

UNDP/ADM/00/6
29 February 2000

To: All UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Staff

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Subject: Further delegation of authority to verify and authorize home leave and education grant travel in conjunction with reassignment or other official travel

Effective: 1 March 2000

Summary

- Delegation of authority to streamline procedures and improve response to the personal needs of the staff in respect of home leave and education grant travel in conjunction with reassignment and/or official travel, with more agility in the administration of this entitlement.
- Delegation of authority to approve exceptions to the UNDP policy which stipulates that there should be a “three months interval” between availing official travel entitlements.

Background

1. As described in circular UNDP/ADM/98/68 of 16 October 1998 on the subject of “Aligning our personnel administration services with the needs of UNDP 2001”, a series of re-engineering and streamlining measures have been undertaken in the area of administration of staff entitlements. Annex I provides an up-dated summary of the measures announced. As another step in the process of streamlining of administration of staff entitlements, I am now pleased to announce the further delegation of authority to i) authorize home leave and education grant travel in conjunction with reassignment or official travel, and ii) approve exceptions to the UNDP policy which stipulates that there should be a “three months interval” between availing official travel entitlements.

Current procedures

2. Circular UNDP/ADM/98/74 announced the universal application of the “Points System” for home leave and the delegation of authority to verify and authorize home leave and education grant travel. The Guidelines attached to that circular (Annex V “Handling of arrangements”) and chapter I, paragraph 8, and chapter II, paragraph 4, indicated that home leave and education grant travel in conjunction with reassignment or other official travel, however, would continue to be authorized by UNDP/BPRM (at present UNDP/BOM/OHR).

3. Staff not availing of the entitlement of home leave or education grant travel in conjunction with reassignment or other official travel must spend at least three months in the new duty station before being authorized any travel entitlement (home leave, family visit, education grant). Exceptions to this requirement fall under the jurisdiction of UNDP/OHR.

New Measures

4. Effective 1 March 2000, the authority to verify and authorize home leave and education grant travel in conjunction with reassignment or other official travel is also delegated to the heads of country offices and Headquarters offices outside New York (Bonn, Brussels, Copenhagen, Geneva, Tokyo and Washington).

5. Effective 1 March 2000, approval of exceptions to the requirement of “three months interval” between entitlement travels is delegated to Resident Representatives and Heads of Headquarters offices outside New York.

6. In exercising this delegated authority, Resident Representatives and Heads of Headquarters outside New York should take the following into account:

(a) In the interest of cost-effectiveness, and in line with the provisions of Staff Rule 105.3 (h), and 207.11 (e), **staff members must take their home leave** in conjunction with reassignment or other official entitlement travel.

(b) Home leave travel can be taken before accruing 24 points. At least 12 points must have been accrued on the understanding that to become eligible for the next home leave the staff member must overcome the negative points balance and then reach an accrual of 24 points.

(c) Staff members not availing of home leave or other entitlement travel in conjunction with reassignment must comply with the three months interval between entitlement travels and spend at least three months in the duty station before travel on home leave can be authorized. Resident Representatives and Heads of Headquarters offices outside New York may authorize exceptions due to exigencies of service.

(d) If reassignment is imminent but due to exigencies of service a staff member cannot utilize home leave in conjunction with reassignment and must return, following home leave, to the original duty station, the organization will not recognize travel expenses for the dependants to travel back to the duty station accompanying the staff member. Dependants are expected to travel to the new duty station following completion of the home leave travel.

Lump sum option

7. In line with the current policy, the lump sum option does not apply to reassignment travel. Thus in the case of home leave or education grant travel in conjunction with reassignment the lump sum option does not apply either at the present time. (This approach is being re-studied and we will revert).

8. In the case of home leave or education grant travel in conjunction with official mission, the lump sum option may apply to the travel of dependants bearing in mind that the organization will not be responsible for the cost of re-routing the dependants' tickets to the place of the staff member's official mission. (In line with the current policy, the lump sum option does not apply to staff members' travel on official mission.)

Issuing the travel authorization

(A) Home leave and/or education grant travel in conjunction with reassignment

9. The Human Resources Service Centre (HRSC) communicates the reassignment of staff members to country offices and the heads of the Headquarters offices outside New York and requests compliance with administrative formalities (early clearance action form, final clearance action form and certificate of annual leave balance). At this time, the staff member's home leave and education grant records must be reviewed to establish the entitlement and determine whether home leave should be combined with the reassignment travel, in line with Staff Rule 105.3 (h) and 207.11 (e).

10. On reassignment, releasing country offices and Headquarters offices locations outside New York will issue the travel authorization (PT.8), regardless of whether or not a split shipment is required on reassignment.

(a) If a split shipment is not required, the PT.8 will be issued for travel and reassignment shipment.

(b) If a split shipment is required, the PT.8 will be issued for travel only and the relevant HRSC must be informed of the requirement of the staff member to effect a split shipment. The HRSC will arrange with the UNDP Travel Services Unit (TSU) to raise the authorization for the reassignment shipment and to request the duty station to effect the arrangements for the shipment of personal effects.

(c) A copy of the travel authorization (PT.8) must be forwarded to the new duty station and to the UNDP Travel Services Unit.

(B) Home leave and/or education grant travel in conjunction with official travel

11. Country offices and Headquarters offices locations outside New York will issue the travel authorization (PT.8). A copy must be forwarded to the UNDP Travel Services Unit. The staff member's official travel airticket will be re-routed to the home leave place. (The lump sum option will not apply)

12. The organization will not be responsible for the cost of "rerouting" the dependant(s) airtickets to the place of official travel. (In this case, the lump sum option will apply for home leave travel of dependants).

Prorating of costs of air tickets

13. The travel authorization (PT.8) will indicate the route for travel on reassignment, or on official travel and the "re-routing" of the air ticket to the place of home leave or education grant. The cost of the air ticket related to the reassignment (present duty station to new duty station) or official travel - in the case of the staff member only - (duty station to place of official travel to duty station) will be charged to the relevant allotment and the cost of "re-routing" the airtickets to the place of home leave will be charged to the home leave or education grant travel allotment as applicable.

Settlement of travel claim (F.10)

14. In line with existing "Decentralized Travel Arrangements" per circular UNDP/ADM/93/18 of 22 April 1993, when traveling in conjunction with reassignment staff members must submit the travel claim (F.10) to the new duty station for settlement. When traveling in conjunction with official mission, the travel claim must be submitted to the current duty station for settlement. In all cases a copy of the travel authorization (PT.8) must be attached to the claim.

Enter on duty (e.o.d.) date on reassignment.

15. Reassignment dates will be set as either the 1st or the 16th of the month; if arrival is different due to the actual travel dates, the established e.o.d. date will apply and entitlements will be established in accordance with the established reassignment date (no adjustments will be made for variation between the actual and established reassignment dates).

Arrival between the 1st to 15th – e.o.d. established as the 1st of the month

Arrival between the 16th to 31st of the month: e.o.d. established as the 16th.

16. The time spent on home leave must be recorded to the previous duty station and/or the new duty station taking into account that the e.o.d. date for staff being reassigned will be established in advance of arrival at the new duty station, by consultation with and mutual agreement between the releasing and receiving offices.

Home leave and education grant travel record cards

17. As indicated in circular UNDP/ADM/98/74 the releasing duty station will transfer the home leave and education grant record cards to the new duty station, which will record the accrual of points (for the month in which the reassignment occurs) on the basis of the following:

Arrival 1 to 15 of the month – accrual at new duty station points rate.

Arrival between the 16 and the end of the month - accrual at previous duty station points rate.

Applicability

18. This measure applies to internationally-recruited staff holding UNDP letter of appointment and administered by UNDP/BOM/OHR under the 100/200 Series of the Staff Rules and Regulations:

UNDP – UNOPS - UNFPA - UNCDP - UNCDF - UNIFEM - UNFSTD -
UNRFNRE - UNSO - UNV - IAPSO

19. UNOPS staff administered by UNOPS must continue to address their requests to UNOPS Headquarters.

20. All other regulations, policy and guidelines addressed in circular UNDP/ADM/98/74 on the subject of decentralization of home leave and universal application of the points system for home leave remain valid.

21. This circular must be shared with the internationally-recruited staff eligible for home leave.

ANNEX I - SUMMARY OF MEASURES PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED AND RE-ENGINEERING MEASURES BEING INTRODUCED AT THIS TIME

ISSUE	ANNOUNCED	PREVIOUS PROCEDURES	NEW PROCEDURES
Further delegation of authority to verify and authorize home leave and education grant travel in conjunction with reassignment or other official travel.	Present Circular	<p>1) Home leave and education grant travel in conjunction with reassignment or other official travel was authorized by UNDP/OHR/BOM</p> <p>2) Exceptions to the required "three months interval" between travel was authorized by Headquarters</p>	<p>1) Effective 1 March 2000, the authority to verify and authorize home leave and education grant travel in conjunction with reassignment or other official travel is also delegated to the Heads of Country Offices and Headquarters offices outside New York (Bonn, Brussels, Copenhagen, Geneva, Tokyo and Washington).</p> <p>2) Effective 1 March 2000, approval of exceptions to the requirement of "three months interval" between entitlement travels is delegated to Resident Representatives and Heads of Headquarters offices outside New York.</p>
Medical Insurance Plan (MIP) for locally recruited staff	UNDP/ADM/00/1 4 January 2000	All cases of MIP/Hardship were approved by UNDP/OHR	Country Offices to approve
Delegation of authority to approve reimbursement under MIP Hardship clause to a limit of \$12,000	UNDP/ADM/99/76 13 December 1999	Payment of hazard pay has been successfully decentralized to the Afghanistan country office. Payment to internationally recruited staff assigned to other duty stations is being effected through the central UN Payroll on a quarterly basis, on the advice of OHR.	Effective 1 December 1999, Resident Representatives are being delegated the authority to effect local payment of hazard pay to internationally recruited staff on a monthly basis, at the end of the month to which the payment applies.
Delegation of authority to Resident Representatives to approve car advances applicable to internationally-recruited staff.	UNDP/ADM/99/61 20 August 1999	Staff members submitted all requests for advances for the purchase of private automobile (through the country office administration) to the respective Personnel Specialists in the Office of Human Resources for approval.	Authority has been delegated to the Resident Representatives to approve the car advance requests in local currency or in US\$ up to the equivalent amount of US\$7,500 to be recovered from the staff member over a period not exceeding 12 months or the duration of the staff member's appointment, whichever is shorter.
Delegation of authority to Resident Representatives to approve rental advances applicable to international-recruited staff.	UNDP/ADM/99/59 12 August 1999	Staff members submitted all requests for advances for pre-payment of rent to the respective Personnel Specialists in the Office of Human Resources for approval.	Authority has been delegated to the Resident Representatives to approve rental advance requests in local currency or in US\$ up to the equivalent amount of US\$25,000 or when rental advance requests are to be recovered from the staff member over a period not exceeding 12 months.
Transfer of home leave and education grant travel	UNDP/ADM/98/74 24 November 1998	OHR maintained the individual records of international staff members in respect of home	During the first quarter of 1999, OHR will transfer to administering offices individual records of international staff

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records to administering offices:		leave and education grant travel entitlements.	members in respect of home leave points accrued after the most recent home leave (for staff members assigned to 12 months home leave cycle duty stations) or on the next home leave (for staff assigned on 24 months home leave travel duty stations). Individual records in respect of the entitlement to education grant travel will also be transferred.
Delegation of authority to verify and approve home leave and education grant travel:	UNDP/ADM/98/74 24 November 1998	The verification/approval of the entitlement to home leave and education grant travel was done by OHR; country offices were responsible for the travel arrangements and settlement of the F.10 or verification of the PT.165.	Effective 1 March 1999, the authorization to verify and approve these entitlements is being delegated to the Heads of Country Offices and locations away from UNDP Headquarters (Belgium, Bonn, Copenhagen, Geneva and Tokyo). Country Offices will also continue to make travel arrangements and settle F.10 travel claims. Home leave or education grant travel in conjunction with reassignment or other official travel will continue to be verified by OHR.
Universal "Point System" for Home Leave	UNDP/ADM/98/74 24 November 1998	i) A point system is used to determine the timing of home leave for staff serving in 12 month cycle duty stations (hardship classification C, D, and E). For 24 month home leave cycle locations and at Headquarters (hardship classification H, A and B), an even year/odd year system is used. ii) The maximum points accrual in the 12-month cycle duty station is 32.	i) A universal point system will be followed in all duty stations to determine entitlement and timing of home leave. The even/odd year for 24 month home leave cycle will no longer apply. ii) The maximum points accrual will be increased to 40.
Delegation of authority for reimbursement of transportation costs of privately-owned automobiles	UNDP/ADM/98/73 20 November 1998	HQ reimbursed partial costs of transportation of privately-owned automobiles to designated duty stations. Staff members submitted to OHR the F.10 claim form for reimbursement.	Effective 1 January 1999, country offices approve and effect the partial reimbursement of the costs of shipment of privately-owned automobile to the designated duty stations, unless the staff member is being reassigned to another designated duty stations, in which case reimbursement will be done in that next country.
Short-cuts in processing of F.10 claims to speed up the time for settlement of	UNDP/ADM/98/68 16 October 1998	i) Vouchers for Reimbursement of Expenses (F.10 claims) for staff member's travel on appointments, reassignments, home leave,	i) F.10 for staff members assigned to Headquarters on appointments, reassignments, home leave, separations, etc. will be submitted directly to TSU rather than through UNDP/OHR

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<p>claims.</p>		<p>separations, etc were submitted to the Travel Services Unit (TSU) through UNDP/OHR Administration Section, when travel authorization was raised at Headquarters.</p> <p>ii) When the Travel Authorization was raised at Headquarters on appointments, reassignments, home leave, separations, etc. but the staff member was being assigned to a country office, the F.10 had to be settled by Headquarters</p>	<p>Administration, when there has been no change in the original itinerary. Processing will be reduced by 2 weeks.</p> <p>ii) When the Travel Authorization is raised at Headquarters on appointments, reassignments, home leave, separations, etc. but the staff member is being assigned to a country office, the F.10 will be settled directly by the country office instead of the claim being sent to Headquarters. TSU will send a faxed authorization including instructions about settling the claims to the country office. Country Offices will IOV UNDP TSU quoting the Headquarters Travel Authorization with a copy of the settled F.10 claim. In both the above situations, staff members should ensure that proper documents are attached to the F.10 claims (e.g. boarding pass, receipt for airport tax, etc.)</p>
<p>Elimination of OHR "post office" functions for Special Education Grant and Special Dependency Allowance (locally-recruited staff in country offices)</p>	<p>UNDP/ADM/98/68 16 October 1998</p>	<p>Country offices submitted requests for payment of Special Education Grant and Special Dependency Allowance for disabled children of locally-recruited staff members to the UNDP OHR Administration Section for onward transmission to the UN Medical Service. Periodic verification required by the Medical Service was also transmitted to the UN Medical Service through UNDP OHR Administration Section.</p>	<p>Country offices submit medical reports and requests for payment of Special Education Grant and/or Dependency Allowances for disabled children of locally-recruited staff members, including periodic verifications, directly to UN Medical Service. The UN Medical service will advise the Country Offices directly whether the staff member is eligible for special education grant and/or dependency allowance for disabled child. The turnaround time will be reduced by at least 2 weeks.</p>
<p>Representation Allowance.</p>	<p>UNDP/ADM/98/37 28 May 1998</p>	<p>Country Offices requested Headquarters' authorization to pay Representation Allowance to Resident Representatives a.i. or Officers-in-Charge of a UNDP Country Office, for periods exceeding 30 days.</p>	<p>Authority has been delegated to the heads of Country Offices to approve Representation Allowance for Resident Representatives a.i. or Officers-in-Charge. Delegation includes, for the first time, payment of Representation Allowance to locally-recruited staff when acting as Officer-in-Charge of a UNDP Country Office.</p>
<p>Elimination of "Post Office" function for medical clearance.</p>	<p>UNDP/ADM/98/35 22 May 1998</p>	<p>Country Offices submitted medical examination results of locally-recruited staff to the UNDP OHR Administration Section for onward transmission to UN Medical Service.</p>	<p>Country Offices submit medical results directly to the UN Medical Services either by fax or pouch. Chest X-rays are no longer required to be forwarded to the UN Medical Service in New York, but a report from the radiologist must be submitted.</p>

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Extension beyond the age of mandatory separation.	UNDP/ADM/98/21 13 March 1998	UNDP Headquarters approved requests for extension of assignments beyond age 60 for staff recruited before 1 January 1990 and beyond age 62 for after that date.	The UN Medical Service fixes medical clearances directly to the Country Offices. Extension of up to 6 months beyond the age of mandatory separation for locally-recruited staff members in Country Offices is delegated to the heads of offices.
Reimbursement of costs for medical examinations.	UNDP/ADM/98/17 19 February 1998	Staff members submitted claims for reimbursement of costs for medical examinations on appointments to UNDP Headquarters for settlement, irrespective of where staff members were being assigned.	Claims for reimbursement of pre-placement medical examinations are settled by the respective country office to which a staff member is assigned, irrespective of where the medical examinations took place.