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منظمة الأغذية
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pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
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y la
Alimentación

COUNCIL

Hundred and Seventeenth Session

Rome 9-11 November 1999

AMENDMENT TO FAO STAFF REGULATIONS

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BUILDING A NEW STAFF PROFILE: CONTRACTS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL STAFF

This document is printed in a limited number of copies. Executive Board documents are available on WFP's WEB site (http://www.wfp.org/eb_public/EB_Home.html)

1. This note is to inform the Executive Board of progress on management initiatives under WFP's Strategic and Financial Plan (2000–2003) commitment to develop new contractual arrangements for International Professional Staff, which will be considered for approval by the FAO Council in November.
2. The Strategic and Financial Plan commits WFP to advancing development of new contractual arrangements for International Professional Staff (EB.A/99/5-A/1 paragraph 106) in order to help meet the planned result of "...a staff adequate in skills and experience to fulfil its Mission Statement but also able to expand and contract in a balanced way".
3. Since 1986, WFP has used a number of appointment categories for staff under differing terms, conditions and contracts. These appointment categories addressed the Programme's needs as it changed from a predominantly development to predominantly relief organization. They provided greater mobility of staff, a wider mix of skills appropriate for relief and development activities, and greater flexibility in staff recruitment.
4. However, they have created uneven staff conditions, administrative complexity and costs, hampered the recruitment and retention of some excellent staff and reduced WFP's flexibility to respond to any future changes in core business and resource levels.
5. A Working Group was established. Led by the Human Resources Division and with the participation of staff representation bodies and FAO's Legal Office, the Working Group proposed a simple and practical solution, more in line with the fundamental nature of WFP. Future International Professional Staff (IPS) from P1 to D1 would be engaged under a United Nations category of indefinite appointment, instead of fixed appointments. Indefinite appointments are appointments that do not carry a specific date of expiry. When introducing the new appointment type, WFP would take into account the legal principle that it cannot change unilaterally fundamental terms of outstanding contracts. Thus, staff holding continuing appointments would retain their appointments. Staff under fixed-term appointments with a definite expectation of conversion of their contracts to continuing would retain their rights. Other IPS under fixed-term appointments would have their contracts converted to indefinite, subject to on-going needs of the Programme.
6. This solution safeguards the current acquired rights of staff while enabling the Programme to move steadily towards a single appointment category—indefinite appointment—for IPS. The single appointment category will provide reasonable and equitable conditions for all IPS, reduce the administrative burden and enable the Programme to expand and contract its staffing in a balanced way in line with any significant changes in resource levels or the nature of its core business.
7. Article VII.6 of the General Regulations of WFP provides, *inter alia*, that the Executive Director "shall administer the staff of WFP in accordance with FAO Staff Regulations and Rules". While the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules provide for indefinite appointments, the FAO Staff Regulations and Rules do not. Therefore, the FAO Council is being requested, at its 117th session, in November 1999, to approve a limited amendment to FAO Staff Regulations, allowing WFP to offer indefinite



appointments to its staff. If the Council approves the proposed amendment, the Director General of FAO would be requested to approve some special Staff Rules applicable to WFP-IPS, setting out modalities for the implementation of the appointment category.

8. Indefinite appointments are already being used by UNHCR, which intends to introduce these for all categories of staff from January 2000. Other United Nations organizations, such as UNICEF, are considering the introduction of indefinite appointments for their staff.
9. For your information, the document submitted to FAO Council at its 117th Session is attached.



