



联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Organisation des Nations
Unies pour l'alimentation
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Hundred and Sixty-fourth Session

Rome, 7 - 11 November 2016

Human Resources Management

Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

Ms Monika Altmaier
Director
Office of Human Resources
Tel: +3906 5705 6422

*This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page;
an FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications.
Other documents can be consulted at www.fao.org*



mr871

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Committee is presented with major achievements in human resources management at FAO, for information.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

- Members of the Finance Committee are invited to take note of major achievements of human resources management.

Draft Advice

- **The Committee welcomed the major achievements in human resources management at FAO.**

Major Achievements

1. The major improvements in the area of human resources policy and management brought about since 2012 follow a vision based on four main drivers: (i) recruitment and development of the highest calibre of employees; (ii) alignment of HR management to the strategic and programmatic needs of the Organization; (iii) reflection of FAO's nature as a United Nations system specialized agency; and (iv) increased efficiency in HR processes and procedures.

Recruitment and development of highest calibre employees

a) Professional staff recruitment

2. Improvements to the recruitment of professional level staff has led to more transparency, more direct involvement of recruiting units, and faster recruitment than before.

3. Previously, the kernel of the recruitment process for professional staff was a single, centralized Professional Staff Selection Committee (PSSC), which would entertain submissions from individual departments and offices. Shortlisting and interviews of candidates was undertaken solely by the recruiting unit, without expertise from other areas within or without the Organization, nor with the support of HR division. Thereafter, the central PSSC, composed of a large number of staff from across the Organization, and based in headquarters, would review the submissions, and decide on recommendations for appointment. However, the PSSC would generally not have a representative of the recruiting unit during its review.

4. Intense internal discussions within HR, management, and long consultations with the professional Staff Representative Body were undertaken to tackle the shortcomings of the recruitment process. It was agreed that the previous regime lacked transparency due to the narrow overview of the shortlisting and interviewing stage, and at the same time lacked due expertise in the PSSC, which thus was not armed with sufficient capacity to undertake optimally informed reviews and decisions. In addition, the centralized nature of the PSSC added considerable time to the process of recruitment.

5. Therefore, the centralized PSSC was abolished and decentralized PSSCs were created for each Department at headquarters and each of the Regional Offices in the field. These new PSSCs are composed of members of the recruiting unit, thus ensuring the requisite technical overview; as well as representatives from other units, elected representatives of staff, and of OHR, thus providing transparency. The new PSSCs are involved in the shortlisting process, undertake interviews, and make recommendations for appointment directly to the Director-General.

6. This has resulted in important improvement in the quality of recruitment by giving a greater role to the recruiting divisions, and enabling more alignment with the technical needs of the respective positions. It has made the recruitment process much quicker by removing an additional layer, and with the introduction of i-recruitment, the new PSSCs have enabled a reduction of nearly 70% in the overall recruitment time, from one year to four months.

b) General Service recruitment

7. A new approach has also been adopted for the recruitment of General Service staff in the Organization, that is considered most innovative and forward-looking in the entire UN system, by opening up the previous "closed shop." The limit of recruitment of GS staff from within a commuting area has been abandoned. Now, the application for GS positions in FAO is opened up globally, with a view to recruiting the best possible candidates, with diverse backgrounds, from a global marketplace, fit for a UN-system international organization like FAO. Out of the 47 persons recruited to GS positions under the Global Call scheme since 2015, eleven have been external (non-FAO) applicants.

8. In addition to launching the Global Calls for Expression of Interest for GS positions at headquarters and in the Regional Offices, the General Service Staff Selection Committee (GSSC) was recast with much simpler processes, as well as a new composition, which includes elected representatives of General Service staff from staff in each department and region. This has replaced the previous practice of the Union of General Service Staff (UGSS) serving on all meetings of the GSSC.

9. A roster of qualified candidates for GS positions has been established and is updated periodically.

10. The revised procedures have not only resulted in a much faster selection process and considerable reduction of recruitment time, but also in greater transparency and competition, leading to greater diversity and the appointment of highly qualified candidates.

c) FAO Representatives (FAORs)

11. Significant progress has been made in the appointments of FAO Representatives. Since June 2012 and in line with DGB 2012/25, candidates for FAOR positions need to have a positive outcome of a compulsory assessment of their financial and human resources management capabilities.

12. In this regard, the FAOR profile was updated to reflect the duties and accountabilities expected from FAO Representatives. The assessment of managerial and leadership competencies is now an integral part of the recruitment process for FAORs and Senior Managers. Since 2012, about 100 candidates to FAOR positions (both internal and external) have undergone an assessment of their leadership competencies.

13. The Virtual Assessment Review (carried out by an external company) consists of a series of online tests and personality questionnaire, combined with a solid competency based interview against FAO leadership competencies and the FAOR profile. The VAR report is one of the elements taken into account during the recruitment process to ensure that future appointees possess the required managerial and leadership competencies for the position.

Year	Total VARs	Assessed for position of FAOR
2012	23	23
2013	47	39
2014	33	18
2015	15	5
2016	29	15
Total	147	100

14. The composition of the selection panel for FAORs has also changed since 2012. In the past, the two DDGs and an ODG representative were on the panel, together with the Director, OSD. Nowadays, the Panel consists of the ADG/TC, the ADG/RR of the specific region and the Director, OSD.

d) Director-level recruitment

15. The procedure for the selection of candidates for D-1 and above-level positions has also been strengthened with, inter alia, a reconstituted Interview Panel that includes a senior external expert and an HR expert. An important feature of the selection process is the assessment of managerial abilities of candidates by an external company, by means of the VAR. A roster of qualified candidates was also established in line with the one for Professional positions.

e) Junior Professional Officers (JPOs)

16. Another area of progress has been the Junior Professional Officers (JPs), which has rejuvenated the Organization's workforce, with highly qualified staff, well prepared for a career in the UN system. Since the introduction of the JP Programme, 49 JPs have been recruited of which 29 were women and 28 from under and non-represented member states.

17. The Organization continues to make strong efforts to ensure a high level of retention of former JPs, subject to individual performance. To date more than two-thirds (67%) of the JPs recruited between 2011 and 2014 have been retained under different contractual arrangements at the end of their initial two-year assignment under OHR funds. This has been done following careful performance assessment of the individuals concerned.

18. As for the 21 JPs who are currently on board, three of these come from non-represented and seven from under-represented countries. As for their academic qualifications, four candidates have a PHD and 16 a Masters degree. Regarding their knowledge of official UN languages, two candidates are competent in four languages (with full proficiency in at least two), six in three languages (with full proficiency in two) and the other candidates in two languages. This means all candidates appointed have at least two official languages.

f) Career progression

19. Internal consultations with Staff Representative Bodies led to the change from the previous practice of job growth that was imbued with lack of transparency and was skewed in favour of candidates in administrative areas.

20. Measures have been introduced to ensure that career progression within the Organization is transparent and merit-based. The previous process of "job growth" has been replaced almost exclusively to promotion by means of a competitive process.

21. Accordingly, promotion to higher grade levels is now undertaken by competing in an open and transparent process relating to vacancy announcements or global calls, against tangible and well-defined criteria.

22. The process of job growth is therefore retained exclusively for exceptional circumstances such as small country offices with limited or no opportunity for promotion by means of vacancy competition.

g) Vacancy announcements and outreach

23. In addition to the global and regional calls for expression of interest for GS staff, the Organization has made concerted efforts to increase and target its outreach for good quality candidates against vacancies at the professional and higher level.

24. The search for candidates against senior level positions has included advertisement in relevant global publications, as well as the use of external, professional recruitment companies. Similarly, all vacancy announcements for professional level positions are reinforced through regional and country offices to increase local and global level outreach. This method was successfully used in the recruitment of 27 professional staff members against the EU-funded FIRST programme in 2016, where candidates were required at headquarters and in decentralized locations.

25. These outreach efforts have resulted in a significant increase in the number of applicants against vacancy announcements. The average number of applicants for professional level positions has increased in the period 2012-2016 by 170%, from 127 to 216, and the below table shows the breakdown by grade level. In 2016, the number of applicants for Director level positions exceeded 600 in some cases, and for some professional positions the number was greater than 300.

Number of applicants - change from 2012 to 2016, by grade

Professional VAs	2012	2016	Increase
P-2	263	367	140%
P-3	155	273	176%
P-4	117	197	169%
P-5	75	139	186%
Total	127	216	170%

26. From 2012, flexibility was imbued by means of non-staff and other contractual instruments in order to support optimally the adjustments in priority areas within the context of adjustments to the strategic direction of the Organization as approved by the members. Following consolidation of transformational changes, and a concomitant strategic workforce planning exercise, the recruitment against professional positions was accelerated in 2016. This has led to the appointment by the Director-General of 141 professional staff against PWB positions. This has led to a drop in the vacancy rate of professional PWB positions to 11.8%, in keeping with the agreed target of not greater than 15%. In addition, considering further recruitment processes that are already in progress, the vacancy rate is expected to fall to around 10%. The recruitment exercise was carried out in a manner to ensure that all individual organizational units, in particular technical areas, also achieved the target vacancy rate. Further details on vacancy rates by organizational units, at headquarters and in the decentralized offices, are outlined in the below table.

Vacancies status update and map

Group	Division/ Unit	Total professional post	Total post occupied	Vacancy rate %	Vacancy rate - group	Processes pending	Projected vacancy rate %	projected vacancy rate - group
APEX	ODG	9	8	11.1	9.9%		11.1	9.3%
	LEG	16	14	12.5			12.5	
	OCC	44	39	11.4		1	9.1	
	OED	8	8	0.0			0.0	
	OHR	46	40	13.0			13.0	
	OIG	18	18	0.0			0.0	
	OSP	21	19	9.5			9.5	
DDO	DDO	8	5	37.5	15.3%		37.5	8.0%
	CIO	43	37	14.0			14.0	
	CPA	39	29	25.6		8*	5.1	
	OPC	34	33	2.9		1	0.0	
	OSD	10	8	20.0		2	0.0	
	CSS	16	15	6.3			6.3	
CS	CSD	5	4	20.0	9.4%		20.0	9.4%
	CSA	18	17	5.6			5.6	
	CSF	30	27	10.0			10.0	
DDN	DDN	7	4	42.9	18.2%		42.9	18.2%
	NRC	15	14	6.7			6.7	
ES	ESD	12	12	0.0	11.0%		0.0	9.7%
	ESA	18	14	22.2		2	11.1	
	ESN	28	24	14.3			14.3	
	ESP	26	23	11.5			11.5	
	ESS	23	20	13.0			13.0	
	EST	38	36	5.3			5.3	
AG	AGD	16	14	12.5	8.2%		12.5	8.2%
	AGF	16	15	6.3			6.3	
	AGA	24	21	12.5			12.5	
	AGL	16	16	0.0			0.0	
	AGE	7	6	14.3			14.3	
	AGP	31	29	6.5			6.5	
FI	FID	1	1	0.0	14.7%		0.0	14.7%
	FIA	67	57	14.9			14.9	
FO	FOD	6	6	0.0	7.0%		0.0	7.0%
	FOA	37	34	8.1			8.1	
TC	TCD	5	5	0.0	16.3%		0.0	11.2%
	TCE	1	1	0.0			0.0	
	TCI	71	56	21.1		5	14.1	
	TCS	21	20	4.8			4.8	
Total headquarters		851	749	12.0		19	9.8	

Group	Division/ Unit	Total professional post	Total post occupied	Vacancy rate %	Vacancy rate - group	Processes pending	Projected vacancy rate %	projected vacancy rate - group
DOs	RAF/SFC/ SFE/SFS	67	60	10.4	11.9%		10.4	11.5%
	RAP/SAP	55	49	10.9		1	9.1	
	REU/SEC	29	26	10.3			10.3	
	RLC/SLC/ SLM	48	41	14.6			14.6	
	RNE/SNE	36	31	13.9			13.9	
FAORS	FAP	9	9	0.0	9.1%		0.0	9.1%
	FEU	5	5	0.0			0.0	
	FLA	15	11	26.7			26.7	
	FNE	6	6	0.0			0.0	
	FRA	20	19	5.0			5.0	
LOs	LOG	3	2	33.3	12.5%		33.3	12.5%
	LOJ	1	1	0.0			0.0	
	LON	2	2	0.0			0.0	
	LOR	1	1	0.0			0.0	
	LOW	1	1	0.0			0.0	
Total decentralized offices		298	264	11.4		1	11.1	
TOTAL FAO		1,149	1,013	11.8		20	10.1	

* 6 posts are identified for abolition in the process outlined in Enhanced Technical Capacity and Consolidation of Programme Arrangements in 2016-17

Alignment of HR management to the strategic and programmatic needs of the Organization

a) Performance management, development and learning

27. The implementation of the revamped policy on Performance Evaluation and Management System (PEMS), which was launched in February this year, is proceeding well. The performance management system has been simplified and improved in 2016. The main changes include an improved online system, simpler and better quality work plans, emphasis on more timely, higher quality feedback and the move from a 4-point to a 5-point rating scale.

28. The PEMS has been reviewed and improved continuously since 2012, in internal management discussions, and consultations with the Staff Representative Bodies. For examples, it was ascertained that a rating scale with an even number of points led to difficulties by managers to ascribe accurately the performance of staff, particularly given the absence of a central point for satisfactory performance.

29. Similarly, internal discussions and consultations revealed that over-elaborate work plans with large number of objectives and indicators had led to less than satisfactory attention in both the formulation stage at the beginning of the year, as well as at the end-year performance assessment stage - both by staff and managers. Accordingly, it was deemed more appropriate to simplify and allow greater flexibility in the elaboration of work plans against which performance could be measured.

30. Furthermore, streamlined automated processes are progressively being put in place for evaluations, which were previously paper-based, bringing in a more harmonized approach to performance evaluation.

31. As part of a broader approach to capacity building, a series of e-learning modules have been launched, starting with the Project Budget Holder course - a mandatory course for new and existing project budget holders. Other e-learnings, which have a primary focus of building the operational capacity of staff, aimed at improving managerial competencies, understanding of accountability and promoting alignment to the FAO results framework, are progressively being released. A new onboarding programme has also been launched to help newcomers acquire essential knowledge and

tools to assist with their orientation to the Organization in the first weeks after appointment. The programme is available to all employees across the globe.

32. The availability of a larger number of FAO-specific courses aimed at building the operational, programmatic and administrative capacity of staff now make it possible for FAO to establish meaningful learning paths for specific roles. The newly designed courses will be launched at the beginning of 2017.

33. The number of webinar series delivered as part of blended learning programmes is increasing. Webinars are currently delivered by the Community of Policy Practitioners, South-South Cooperation and Resource Mobilization Division. Other webinar series are at various stages of preparation ranging from European Funding PAGO DA, Child Labour, Free Prior and Informed Consent, to name a few. OHR supports subject matter experts in the design and also in building their capacity to design, facilitate and deliver their webinar sessions.

34. The Food Security, Food Systems and Nutrition Programme, which brought together Strategic Programme teams (at headquarters and regional offices), as well as key staff across all locations, yielded good results in terms of reshaping FAO's thinking on food security, food systems and nutrition. Similar initiatives are currently under review by the Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development Division, in collaboration with academia.

b) Relations with Staff Representative Bodies (SRBs)

35. There has been continuous and substantive engagement with the Staff Representative Bodies – Association of Professional in FAO (AP-in-FAO) and the Union of General Service staff (UGSS) – since the beginning of 2012. This has led to greater clarity in the respective roles of management with regard to taking of managerial decisions, and of the Staff Representative Bodies in providing constructive comments.

36. A dedicated Staff Management Consultative Committee (SMCC) has been introduced which holds regular meetings between Representatives and Management. For example, in 2015, 27 meetings were held, and in 2016 the SMCC has met 16 times to date. The level of cooperation and understanding with the Staff Bodies has improved tremendously, which has a salutary effect on the Organization as a whole. In order to increase transparency, the minutes of these meetings are posted on the internal intranet.

37. In addition, each Staff Representative Body has been afforded a permanent, dedicated area on the front page of the Organization's intranet, where the SRBs can post information without censure.

c) Short-term contracts

38. In 2015, an overall limit to the maximum length of employment possible under short term appointments of 55 aggregate months of service was introduced through an administrative circular. The aim was to ensure that short-term appointments are properly used and that short-term personnel are recruited for temporary periods of time, to cover temporary needs due to peak workload, absence of regular staff or vacancies. It follows that there should be no expectation of extension of appointment or rehire under a short-term appointment. The Administrative Manual Section on short-term personnel has been revised and amended *inter alia* to include this maximum employment limit.

Reflection of FAO's nature as a UN system specialized agency

a) Implement measures and track progress in achieving corporate geographic representation targets

39. In taking decisions on recruitment to International Professional positions, the criterion of merit has always been followed to ensuring that the Organization is able to fill all positions with the best qualified candidates.

40. At the same time, in line with guidance provided by the Governing Bodies, due attention has been given by senior management to ensure an equitable geographic representation of member countries in the Secretariat of the Organization as far as the PWB-funded posts are concerned.

41. With continuing efforts pursued in this regard, it has been possible to reduce, to a considerable extent, the number of non-, under- and over-represented countries in the Secretariat of FAO, thus increasing the number of equitably-represented countries.

42. In January 2012, the number of equitably represented countries was 137 constituting 72% of a total of 191. Effective 2014, maintaining the equitable representation target level was proven particularly challenging since the definition of the staff to be counted in the geographic distribution became stricter (the rule reverted to the established methodology), the number of PWB posts in the geographic distribution was decreased resulting in the lower desirable ranges, also the reduction of the assessed contribution of some countries and the newly admitted member countries contributed to the challenges.

43. However, it is expected that a review of the relevant numbers by end of the year would indicate a significant improvement in the geographic representation. Remarkable number of recent hiring decisions would yield excellent effect on the geographic representation. Following the completion of the new recruitments, by the end of the year, we envisage that the portion of the equitably represented countries would stand 76% (147 countries out of 194).

Number of Member Nations by representation status

	January 2012		Projection at the end of December 2016 ^(*)	
Non-represented countries	31	16%	29	15%
Under-represented countries	18	9%	14	7%
Equitably-represented countries	137	72%	147	76%
Over-represented countries	5	3%	4	2%
Total	191	100%	194^(**)	100%

^(*) *Projection end December 2016: Indicates the envisaged status taking into consideration the completion of the onboarding of the selected candidates (pipelines)*

^(**) *Member Nations not considered that joined during the period: Singapore (under-represented); South Sudan (equitably-represented); Brunei (not-represented). These three countries joined in January 2014*

44. The status of geographic representation in FAO is carefully monitored and a monthly status report is produced, which is also posted on the website of the Permanent Representatives.

b) Improved gender representation

45. Between 2012 and 2016, the overall combined percentage of women at all staff categories (Directors, Professionals, JPOs, APOs, NPOs and General Service staff) steadily rose from 51% to 52%. Although the absolute number of total staff was reduced by 22% since 2012, the Organization continued its efforts focusing on hiring more women for the workforce and we can affirm that over half of all FAO staff members are already women.

46. With regard to the international professional category (P-1 to DDG), the gender representation has moved in a positive direction. Women accounted for 36% at the beginning of 2012. By October 2016, thanks to continued and expanding recruitment outreach efforts to a plethora of professional institutions and universities within selected countries, as well as attention paid by the selection authority to gender balance, this figure rose to 40%.

47. Another notable improvement that should be noted is the increase of women in the NPO and JPO categories. Indeed, the percentage of women NPOs between 2012 and 2016 has risen from 36 to 40%. In the JPO category (P1 grade) from 61 to 72%. With the new JPO recruits in the pipeline, FAO will have a total of 33 JPOs, 22 of which are women. In this latter category, the same anticipated

results on overall gender representation are expected in the medium and long term as for professional staff

c) Corporate mobility

48. A corporate Geographic Staff Mobility Policy has been developed in the Organization and yearly mobility exercises have been undertaken beginning in 2014. Prior to that date, geographic mobility cases were voluntary, low in number, and ad hoc in nature, and there was no coherent policy in this regard.

49. In 2014, a policy was introduced for mandatory geographic staff mobility, reflecting the international nature of FAO, and with the aim of oxygenating the Organization. This policy was further refined following internal discussion and consultation with SRBS, and promulgated by means of DGB 2015/07.

50. The related programme involves all Departments, Divisions and Offices at headquarters and in the field, with minimum targets set for each on a yearly basis. Since 2014, the Programme has been fine-tuned based on the feedback of the previous years and the number of mobility moves has increased from 15 in 2014, to 34 in 2015 and now to 50 in 2016.

51. The success of FAO's corporate Geographic Staff Mobility Policy has already attracted the attention of sister UN-system organizations. The manifold beneficial impact of the Mobility Policy on both the Organization and the staff members are increasingly becoming evident, enhancing the technical capacity of the Organization as a whole, bringing the knowledge from headquarters to the field and vice-versa.

d) Promotion of multilingualism

52. Based on the landmark United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/11 and subsequent ones on multilingualism, several steps were taken to promote multilingualism within the Organization, particularly amongst international professional staff. All international professionals were requested to provide evidence of their language skills in two official languages and those who did not meet the basic requirements had to take courses to improve their knowledge. As a result, less than 4% staff member (on PWB positions) still need to acquire the knowledge of a second language at least at intermediate level. Furthermore, in the context of selection and appointment procedures, the language skills of candidates, internal and external, are closely considered. The selection of a candidate who does not possess the minimum language skills requires a waiver and is subject to the candidate reaching the required level within a given period.

53. The role of Member States is also crucial for adopting a clear position on multilingualism, expressed through their participation in the legislative bodies of the different United Nations system organizations, and for supporting its implementation by endorsing all the necessary measures to achieve it, for example by developing national capacities to promote language professional curricula up to the standards required by international organizations.

e) Non-staff human resources (NSHR)

54. Guidelines on the employment of International Consultants and PSA Subscribers were introduced in late 2013 covering all aspects of servicing of these categories of employees, including selection, recruitment, remuneration (categories A, B and C), performance evaluation, accountability and oversight, as well as reporting to management and to governing bodies. Likewise, guidelines on the employment and servicing of National Project Personnel and locally recruited PSA Subscribers were issued in 2014. One of the main objectives of these initiatives is to adopt a more consistent and transparent approach across the Organization in dealing with these categories of employees that represent a large share of the Organization's workforce, particularly in field duty stations.

55. Further to the review of the NSHR category and its servicing by the OIG, OHR has started work on a set of agreed recommendations, in collaboration with the Shared Services Centre (SSC) and the Legal Office. The guidelines on the servicing of consultants and subscribers holding personal service agreements, which had been updated in 2015, following consultations with managers

throughout the Organization, were further revised taking into account agreed actions, subject to management review.

56. The HR policy and procedures governing the use of Interns have been revised and revamped based on lessons learned to date and are expected to be issued before the end of the year. The new programme provides for a greater involvement of OPC in activities related to the identification of academic institutions for the establishment of partnerships and of networks of experts, to facilitate discussions and research in areas of interest to FAO, and to negotiate and approve sponsorship arrangements with universities or other academic institutions.

Increased efficiency in HR processes and procedures

a) Transformation of the HR function and units and of the Shared Service Centre (SSC)

57. The SSC has been transformed, by using a new “horizontal” business model. When we first created the SSC, all we did was pick the posts in headquarters from different areas – HR, Finance, travel, etc. – and moved them from Rome to Budapest. So, we reproduced there a number of vertical silos. But now we have changed to a cross-cutting structure, with client service, monitoring and transaction processing and we developed an organizational structure resilient to staff turnover, in addition to improving effectiveness and quality in services provided

58. In these past six months, the SSC team has made tremendous progress. From streamlining the NSHR payroll process by reducing the number of exceptions by over 70 percent, to strengthening over 60 individual processes in HR services, the transformation exercise has improved communications and validations with and within the SSC.

59. In addition, a new contact centre team has been put in place to improve service quality. From this point forward, all requests to the SSC will now be met with confirmation of receipt, expected deadlines for completion, and notification to all relevant parties, once action is taken.

60. Work continues to update and rationalise relevant instruments, as well as the rules and procedures, in the human resources area. The entire Human Resources section of the Administrative Manual has been reviewed and significantly improved. A first revision and preliminary consultations with internal stakeholders of nearly all manual sections on human resources issues and entitlements and benefits have been completed.

61. The HR provisions in the FAO Administrative Manual, which serves as a source material for HR policies and procedures, have been reviewed thoroughly with a view to revising and reorganizing the content and ensuring that they reflect the most recent information in a clear, transparent and user-friendly manner. In parallel, an online user-friendly FAO Handbook was launched in December 2013. A major exercise has been undertaken to update the Manual with rules previously held in a multitude of administrative issuances in order to consolidate them, as far as possible, in a single source. As a result of the complete review and streamlining of existing administrative issuances, circa 360 reference administrative documents (HR Key Information Circulars, Policy Directives and Administrative Circulars) were abolished and the remaining ones were reviewed and included in the FAO Handbook.

62. Two self-service HR/administrative tools were released to HR servicing staff during the course of 2016: the certificate of employment and a rental subsidy calculator have contributed to reduce the workload of HR/administrative staff.

63. A new GRMS functionality has been developed to automate and standardise globally all major staffing actions related to position management (e-PM) and an HR Help Desk in Budapest created to support users in the new functionality. This tool has resulted in reduction of processing time and enhancing increased transparency.

64. The management of sick leave has been enhanced through greater internal collaboration between OHR and the Medical Office. An improved automated process by means of the existing GRMS allows for more efficiency in the processing of sick leave requests. Greater fairness and

oversight, as well as cost-effectiveness, has been instituted with the use of an external provider from the Organization's medical insurer, in order to support the Medical Office in reviewing requests for extended sick leave, including by means of home visits when required.

b) Streamlining and standardization/automation of HR processes

65. Automation of the Payroll system has brought many significant benefits to different areas of HR servicing that include, inter-alia, Leave Management, Separation Payments, Travel time and Stopovers, and NSHR Management

66. A significant innovation was achieved in designing and implementing a HR Management Dashboard and establishing a set of Standard HR Reports to support the needs of management as well as for other internal use. Indicators in key areas of HR (workforce profile, Geographic representation, gender distribution, HR turnover, retirements) were established

67. Most of the major HR-related procedures have been reviewed, analysed and organized into updated Standard Operating Procedures (140 SOPs implemented). These SOPs have proved to be extremely useful in carrying-out HR processing work and ensuring consistency and transparency throughout the HR units, as well as to support knowledge transfer.

Conclusion

68. The Organization's Human Resources (HR) policies and management are designed to support FAO's work in ensuring a world free from hunger and malnutrition in a sustainable manner. Since 2012, the HR function has been a priority element in the transformational change of the Organization. This is manifest in the improvements made to HR capacity and reporting line, and the major achievements accomplished as a result.

69. Commensurate with the importance placed on the HR function, an iterative enhancement since 2012 has led to coalescence of the core HR capacity within the Office of Human Resources (OHR) placed in the Apex, alongside rationalization of transaction-related functions within the Shared Services Centre. Accordingly, the Director OHR now reports directly to the Director-General, in contrast with the previous two layers of management in the reporting line. The management team of OHR has been bolstered with a high level Special Advisor for the past 3 years, who along with the Director and Deputy Director, meets regularly with the Director-General on HR matters.

70. The close attention paid to the function has led to major achievements in HR at FAO since 2012, which have been repeatedly recognized by the Governing Bodies, and have also placed FAO at the vanguard of innovation within the context of the UN common system.

71. Authority on matters pertaining to human resources policies and management is primarily a matter for the Director-General, in particular as it is the Director-General who appoints, manages the staff and establishes HR policies and procedures, as set out in the Basic Texts of the Organization.

72. The role of the Governing Bodies in respect of matters pertaining to management of staff is limited to general oversight. It does not extend to day-to-day management of the staff, detailed review of HR matters and policies within the managerial authority, and is not within the overall spirit and purpose of the FAO Reform, which led to greater clarity in the relations between governance and management.

73. This need for adherence to respective roles and responsibilities was recognized by the Finance Committee at its 161st Session in May 2016, and it is within this spirit that achievements made in the area of HR management and policies are hereby presented to the Finance Committee for its information.