who have overstayed are expected to rotate outside their current duty station in 2019; they will be asked about their interest in particular countries/regions ahead of rotation priority; they will be given adequate notice to allow forward planning and smooth rotation; there will be objective and transparent processes for resolving difficult cases; for fairness and duty-of-care considerations, priority consideration will be given to those international professional staff members who have overstayed their standard duration of assignment in hardship duty stations (D, E and non-family).

18. Based on the evaluation reports of the voluntary phase, alternatives to the annual compendium are being explored. Furthermore, other WHO policies related to selection and promotion will be amended to place greater value on staff mobility. The policy revision will also take into account the proposals made by staff representatives at the Global Staff/Management Council meeting in October 2019 and the Council's subsequent recommendations. The Secretariat will provide an update on policy development and implementation at the governing body meetings in January 2019.

ACTION BY THE BOARD

19. The Board is invited to note the report.

ANNEX

GLOBAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

1. In May 2018, building on the foundation of the previous internship programme and on the changes recently implemented, the Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA71.13 on the reform of the global internship programme. As requested in paragraph 4 of the resolution, this Annex:

- (a) reports on the measures that have been put in place to operationalize the objectives of the resolution, across all three levels of the Organization;
- (b) provides statistics on applicants and accepted interns' demographic data, including gender and country of origin;
- (c) gives updates on progress concerning the mechanism that will provide financial and in-kind support to accepted interns who need support.

2. The strategic objectives of the programme are to build future leaders in public health through professional training and capacity-building opportunities across the Organization. The programme is supported by three pillars, namely: attracting talent, assuring good-quality training and professional experience, and building a pool of talented young professionals. It is guided by three cross-cutting principles: gender balance, geographical diversity, and communication and collaboration both across and outside the Organization. The programme is proposed to be implemented in three phases as follows.

- **First phase.** Activities include: the development of the basic architecture, structure and tools; the collection of baseline information; the mapping of challenges, the implementation of minimum support; the development of a plan for financial support; and discussion with potential partners.
- **Second phase.** Financial and in-kind support for selected interns who need assistance will be fully implemented, while monitoring of implementation and the established target will be an ongoing effort that will guide the adaptation of the measures in place.
- **Third phase.** The Secretariat will steadily increase the quality of the programme and will target diversity of the universities where the interns study in addition to diversity of their countries of origin.

3. Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out throughout the three phases, with a special emphasis on gender balance and geographical diversity. Communication and collaboration across and outside the Organization will be critical to ensure the sustainability of the programme.

4. Since the adoption of resolution WHA71.13, a number of measures have been implemented. First, in order to facilitate monitoring and ensure equal and transparent access to all students across the world, a centralized system of applications was set up on 15 March 2018 and has been progressively used across the Organization. All interested candidates apply online through the central portal and merit-based selections are conducted from within the pool of applications received. The selection process is carried out by the technical units, supported by human resources internship focal points who oversee the entire recruitment process. While the implementation of financial support is under consideration, in-kind support was immediately strengthened. In May 2018, the Secretariat implemented the provision of

accident and medical insurance for all interns across the Organization. Interns are also granted 2.5 days of time off per month. In Geneva, Copenhagen and Brazzaville, some of the most expensive duty stations, interns are supported by lunch vouchers.

5. In order to increase the quality of the programme, supervisors are requested to provide specific terms of reference and learning objectives. A semi-structured training curriculum is being developed. Progressively, interns are receiving an information package before they join WHO and special induction sessions are being organized. At headquarters, new interns attend a monthly induction session, where they are briefed by directors on key topics, including the Thirteenth General Programme of Work. The induction is coordinated by the Department of Human Resources Management and the results of the systematic evaluations completed after each session by the interns have been used to refine the induction curriculum. The Department has also organized special curriculum vitae clinic sessions, which were attended by more than 85 interns in June and August 2018. Year-round technical lunch-time seminars are offered to interns. They also have access to WHO online training facilities and are required to take the online training courses on prevention of harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority, as well as on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

6. Statistics on WHO interns are provided in tables 16, 17 and 18 in the workforce data.¹ Between 15 March (the date of introduction of the WHO new recruitment system) and 31 July 2018, 4688 candidates worldwide applied for an internship, of whom 56% were female and 57% from low- and middle-income countries. Between 1 January and 31 July 2018, WHO hosted 520 interns, of whom 74% were female and 25% were from developing countries, compared with 76% and 24%, respectively, between 1 January and 31 July 2017. Over the same period, the number of interns has decreased by 11% compared with 2017 (585 interns in 31 July 2017) and the number of nationalities represented has decreased from 86 to 73. Continuous efforts are made to increase the focus at the regional and country levels. There is an overall increase of 5% in the number of interns hosted by regional and country offices in 2018 compared with the same period in 2017.

7. Achieving the target of 50% of selected interns coming from low- and middle-income countries is most likely to be easier when stipends are provided. However, while work is ongoing to prepare for stipends, monthly monitoring of geographical diversity is available on WHO intranet interns pages and is sent to managers.

8. The mechanism for providing financial and in-kind support to accepted interns commensurate to their needs is being explored and its foundations are being established. In terms of in-kind support, accident and medical insurance coverage will be maintained for all interns across WHO in keeping with the Organization's objective of universal health coverage. Provision of lunch vouchers and support for lunch will also continue at the most expensive duty stations. In terms of financial support, the Secretariat is currently examining different options, including the amounts related to the review by the Joint Inspection Unit of internship programmes in the United Nations system (September 2018).²

9. To finance the costs of stipends, different approaches are being considered. For example: to request each technical unit that plans to host interns across the Organization to budget for and fund their interns directly. This approach would require advance planning by technical units, inclusion of costs in their programme budget and fund-raising linked to country capacity-building. An initial survey was sent to all directors at headquarters and regional offices and to all heads of WHO country offices in order to

¹ See <http://www.who.int/about/finances-accountability/budget/en/> (accessed 13 November 2018).

² Document JIU/REP/2018/1 (https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2018_1_english.pdf, accessed 13 November 2018).

assess the capacity of managers to cover the costs of stipends from their activity budgets. Results indicate that some offices could support interns from their technical budgets.

10. Another approach is to raise funds to cover the costs of the stipends. Two regional offices, all country offices and 14 of the 53 headquarters departments that replied to the survey indicated in their responses that they would need additional funds. The Wellcome Trust will be the first partner to provide funds to the global internship programme and has committed to support 50 interns from low- and middle-income countries per year for three years (a total of 150 interns), to be placed at headquarters and the Regional Offices for Africa, South-East Asia and the Western Pacific.

11. In order to better assess the financial support needed by interns, in September 2018 the Department of Human Resources Management and the headquarters intern board conducted a survey among current interns in Geneva: 40% of survey respondents said their acceptance of the internship offer was dependent on receiving financial support, 48% indicated they had guaranteed financial support before they accepted the internship offer and 60% received some form of financial support during their internship period. One single source of financial support is often not enough to cover all expenses: respondents indicated their reliance on multiple sources of support, including a combination of scholarships, university loans and/or private loans that would require repayment, personal credit cards and/or support from family, while 68% relied on their own personal savings during their internship.

12. After consultations with interns, the following implementation process is under consideration:

- (a) All technical units across WHO should implement advanced planning for the number of interns that they can host and prepare specific terms of reference for each internship position;
- (b) The positions will be advertised on the WHO central platform twice a year, for a limited period of time, and candidates will be able to apply to a maximum of three positions in any WHO office;
- (c) Upon closure of the established application period, the human resources focal point will provide technical units with a list of candidates who expressed interest;
- (d) Technical units will conduct a merit-based selection process (reviewing CV and letter of application and conducting an interview);
- (e) After the selection process has been finalized, candidates will complete a declaration of honour document, indicating their need for financial support. Any grant or scholarship received by the candidate from their university must be declared and any potential conflict of interest will be assessed;
- (f) WHO will provide a stipend based on the declaration. When it is proven that a candidate will receive a grant/scholarship less than the amount of the stipend, WHO will provide the difference.

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