

# **Summative evaluation of the implementation of the WHO Geographical Mobility Policy during its voluntary phase**

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## **Executive summary**

In January 2016, the Geographical Mobility Policy for WHO International Professionals (IPs) on continuing and fixed-term appointments came into effect. During the first three years (2016-2018), the Policy has been implemented on a voluntary basis and has been evaluated annually. It was envisaged that the lessons learned from these evaluations would inform the Organization on how to effectively implement the Policy during the mandatory phase as of 1 January 2019.

The first and second annual evaluations of the Policy's implementation were completed by the WHO Evaluation Office in January 2017 and February 2018 respectively. These evaluations reviewed the geographical movements that took place in the annual compendia, as well as the governance mechanism and related institutional practices. The implementation of the Policy was paused in 2018 and there were no geographical moves organized through the compendium exercise. This current evaluation was therefore designed as a summative evaluation of the implementation of the Policy during the voluntary phase (2016-2018).

The evaluation designs for the annual evaluations carried out in 2016 and 2017 were based on a mixed method approach using a combination of document review, interviews and online surveys. To ensure comparability over time, the design and structure of interview guides and survey questionnaires used in the 2017 evaluation were aligned with those used in the first annual evaluation. The methodology adopted for this summative evaluation was similar, but no additional online surveys were carried out.

### **Key findings**

#### **1) What changes have occurred during the voluntary phase of implementation of the Policy?**

In January 2017, the Department of Human Resources Management (HRD) published a slightly revised version of the Policy to take into account some lessons learned from its implementation in 2016. However, these amendments did not change the basic process of the annual compendium exercise.

Of the eight recommendations issued in the first annual evaluation report, one was fully implemented, six were partially implemented, and one was not implemented. As the implementation of the Policy was paused in 2018, the recommendations made in the second evaluation report were generally not implemented.

On 23 May 2017, WHO Member States elected a new Director-General, who began his five-year term on 1 July 2017. Geographical mobility remains high on the agenda of the new WHO Administration. As the focus of the 13th General Programme of Work (GPW13) is to strengthen the work of WHO at country level, it is expected that the geographical distribution of WHO's workforce will be adjusted and managed mobility should be aligned accordingly.

In its meeting in November 2017, the Global Policy Group (GPG) decided that position descriptions would be standardized across WHO to facilitate mobility. The number of standardized positions rose from around 92 in November 2017 to about 114 in November 2018. The GPG also decided to review the distribution of staff across the 3 levels of WHO, to inform potential goals for future staffing of the Organization.

In 2018, whereas the implementation of the geographical mobility policy was paused, work began to develop a new operating model for the Organization.

## **2) How was the geographical mobility policy implemented during the voluntary phase, and what have been the main results achieved?**

### **How was the Geographical Mobility Policy implemented during the voluntary phase?**

The process of the annual compendium exercises in 2016 and 2017 was described in detail in the respective evaluation reports. For 2018, to address the problem of low participation, HRD proposed two options for the consideration of the Global Staff Management Council (GSMC): (i) issuing an annual mobility compendium with a similar governance mechanism and containing at least 100 positions (50 from headquarters and 50 from regional/country offices); or (ii) including all advertised fixed-term IP positions in the voluntary mobility scheme, in a rolling list available for consultation by all staff members, and giving priority consideration to qualified internal candidates willing to move to another duty station. The GSMC recommended this latter option.

In addition, HRD proposed three other changes: (i) to reintroduce the notion of non-rotational IP positions; (ii) to introduce the possibility of promotion through mobility for hardship duty-stations; and (iii) to introduce mobility as a requirement for certain positions (one geographical move being required for staff to be considered for P5 positions and above). As the implementation of the Policy was paused in 2018, none of these proposals were implemented.

In 2016 there were mixed reports on the level of information and support received, but this improved in 2017. New measures supporting the Policy were introduced in 2017 by HRD. However, the communication and information campaign on the Policy was largely unsuccessful and the number of applicants and final placements remained low.

In general, interviewed IPs and managers acknowledged that the mobility exercises implemented complied with WHO's non-discrimination requirements. Recommendations to increase transparency, objectivity and fairness of the assessments were issued by the Global Mobility Committee (GMC) after the 2016 exercise and implemented in 2017. Nevertheless, the lack of standardized job descriptions and appraisal procedures made fair and objective assessments more difficult. Also, the Policy provisions did not respond effectively to the issue of ensuring burden sharing in hardship duty stations.

Women account for around 43% of all IPs in WHO. Online survey data collected in 2016 indicates that women are in general less inclined to seek geographical mobility (frequently for family reasons). Available statistical data seem to confirm this. Overall, women accounted for 38% of the 162 geographical moves of WHO IPs in 2016, and for 37% of the 200 moves in 2017. They represented about 39% of eligible applicants in 2016 and around 30% in 2017. Although the sample size is small, the exercises implemented seem to have complied with WHO's policy of gender balance.

The implementation of the Policy raised awareness of the need for unifying and standardizing practices and managerial tools (e.g. position descriptions, job titles and assessment methods) across the three levels of WHO, but the actual level of harmonization does not yet permit a seamless implementation of geographical mobility.

A comparison between HRD's target for annual managed geographical moves (around 200, i.e. 10% of IPs) and the number of actual managed moves implemented in 2016 and 2017 on a voluntary basis (12-13 per year) shows that the levels of effectiveness and efficiency are low and suggests that new approaches need to be explored. Similar difficulties met by other UN agencies, who also have a wide range of job families and areas of expertise, as well as their assessments of the resources required to successfully implement geographical mobility rounds, further support this judgement.

Identified factors which influence the implementation of geographical mobility include: WHO's current weak mobility culture, especially in headquarters; the absence of a comprehensive system of harmonized and standardized job descriptions and standard HR managerial practices and tools across

the three levels of the Organization; and the absence of a lead authority entrusted with the organization of geographical mobility and made accountable for its implementation (HRD has only a supporting role and GMC currently has mainly an advisory role).

### **What have been the main results achieved?**

IPs placed through the compendium exercises represent only about 6.5% of the total annual geographical moves through all staffing modalities (the latter also include normal recruitment/selection, lateral reassignment and other ad hoc moves).

IPs placed in 2016 and 2017 were interviewed. Most of them were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience of having moved through the mobility compendium. Not enough time had passed for them to assess the consequences of their moves on their career progression and on the improvement of their competencies.

The online surveys and interviews carried out during the first two annual evaluations that targeted eligible IPs who did not apply through the compendium exercises highlighted the reasons that would motivate them to move geographically and those that might hold them back from moving geographically. Eight main reasons were given to explain reluctance to move: “family/spouse considerations” (81%); “no suitable positions for my professional profile” (59%); “higher security risks” (57%); “low or less attractive living conditions in general” (51%); lack of promotion opportunities” (48%); “limited education/schooling options” (46%); “limited health care options” (42%); and “lower financial entitlements/allowances” (38%). Another frequent reason presented by IPs who did not move was that there were not enough positions advertised in the compendium.

Levels of satisfaction of IPs and managers who participated in the compendium exercises were mixed. The number of advertised positions was low and there were no possibilities for promotion. Feedback collected from managers who advertised positions in the 2017 mobility compendium showed that some of them were disappointed by not having been sufficiently involved in the process. Several managers would have liked to organize an interview with short-listed applicants to better assess their suitability for the position. The pool of applicants was found too limited by several managers.

## **3) What are the main lessons learned?**

### **Lessons learned from WHO’s experience**

The main lessons learned from WHO’s experience of implementing its Geographical Mobility Policy on a voluntary basis in 2016 and 2017 have been described in detail in the first two annual evaluation reports. The levels of voluntary participation of IPs in the managed mobility exercises organized in 2016 and 2017 were low. The annual evaluations have provided useful insights into the perceptions of staff and management on issues such as: the expected benefits of geographical mobility and the way it has been implemented; challenges and obstacles met and actions required to overcome them and improve the governance mechanisms and managerial practices; and the organization of an enabling environment.

### **Lessons learned from the experience of other UN agencies**

Many UN agencies have been implementing or launching geographical mobility policies in the last few years. The 2017 evaluation captured lessons learned from some of these agencies. A benchmarking analysis carried out through interviews with mobility teams of 8 UN agencies identified five main lessons:

- 1. The best options to manage geographical mobility depend on the profile of the agency’s workforce.*
- 2. A seamless implementation of geographical mobility requires thorough forecast-based planning.*

3. *The overall set of requirements and constraints needs to be carefully analysed and taken into account.*
4. *An effective managerial network associating HRD and operational departments needs to be in place.*
5. *Adequate training needs to be provided, in addition to communication and support measures.*

#### **Lessons learned from the experiences of other organizations outside the UN system**

In addition to the experience of UN agencies there is a wide, mature and rich field of experience regarding HR policies and management, which includes lessons learned from the management of large governmental workforces. These lessons are particularly informative regarding basic human resource management (HRM) practices, such as the construction of well-designed job classification systems (and related systems of standardized position descriptions), or the effective and efficient distribution of HRM responsibilities between operational departments and HR managers.

#### **4) Based on lessons learned, what are the key requirements identified that need to be fulfilled to optimize the chances of the Policy to achieve its intended benefits?**

The analysis of the information collected during the annual evaluations of the implementation of the Policy has led to the identification of three sets of requirements that need to be fulfilled for optimizing the chances of a seamless, effective and equitable implementation of geographical mobility in WHO.

##### **Results-related requirements**

Geographical mobility is not a mechanical rotation exercise obliging people to move for the sake of moving. It is a strategic instrument intended to enrich careers and skills, strengthen duty stations' capacity to deliver, and contribute to the fulfilment of WHO's mandate. The purpose and added value of the Policy need to be clear and well understood by all staff.

Well-designed geographical mobility is a win-win situation: geographical mobility needs to jointly satisfy the legitimate expectations of WHO's Member States, managers and staff.

##### **Process-related requirements**

Three fundamental process-related requirements need to be fulfilled: (i) a fair balance between the number of IPs who are due/expected to move in the year and the number of relevant available positions (this balance should not only consider the overall numbers, but also specific areas of competencies, job profiles and grades); (ii) a balance between the Policy requirements and the available resources; and (iii) a fair and inclusive implementation combined with openness to the recruitment of new talent.

##### **Requirements related to implementation**

For the Policy to be seamlessly implemented, a culture of geographical mobility needs to be progressively developed and encouraged. Integration of geographical mobility into performance appraisal criteria and career development schemes, associated with an awareness campaign involving WHO senior management, are effective tools to foster in WHO a geographical mobility culture.

Mobility usually occurs between positions requiring similar basic qualifications and skills (professional profiles/job categories/areas of expertise). Networks of experts belonging to specific areas of expertise/job categories and working at different levels of the Organization should play a key role in the organization of geographical mobility. Also, as recommended by the GMC, hiring managers should play a major role in the matching/selection process.

Harmonization of the functioning of HRM at the three levels of the Organization (e.g. for the standardization of job titles, position descriptions and job families) is a critical requirement for a well-

functioning scheme of managed mobility. Efforts made by HRD and regional HR managers to overcome current disparities in managerial practices need to continue in order to achieve a reasonable standard of consistency across the Organization.

A consistent system of job titles and position descriptions is necessary to organize relevant, effective and fair geographical moves. Such a system would serve as the basis for a WHO job framework and would allow clear identification of corresponding positions in different regions/countries. Initially, this customized and simplified framework could include: (i) *generic position descriptions*, corresponding to *types of jobs*, and, affiliated to them, (ii) *specific job descriptions*, corresponding to *actual positions* in the Organization. Generic and specific job descriptions in this framework should include information about their replicability and their geographical distribution.

Teams in charge of the management of geographical mobility need effective planning and monitoring tools in order to easily monitor staff distribution and moves and, when relevant, to meet predefined mobility targets (e.g. targets regarding gender balance). Such tools include customized forecast-based planning tools combined with dashboards to monitor the geographical distribution of the different categories of job profiles with their respective grades. They also include communication and knowledge-sharing tools (to facilitate induction and help to preserve the institutional memory of duty stations).

## **5) What are the current main challenges that need to be addressed?**

### **Specificities of WHO**

As the main specialized UN Agency mandated to help improve the health situation of the World's population, WHO has a challenging mission. Three of the 8 Millennium Development Goals were directly related to health, and virtually all SDGs have direct or indirect ties with health. Of the 169 SDG targets, 22 are closely related to health.

Although WHO has mainly a normative, advisory, catalytic and convening role in health assistance initiatives, the challenges met are huge and expanding. With only around 2,100 IPs, WHO needs to have a well-organized, highly motivated, competent, agile and flexible workforce to successfully face these challenges.

### **Specific features of WHO's workforce**

WHO has a high level of compartmentalization linked to a wide range of areas of expertise. The combination of a relatively small IP workforce with highly differentiated areas of expertise results in limited "pools" of IPs belonging to the same area of expertise. This represents a barrier to the organization of geographical moves, even more so considering that, in general, geographical mobility also requires the same or similar grades in the former and new positions.

The decentralized structure of WHO is an added challenge for the implementation of global policies. As is the case for the proposed new operating model, the implementation of geographical mobility requires a shared vision and harmonized procedures, practices and tools. Without a harmonized approach, the implementation of the Policy will meet with recurrent barriers.

WHO does not have a deeply rooted culture of geographical mobility. The evaluations have shown that average yearly rates of geographical mobility are within the range of 10%-14% in the European, Western Pacific, Eastern Mediterranean and South-East Asia Regions, close to 25% in Africa, but much lower in headquarters (around 3%-4% only). The weak rate of geographical moves from headquarters has a strong impact on geographical mobility because around half of WHO's IPs are currently working in headquarters. The fundamental dynamics of geographical mobility in WHO is not among regions, but between headquarters and all the other major offices (considered together).



With GPW13, WHO has designed an ambitious strategy for the next 5 years (2019-2023), in line with the scale of the challenges faced. The key drivers of this strategy are the triple billion targets and the nine outcomes that are expected to contribute to the achievement of these targets. To support this strategy, a new operating model is in the process of being elaborated. It will have repercussions on: (i) the organization of structures and processes, (ii) the internal distribution of roles, responsibilities and sets of skills required, (iii) the enabling systems supporting the main workstreams, and (iv) the Organization's way of working with Member States and partners.

The main focus of the strategy is the generation of measurable benefits at country level, addressing countries' needs and expectations. Human resources (staff) are the actors who take decisions, deploy efforts and achieve goals (structures and processes only facilitate their action), thus the importance of developing in WHO a "workforce of excellence" as described in para 114 of GPW13. Geographical mobility of IPs is a component of HR policies designed to develop this highly competent, cutting edge and fit-for-purpose workforce.

## 6) Conclusions

GPW13 puts countries at the centre of WHO's work. The overall architecture and the activities of the Organization are being reorganized to ensure that WHO's action is strategically oriented and demand-driven, and that all available resources are used to optimize WHO's assets to meet its targets. WHO's Geographical Mobility Policy launched in 2014 was designed in the context of the implementation of GPW12. The shift towards the new operating model requires an adjustment of the paradigm underpinning the organization of geographical mobility.

The interviews carried out in December 2017 with HR managers implementing geographical mobility policies in eight UN agencies highlighted that the implementation of these policies often requires a change of mindset and a learning and adaptation period for both the Organization and its staff. The organization of managed rotation exercises faces many challenges and the experience gathered in the first years of implementation has led several agencies to readjust the provisions of their policies and to modify their managerial practices.

The UN Secretariat adopted in 2014 a mobility policy that was implemented in two of its networks in the period 2016-2017. A UN report of 15 November 2018<sup>1</sup> notes that managed mobility ended up with relatively few moves. Of the 374 geographical moves reported for its POLNET network, less than 10% took place under managed mobility. The implementation was paused in 2018. Following the publication of the findings of a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Policy carried out during the first semester of 2018, the UN Secretary-General has decided to propose to the UN General Assembly a new comprehensive mobility framework for the Secretariat, based on a new approach, the details of which will be developed in consultation with management and staff during 2019 and presented to the UN General Assembly for consideration at its seventy-fourth session (September 2019).

Although having a much smaller IP workforce, WHO faces similar challenges and has followed a quite similar path. WHO's Geographical Mobility Policy was also promulgated in 2014 and went through a 2-year period of implementation in 2016-2017. Accounting for less than 10% of the annual moves, managed mobility had similar disappointing results. The implementation of the Policy was paused in 2018, and a summative evaluation was carried out in 2018. As is the case of the UN Secretariat, WHO has both operational and normative functions and an IP workforce covering a wide range of functions (working in different areas of expertise and with distinct competency profiles). Given the smaller size of WHO's IP workforce, it will meet greater challenges than those met by the UN Secretariat in the

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<sup>1</sup> Mobility – Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. UN General Assembly, document A/73/569, para. 6.

organization of rotation rounds within specialized areas of expertise. Unless the current Policy is revised to incorporate the lessons learned, the difficulties faced during the voluntary phase of implementation of the Policy will likely increase.

The specificities of WHO's overall organization, which grants a large degree of autonomy to regions, further accentuate the obstacles met in the organization and implementation of geographical mobility. Even more importantly, the adoption of a new operating model in response to the need to introduce major changes in the geographical distribution of WHO's workforce and in the way the Organization delivers, adds to the necessity of readjusting and refining the geographical mobility scheme designed in 2014.

The key requirements that may help design a system of geographical mobility tailored for WHO, in line with its new overall strategy and operating model, are now better understood. Innovative ways to address these key requirements and options for ensuring equity in burden sharing and establishing links between geographical mobility, performance appraisal and opportunities for career advancement, are thus explored.

As highlighted in the second annual evaluation, a seamless implementation of the Geographical Mobility Policy requires suitable steering and coordination mechanisms, coordinated HR networks across the three levels of the Organization that are using standardized and harmonized managerial practices, and a comprehensive set of fit-for-purpose tools. The evaluations carried out during the voluntary phase of the implementation of the policy have highlighted that capacity reinforcement actions are needed in WHO in all these areas.

## Recommendations

### Adjust the policy to the changes introduced by GPW13

- R1 The Secretariat should consider preparing a **new framework** for the implementation of geographical mobility which takes into account the new strategic orientation of WHO, the organizational changes accompanying this transformation, and the lessons learned through the annual evaluations carried out during the voluntary phase of the implementation of the policy.

In addition to incorporating the expectations of all key stakeholders, the new framework should be developed in consultation with management and staff. It should:

- combine geographical mobility and other staffing modalities into a **coherent staffing strategy** that is aligned with WHO's overall corporate strategy and remains open to recruitment of new talent;
- be designed to be implemented within a wider framework including **career management, talent and knowledge management, succession planning and performance management**;
- facilitate **inter-agency mobility** within the UN system.

### Implement enabling capacity-development actions

#### *Ensure Suitable Planning and Monitoring Capacity*

- R2 HRD and regional HR managers should develop and implement across the 3 levels of the Organization:

- a **customized WHO job framework for IPs** supporting a **unified and coherent system of job titles and position descriptions**, and highlighting an overall WHO IP structure of job families, position grades and career paths;
- a set of **basic forecast-based workforce planning tools** customized for managing geographical mobility of IPs;
- **monitoring dashboards** customized for managing geographical mobility of IPs, providing **real-time information** on the overall situation and including a **set of relevant key indicators**, designed to inform and guide the managing team on an ongoing basis.

#### *Ensure Suitable Implementation Capacity*

- R3 HRD and regional HR managers should implement across the 3 levels of the Organization:

- updated **standard operating procedures** targeting line managers and HR/administrative staff involved in geographical mobility, and providing guidance on the implementation of measures aimed at facilitating moves, settlement in the new living environments and induction;
- a customized "toolbox" designed to facilitate **knowledge-sharing and mentoring**, including examples of good managerial practices, recommendations and tools;
- a **communication and information action plan** on the *raisons d'être*, expected benefits and implementation rules of the new policy framework, supported by fit-for-purpose **tools** and targeting IPs and managers. *(This measure needs to be implemented in synergy with Recommendation R4).*

#### *Ensure Favourable Institutional Culture*

- R4 The Secretariat should design and implement an **awareness campaign** targeting all managers and IPs and explaining clearly the **purpose** of the policy and **how it benefits both the Organization and staff**. *(This should be done with participation of senior management.)*

## Introduction

In January 2016, the Geographical Mobility Policy<sup>2</sup> for WHO International Professionals (IPs) on continuing and fixed-term appointments came into effect. During the first three years (2016–2018), the policy has been implemented on a voluntary basis and has been evaluated annually. It was envisaged that the lessons learned from these annual evaluations would inform the Organization on how to effectively implement the policy during the mandatory phase as of 1 January 2019.

The first annual evaluation of the policy's implementation was completed by the WHO Evaluation Office in January 2017, and the second in February 2018. These first two evaluations reviewed the geographical movements that took place in the annual compendia, as well as the governance mechanism and related institutional practices. The implementation of the policy was paused in 2018 and there were no geographical moves organized through the compendium. This current evaluation was therefore designed as a summative evaluation of the implementation of the policy during the voluntary phase (2016–2018).

### Methodology of the evaluations

The evaluation designs for the annual evaluations carried out in 2016 and 2017 were based on a mixed method approach using a combination of document review, interviews and online surveys.<sup>3</sup> To ensure comparability over time, the design and structure of interview guides and survey questionnaires used in the 2017 evaluation were aligned with those used in the first annual evaluation. The methodology adopted for this summative evaluation was similar, but no additional online surveys were carried out. More details on the methodology of the evaluation may be found in section B of the Annexes.

### Evaluation Questions

The evaluation was guided by five high-level evaluation questions:

- 1) *What changes have occurred during the voluntary phase of implementation of the Policy?*
- 2) *How was the geographical mobility policy implemented during the voluntary phase, and what have been the main results achieved?*
- 3) *What are the main lessons learned?*
- 4) *Based on lessons learned, what are the key requirements identified that need to be fulfilled to optimize the chances of the Policy to achieve its intended benefits?*
- 5) *What are the current main challenges that need to be addressed?*

## 1) What changes have occurred during the voluntary phase of implementation of the Policy?

**Adjustments made to the policy:** In January 2017, HRD published a slightly revised version of the policy, including minor amendments to take into account some lessons learned from the implementation of the policy in 2016. However, these amendments did not change the basic process of the annual compendium exercise.

**Level of implementation of the 2016 and 2017 recommendations:** Of the eight recommendations issued in the first annual evaluation report, one was fully implemented, six were partially implemented, and one was not implemented. As the implementation of the policy was paused in 2018, the recommendations made in the second evaluation report were not, in general, implemented.

**Major institutional changes in WHO:** On 23 May 2017 the WHO Member States elected a new

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.who.int/employment/WHO-mobility-policy.pdf> (a few minor adjustments were introduced in January 2017).

<sup>3</sup> More details on the methodology of the evaluations may be found in the annexes of the annual reports.

Director-General, who began his five-year term on 1 July 2017. Geographical mobility remains high on the agenda of the new WHO Administration. As the focus of GPW13 is to strengthen the work of WHO at country level, it is expected that the geographical distribution of WHO's workforce will be adjusted and managed mobility should be aligned accordingly.

In its meeting in November 2017, the Global Policy Group (GPG)<sup>4</sup> decided that position descriptions would be standardized across WHO to facilitate mobility. The number of standardized positions rose from around 92 in November 2017 to about 114 in November 2018. The GPG also decided to review the distribution of staff across the 3 levels of WHO, to inform potential goals for future staffing of the Organization. In 2018, whereas the implementation of the geographical mobility policy was paused, work began to develop a new operating model for the Organization.

## **2) How was the geographical mobility policy implemented during the voluntary phase, and what have been the main results achieved?**

### **2.1 How was the Geographical Mobility Policy implemented during the voluntary phase?**

**Process:** The process adopted to carry out the annual compendium exercises in 2016 and 2017 was described in detail in the respective evaluation reports.<sup>5</sup> For 2018, to address the problem of low participation, HRD proposed two new options for the consideration of the GSMC. The first option was based on an annual mobility compendium to be issued in 2018, with a similar governance mechanism and containing at least 100 positions (50 from headquarters and 50 from regional and country offices). In the second option all advertised fixed-term IP positions would be part of the voluntary mobility scheme. Priority consideration would be given to qualified internal candidates willing to move to another duty station. Advertised positions would be included in a rolling list available for consultation by all staff members. The GSMC recommended this latter option.

In addition, HRD proposed three other changes: (i) to reintroduce the notion of non-rotational IP positions (for those for which there are no similar positions at the same grade in other duty-stations); (ii) to introduce the possibility of promotion through mobility for hardship duty-stations (C, D, E and Non-family); and (iii) to introduce mobility as a requirement for certain positions (one geographical move being required for staff to be considered for P5 positions and above). The implementation of the policy was paused in 2018, so none of these proposals were implemented.

**Information on the Policy and elements of support:** In 2016 (the first year of implementation) there were mixed reports on the level of information and support received, but there was an improvement in 2017. For the second exercise, the preliminary information on positions and duty stations and the feedback received at the end of the exercise were mostly considered satisfactory by IPs that moved under the Policy. With some exceptions,<sup>6</sup> the same may be said of the local support received and of the induction initiatives from which newly placed IPs have benefited. New measures supporting the

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<sup>4</sup> The Global Policy Group (GPG) discusses strategic and internal policy issues relating to the programmatic and managerial work of WHO, established to ensure a coherent implementation of decisions, policies and strategies of WHO across all levels of the Organization. The GPG consists of the Director-General, Deputy Director-General, Regional Directors and the Executive Director of the WHO Emergencies Programme.

<sup>5</sup> HRD collected positions for the compendium in September/October. All professional staff on fixed-term (FT) and continuing appointments were invited to apply for up to three positions at their current grade, where their qualifications and experience matched the requirements of the positions located in other duty stations. All applications received were technically assessed by the Category Networks (CNs). CNs provided suggestions to the Global Mobility Committee (GMC)<sup>5</sup>, which included (i) senior representatives from each Regional Office nominated by their Regional Director (RD) and (ii) Staff Representatives. The GMC made placement recommendations to the RDs and the WHE Executive Directors. The recommendations endorsed by them were sent to the DG for approval. Overall, in 2017 the decision-making process was completed in 21 calendar days.

<sup>6</sup> Some IPs and hiring managers reported induction difficulties related to cultural differences in the work environment. Other IPs who moved reported difficulties in adapting to the new professional environment (and exceptionally weak support provided by the receiving duty station).

policy were introduced in 2017 by HRD. However, the responsiveness of IPs and hiring managers to the communication and information campaign on the policy did not meet the expected level, and the number of advertised positions, applicants and final placements remained low.

***Compliance with relevant HR regulations/fairness:*** In general, interviewed IPs and managers acknowledged that the mobility exercises implemented complied with WHO's non-discrimination requirements. Recommendations to increase transparency, objectivity and fairness of the assessments were issued by the GMC after the 2016 exercise and implemented in 2017. Nevertheless, the lack of standardized job descriptions and appraisal procedures made fair and objective assessments harder to ensure. Also, the Policy provisions did not respond effectively to the issue of ensuring burden sharing in hardship duty stations.

***Gender balance:*** Women account for around 43% of all IPs in WHO. Data collected in 2016 through an online survey indicates that women are in general less inclined to seek geographical mobility (frequently for family reasons). Available statistical data seem to confirm this. Overall, women accounted for 38% of the 162 geographical moves of WHO's IPs in 2016, and for 37% of the 200 moves in 2017. They represented about 39% of eligible applicants in 2016 and around 30% in 2017.<sup>7</sup> Although the sample size is small, the exercises implemented seem to have complied with WHO's policy of gender balance.

***Does the governance mechanism contribute to unifying practices across all major offices?*** The implementation of the policy raised awareness of the need for unifying and standardizing practices and managerial tools (e.g. position descriptions, job titles and assessment methods) across the three levels of WHO, but the actual level of harmonization does not yet permit a seamless implementation of geographical mobility.

***Is the institutional capacity efficiently organized?*** A comparison between HRD's target for annual managed geographical moves (around 200, i.e. around 10% of the number of IPs) and the number of actual managed moves implemented in 2016 and 2017 on a voluntary basis (12-13 per year) shows that the levels of effectiveness and efficiency are low, and suggests that new approaches need to be explored. Similar difficulties met by other UN agencies who also have a wide range of job families and areas of expertise, as well as their assessments of the resources required to successfully implement geographical mobility rounds,<sup>8</sup> also support this judgement. The organizational changes taking place in WHO further highlight the need to readjust the current framework.

***Internal and external factors influencing the Policy's implementation:*** Identified factors which influence the implementation of geographical mobility include: WHO's current weak mobility culture, especially in headquarters; the absence of a comprehensive system of harmonized and standardized job descriptions and standard HR managerial practices and tools across the three levels of the Organization; and the absence of a leading authority/committee entrusted with the organization of geographical mobility and made accountable for its implementation (HRD has only a supporting role and responsibility, not a leading role, and GMC, as it exists now, has mainly an advisory role).

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<sup>7</sup> Differences in percentage in small samples, which artificially amplify gaps, may be misleading and need to be carefully considered. Both samples were too small to allow reliable statistical inferences or evidence-based judgements.

<sup>8</sup> See Annexes A1 and A2.



## 2.2 What have been the main results achieved?

**Low level of participation in the compendium exercise:** IPs placed through the compendium exercises represent only about 6.5% of the total annual geographical moves through all staffing modalities (the latter also include normal recruitment/selection, lateral reassignment and other ad hoc moves).

**Staff who moved:** IPs placed in 2016 and 2017 were interviewed. Most of them were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience of having moved through the mobility compendium. Not enough time had passed for them to assess the consequences of their moves on their career progression and on the improvement of their competencies. No gender differences were found regarding the benefits from the Policy (small sample).

**Staff who did not move:** The online surveys and interviews carried out during the first two annual evaluations that targeted eligible IPs who did not apply through the compendium exercises highlighted the reasons that would motivate them to move geographically and those which might hold them back from moving geographically. Eight main reasons were given to explain reluctance to move. These were (by decreasing order, with percentage of positive answers in brackets): “family/spouse considerations” (81%); “no suitable positions for my professional profile” (59%); “higher security risks” (57%); “low or less attractive living conditions in general” (51%); lack of promotion opportunities” (48%); “limited education/schooling options” (46%); “limited health care options” (42%); “lower financial entitlements/allowances” (38%). Another frequent reason presented by IPs who did not move was that there were not enough positions advertised in the compendium.

**To what extent were the internal stakeholders (IPs and managers) expectations fulfilled?** Levels of satisfaction of IPs and managers who participated in the compendium exercises were mixed. The information gathered suggests that IPs’ expectations have only partially been satisfied. The number of advertised positions was low and there were no possibilities for promotion. Feedback collected from managers who advertised positions in the 2017 mobility compendium showed that some of them were disappointed by not having been sufficiently involved in the process. Several managers would have liked to organize an interview with short-listed applicants to better assess their suitability for the position. The pool of applicants was found too limited by several managers. Of the five managers who received IPs through the 2016 geographical mobility compendium and responded to a brief follow-up survey, four declared to be satisfied or very satisfied, while one of them was dissatisfied with the experience.

**Increasing staff awareness and learning effects:** The interviews showed an increased awareness among staff and managers of the rules related to the policy and its implementation. The implementation of the policy in 2016 and 2017 also contributed to strengthening a number of key issues (e.g. information and support to be provided to moving IPs). Senior management and GMC members now have a better understanding of the challenges that need to be overcome to effectively manage geographical mobility. The information collected for the annual evaluations provides valuable information on the requirements that need to be satisfied to optimize the chances of fairly and effectively implementing a win-win geographical mobility policy in WHO.

## 3) What are the main lessons learned?

### 3.1 Lessons learned from WHO’s experience

The implementation of the WHO Geographical Mobility Policy on a voluntary basis during the 3-year period 2016-2018 has enabled a deeper understanding of the Organization on managed geographical mobility. It has allowed an assessment of the suitability, relevance and effectiveness of the provisions of the Policy and of its governance mechanism, and the identification of areas for improvement. The first two annual evaluations (in 2016 and 2017) summarized the main lessons learned from the implementation of the mobility rounds in these first two years.

The second (2017) annual evaluation, whose report was delivered to WHO's Senior Management in February 2018, also reviewed geographical mobility policies and practices in ten other UN agencies, thus providing a basis for a comparative (benchmarking) analysis. In addition, the report recalled widely-acknowledged good practices adopted by other experienced international and governmental organizations regarding, namely, the standardization of position descriptions, and design of well-structured job and competency frameworks, which are of vital importance for the organization of a seamless implementation of geographical mobility. The lessons learned from this extended experience (gathered in other UN agencies and in other relevant performing organizations) were integrated into the assessments and recommendations made.

There was no new geographical mobility round organized in 2018. However, a series of events which have a direct impact on the organization of geographical mobility occurred in WHO during this year. In particular, the new strategy of WHO, oriented towards the achievement of three main global targets and putting countries at the centre of WHO's action, was consolidated and work began on the redesign of the operating model of WHO across the three levels of the Organization to better serve the needs of WHO Member States.

The shift towards an impact-based strategic management focusing on countries has repercussions on the distribution, organization and management of WHO's IP workforce. The geographical distribution of required sets of competencies and job profiles needs to be adjusted, and the overall structure of job families needs to incorporate the changes introduced in job profiles. The system of career paths is also affected by these changes.

Performance management appears, in this new context, as a key managerial tool, and is in general more closely aligned with target-oriented operational and HR management. Performance appraisal methods that increase, in particular, the weight of agreed targets met<sup>9</sup> tend to replace other methods of performance assessment, which are often mainly based on job descriptions.

The organization and management of geographical mobility needs to take into account this fundamental shift, which modifies not only the structure and geographical distribution of IP positions, but also the decision levels of managers (including HR managers) across the Organization. To effectively serve the goals of the Organization and remain aligned with the overall strategic management policies and practices, WHO's Geographical Mobility Policy needs to be revisited, taking into account the lessons learned.

The main lessons learned from WHO's experience of implementing its geographical mobility policy on a voluntary basis in 2016 and 2017 have been described and analysed in detail in the first two annual evaluation reports issued by the WHO Evaluation Office. The levels of voluntary participation of IPs in the managed mobility exercises organized in 2016 and 2017 were low. The annual evaluations have provided useful insights on the perceptions of staff and management on the expected benefits of geographical mobility and on the way it has been implemented; on types of challenges and obstacles met (e.g. lack of a standardized system of job descriptions), and on actions required to overcome these obstacles and improve the governance mechanisms and managerial practices; on the organization of an enabling environment; etc. These lessons were combined with lessons taken from other UN

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<sup>9</sup> Four main sets of assessment criteria, which may be combined into different "assessment grids (or frameworks)", where different weights may be given to each selected criterion, are universally used to **appraise staff performance**: (i) *job descriptions*, describing current due tasks and job obligations; (ii) *staff competencies* (they are assessed against a framework of required skills, knowledge and competencies, closely related to the tasks to be performed); (iii) *staff professional integrity and behaviour* (assessed against the set of institutional values, deontological codes of behaviour and ethical standards); and (iv) *agreements on targets* (in organizations driven by strategic management based on a top-down logical tree of objectives and targets, these agreements are usually settled during yearly meetings of each staff with his/her immediate supervisor, where the level of achievement of the previous year's agreed targets is assessed, new agreed targets are established, an assessment of training needs is, accordingly, outlined, and career development opportunities, including mobility, are discussed). On the links between performance appraisal and geographical mobility, see section 6.4.



entities, and from other experienced organizations outside the UN system.

### 3.2 Lessons learned from the experience of other UN agencies

In December 2017, a benchmarking analysis was carried out through interviews with mobility teams of 8 UN agencies,<sup>10</sup> for the purpose of the 2017 evaluation, the results of which were reported in February 2018. These interviews were complemented by a document analysis on policies and practices adopted in two other UN agencies.<sup>11</sup> A summary of the findings of this comparative analysis is presented in Annex A1. This exercise resulted in five lessons learned.

#### Lessons learned from other UN agencies' experience

##### First lesson

#### 1. The best options to manage geographical mobility depend on the profile of the agency's workforce

Several factors impact on the organization of geographical mobility in UN agencies. Among them: (i) the *specific obligations* set out by the system of Standard Durations of Assignment (SDA); (ii) the *size of the IP workforces* and the *number of duty stations* where they may rotate; (iii) the *level of "compartmentalization" of the agency* (i.e. the number of different sectors/areas of specialization where staff work), and the corresponding *range of the job families and of job profiles*.

Although there is some diversity among agencies regarding the **ranges of SDA**, the differences are not very relevant (most agencies follow a pattern that goes from around 2 years for E or Non-Family duty stations to around 4 or 5 years for A and H duty stations). The **range of job families and profiles**, which is linked to the level of diversity of the competencies and skills profiles, and of the position profiles, tends to be larger in specialized agencies such as FAO, UNESCO, ILO or WHO than in UN funds and programmes such as UNDP, UNICEF or WFP, or in entities such as UNHCR. For comparatively equivalent workforces (in terms of numbers), more internally divided agencies offer more obstacles to the organization of geographical mobility.

The organization of geographical mobility is also dependent on the **size of the IP workforces**. It is obviously more complex to organize geographical mobility in the UN Secretariat, whose IP workforce is around 11,500, than in UNAIDS or UNIDO, which have relatively small workforces, with only a few hundred IPs (around 400 in the case of UNAIDS, and about 250 in the case of UNIDO).

<sup>10</sup> UN Secretariat, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, FAO, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNAIDS.

<sup>11</sup> UNHCR and ILO.

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## Second lesson

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### 2. A seamless implementation of geographical mobility requires thorough forecast-based planning

There is wide agreement on the need to adopt strategic planning and monitoring tools and practices to manage workforce adaptation and development in the long-run, and to more closely align them with the overall corporate strategy. There is also increasing awareness of the need to develop and use, in parallel, adequate practices and tools to preserve and enhance the “knowledge capital” of the organizations, i.e. their “core value”. These practices and tools are essential to effectively manage geographical mobility.

The need to make use of strategic planning is acknowledged in WHO official documents. In the summary of the results of the evaluation of WHO Reform, third stage (2017), two recommendations were issued regarding the implementation of the geographical mobility policy: (i) implement the mandatory mobility policy by 2019 with no delays; (ii) **support the implementation with forward-looking workforce planning mechanisms.**

The relevance of this recommendation is enhanced by the new priorities set out in the Thirteenth WHO General Programme of Work 2019-2023 regarding the transformation of WHO’s organizational structure and operating model, and the correlated reorganization of WHO’s IP workforce. The implementation of this programme requires **effective strategic HR management, with careful forecast-based planning supported by suitable tools.**

In their efforts to modernize their workforces, other UN agencies meet the same fundamental requirements, which are sometimes highlighted in their corporate reference documents. For instance, one of the two main HR outputs in ILO’s Human Resources Strategy 2018-2021 is the development of “sound HR metrics to inform strategic policy decisions”, to be assessed through **regular use by managers of HR metrics, analytical tools and dashboards to guide, in particular, workforce planning and talent management.**

The implementation of geographical mobility requires prior careful design and timely use of an **appropriate set of strategic and operational HRM tools.** This set includes *workforce-planning tools* (e.g. standardized job descriptions), *monitoring tools* (e.g. strategic HRM dashboards, complemented by a customized set of key performance indicators), and *communication/support tools*. Annex A10 lists 12 key requirements regarding the tools that need to be in place for a seamless implementation of geographical mobility policies.

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## Third lesson

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### 3. The overall set of requirements and constraints must be carefully analysed and taken into account

Although indispensable, the managerial practices and tools mentioned before are not sufficient to guarantee an effective, efficient and equitable implementation of geographical mobility in organizations that have relatively large workforces (at the UN scale), strong imbalances in staffing between headquarters and field offices, and/or complex intrinsic differentiation of sectors (areas of work) and job families (as is generally the case in UN specialized agencies). At least three other requirements need also to be considered.

#### ***Balancing IP mobility obligations and the number of relevant available (advertised) positions:***

It is important to ensure that an adequate balance exists, both quantitative (in terms of numbers) and qualitative (in terms of job profiles, including areas of expertise and grades), between (i) the

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set of IPs who are required to move annually; and (ii) the set of available positions which are advertised in the year. Otherwise, different types of problems will emerge. UNAIDS, for instance, which manages a relatively small IP workforce, found it relatively easy to implement geographical mobility when the overall number of available positions was increasing, and harder to implement when this number decreased. The UN Secretariat, which initiated in 2016 the implementation of its new geographical mobility policy within POLNET (one of the nine job networks of the Organization), has identified as a main problem the fact that vacant positions are not included in the compendium, which significantly limits the possibilities offered in the mobility exercise.

**Balancing policy requirements and available resources:** A balance also needs to be maintained between the administrative, financial and **managerial** capacity of the Organization to manage geographical mobility and the respective requirements of the annual implementation of geographical mobility. Implementation of the policy is widely acknowledged, among the interviewed UN agencies, as an expensive, labour-intensive and time-consuming exercise, especially when a large number of IPs and annual moves is at stake.

Careful analysis of each eligible IP's application requires time and may become a costly operation. In the UN Secretariat, which has a workforce of around 11,500 IPs distributed into nine job pools, the implementation in 2016 of geographical mobility in POLNET (a pool with about 3,300 members, among which around 300 staff members were affected) took quite a long time. The Secretariat has **staffing networks** that assist managers in the departments in HR matters (managers' support is deemed of key importance), and **subject matter experts** (SMEs) who check applications for the suitability review of the candidates. This operation proved to be very time-consuming, as SMEs looked at all the staff members and their applications. By the end of 2017, the UN Secretariat was envisaging complementing the network approach by other measures, especially career development. This will require additional operations in relation to each applicant and will increase the workload of the teams managing the process. The extension of the scheme to the remaining job pools will multiply the current challenges.

In the first semester of 2018, at the request of the UN General Assembly, a comprehensive review of the UN mobility framework that was approved in 2014 and implemented in 2016 and 2017 was undertaken. A set of lessons were drawn. New proposals to improve the UN geographical mobility system were presented to the 73rd General Assembly. A multi-faceted system was proposed, with a number of complementary parts that include mandatory and opt-in components, incentives, and special considerations for staff serving in D and E duty stations.<sup>12</sup>

WFP, whose mobility system is considered as an example of good practice<sup>13</sup>, has **staffing coordinators** in the functions/categories (**full-or part-time**). There are **around 20 functions** and also **around 20 coordinators**. The staffing coordinators review the applications and try to come up with best matches, thus making an initial recommendation which is received by the hiring manager. The managers then also express their preference. For P5 and D1 staff members, in addition to the standard assessment documents (CV, application questions to assess motivation and qualification, employment history and performance evaluation), there is a formal process with **talent reviews** and **other assessments**. Staffing coordinators also guide staff members in their application. Formally there are no interviews because the key relevant information about IPs is already "in the system", but informally some applicants get contacted. In recent years, WFP has tried to increase the feedback provided to staff. All this requires a lot of work.

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<sup>12</sup> The lessons drawn from the UN Secretariat geographical mobility experience are listed at the end of this section.

<sup>13</sup> A synoptic description of the geographical mobility system adopted by WFP is given in Annex A3.

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Agencies are exploring ways of simplifying the procedures to reduce delays and costs. After experimenting with a central committee for the matching/selection phase, FAO decided to discontinue the practice, as it appeared cumbersome and inefficient, replacing it with a simpler and swifter matching method. Costs and available resources need to be carefully considered and monitored. Limited financial resources was one of the reasons why UNESCO's former geographical mobility policy was not fully implemented and is a major reason why UNFPA has restricted implementation of rotation to only three job profile groups. Rotation in UNDP which, at the end of 2017, was in the process of preparing a new mobility policy, is also limited. The significant reduction of the UN budget for the biennium 2018-2019 is likely to heighten pressure in UN agencies to further streamline their operational processes, including those which support geographical mobility.

***Harmonizing fair implementation of geographical mobility with openness to the incorporation of new talent:*** The key asset and the core value of highly performing organizations is the **quality of their workforce**. For an organization to remain performing and competitive, it needs to continuously **incorporate new talent**. The scheme used to manage geographical mobility in a fair way needs to be combined with an effective strategy to capture and retain external talent

While managing geographical mobility of their IPs, several UN agencies (such as UNFPA, UNHCR, and more recently UNICEF) have implemented talent pools. The utility and the range of advantages of these pools are widely recognized. However, interviewed agencies usually find that the costs and the workload associated with the management of these pools are generally high.

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#### Fourth lesson

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#### 4. An effective managerial network associating HRD and operational departments needs to be in place

Good practices in the organization and management of geographical mobility highlight the need to ensure (i) a coherent functioning of the Organization's overall HRM network (with a clear and well-orchestrated distribution of responsibilities in the management of geographical mobility); and (ii) the proactive participation of the operational departments.

Whilst HRD plays a key role in supporting the administrative organization of the implementation of geographical mobility and helping IPs to satisfy their statutory mobility obligations, the operational departments are expected to play a leading role in the managerial organization of geographical mobility. Only thus can geographical mobility be guided in the long run to contribute to the improvement of the functioning of organizations, and to the enhancement of their capacity to deliver and to meet their targets. Interestingly, this need for a proactive participation of the operational departments is particularly felt and underscored in specialized UN agencies (e.g. FAO, UNESCO), where a wide range of critical but highly differentiated competency and job profiles participate in geographical mobility.

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#### Fifth lesson

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#### 5. Adequate training needs to be provided, in addition to communication and support measures

The need for high-quality communication and information targeting all key stakeholders (namely, in the front line, IPs and hiring managers) is widely acknowledged as a crucial requirement among UN agencies implementing geographical mobility. The same may be said of

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the need for quality support provided to IPs upon arrival in their new duty stations. A third crucial, but less visible, requirement is less often mentioned. Failure to recognize its importance and impact is responsible for many difficulties encountered during the implementation of mobility policies.

For managers and members of a selection or assessment panel or committee to adequately perform their duties, they need to have **relevant assessment competencies**, which are **distinct from their specific managerial competencies**. Excellent managers are not necessarily good trainers or good evaluators of performance. They need to acquire, on the one hand, training competencies and, on the other, evaluation and assessment competencies. This is one of a set of key lessons learned from the experience of governments of OECD and EU countries (among them, the French and British Governments) when they launched comprehensive performance appraisal programmes for civil servants. After first neglecting to take into account this need, they made training on performance evaluation compulsory for managers carrying out performance assessments.

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In 2012, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) carried out a benchmarking study of the institutional framework for the recruitment of staff in organizations of the United Nations system. Benchmark 7 of this document states:

***“Training is developed for recruitment policies, procedures and practices, including competency-based interviewing and other assessment techniques, and is mandatory for human resources officers, hiring managers and members of ad hoc assessment panels and standing/appointment review bodies.”***

The analysis included in this study underscores that, whereas around 75% of those who had received training thought that it had prepared them to perform the assessment functions requested from them, only some agencies (the UN Secretariat, UNICEF and UNRWA, and in a more informal way UNFPA, UNDP and UNAIDS) had organized specific training for managers and members of assessment/selection panels of review boards.

**Training on assessment methods of competency profiles** may be very brief (e.g. the UN instituted a one-day mandatory training on competency-based interviewing for interview panel members), but it **is important**, and it prevents many inconsistencies, unfair treatment of applicants and inappropriate decisions. This is another important lesson that needs to be carefully considered.

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Additional information, focusing on points of particular relevance for this evaluation, is included in the Annexes:

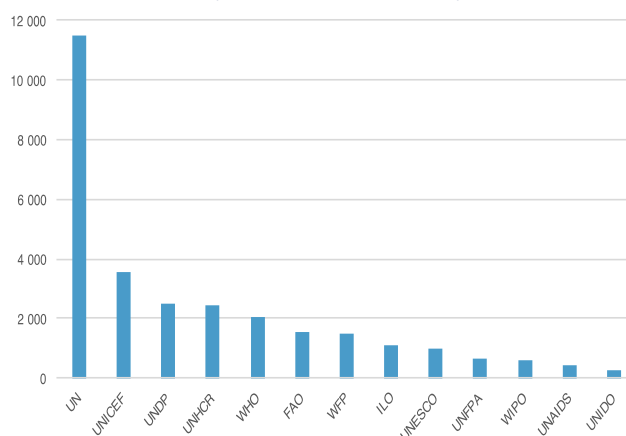
- An overall description of the ways ten other UN agencies/entities were organizing geographical mobility in December 2017, including specific information on the ways non-rotational positions and links between geographical mobility and possibilities of promotion were being managed, is given in Annex A1.
- A synoptic description of the mobility system in force in WFP at the same date is included in Annex A3.
- Relevant internal assessments made by interviewed HR managers of these UN agencies/entities are inserted in Annex A2.
- Summaries of the policies adopted in relation to the identification of non-rotational positions and to the establishment of links between geographical mobility and possibilities of promotion are included in the boxes shown in Annex A4.

The internal lessons learned in 2018 by the UN Secretariat, after two years of implementation of its geographical mobility policy (2016-2017), are listed in the next page.

### Lessons drawn by the UN Secretariat (2018)

The United Nations General Assembly requested the UN Secretary-General to conduct a comprehensive review of the mobility framework that was approved in 2014 and implemented in 2016/2017. A comprehensive review was undertaken in December 2017-June 2018, and lessons learned have been compiled. Consultations with internal stakeholders have been held on the way forward. The ten lessons drawn from the UN Secretariat experience in 2016/2017 are listed below. The graph shows the relative size of the UN workforce, as compared to other UN entities.

**Size of IP workforces in selected UN agencies**  
(as at 31 December 2015)



Source: UN System, Chief Executives Board for Coordination, Human Resources Statistics

### THE 10 LESSONS DRAWN BY THE UN SECRETARIAT (2018)

- 1 A **multi-faceted** approach to mobility is needed
- 2 A **culture of mobility** needs to be established across the UN Secretariat
- 3 Mobility initiatives in the Secretariat need to be **resourced** in order to be successful
- 4 A mobility framework for the Secretariat should encourage **increased movement in and out of difficult duty stations**
- 5 A mobility framework for the Secretariat needs to be **based on delegation of authority** to Departments and offices, supported by centralized policies and oversight
- 6 Mobility must become an **integral part of career development**
- 7 The internal mobility programmes used by a number of other UN organizations **are not feasible for the UN Secretariat if vacant positions need to be advertised externally**
- 8 Mobility in the Secretariat should be **built into succession planning**, with a focus on developing junior to mid-level staff for future roles
- 9 A system of **incentives** is necessary to encourage mobility
- 10 Mobility should be part of an **integrated talent management strategy**

Source: UN Secretariat (HRM) presentation: "UN Secretariat Mobility System: Way Forward" (18 July 2018) and the Report of the Secretary-General on Mobility, document A/73/372/Add.2, 10 September 2018.



### 3.3 Lessons learned from the experiences of other organizations outside the UN system

International or intergovernmental organizations operating outside the UN system (such as the OECD and the European Union), as well as governmental administrations managing large workforces, have been under continuous pressure, especially during the last two decades, to find and implement new ways for more effective and more “friendly” management of their human resources, who are key for the achievement of the targets of their strategies and actions, and for generating the expected impact on the quality of life of the benefiting citizens.

The OECD and the EU, whose Member States are engaged in continuously improving the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and equity of the public services provided to their respective populations, and in encouraging the creation and maintenance of governmental “workforces of excellence”, have made significant and continuous efforts to identify and proactively circulate “best practices” in Human Resource Management within their Member States. Globally, these States represent one fifth of the countries of the World, where the quality standards and requirements of the expected public services, in all areas, are most demanding. In total, the workforces engaged in the public sector in OECD and EU countries exceed 100 million agents.<sup>14</sup> Much experience has been accumulated by HR Departments, and much innovation has been translated into managerial practices.

The main lessons learned in managing, restructuring and invigorating these workforces have been identified, analysed and assessed in a wide range of publications of the OECD or under the auspices of the Presidencies of the EU, and also in a wide range of internal documents of national administrations. Many of these lessons - namely those which pertain to the basic organization and to the professional development of any workforce, such as the design of job descriptions and of communication and knowledge management and knowledge-sharing tools - are useful, not only for governmental workforces, but also for those of other organizations, including those of the UN system.

Among these common core tasks of HRM, the **design of effective systems of job descriptions**, which are key for the effective organization and management of most of the basic HRM functions (selection and recruitment, career management, training needs assessments and knowledge management, design of organizational and workflow charts, accountability lines and chains of command, compensation, integrity management, workforce redeployments, design of enabling and motivating work environments, identification of technical equipment needs for the different workstations, succession planning), is an **essential prerequisite** for the organization and seamless implementation of functional and **geographical mobility**.<sup>15</sup>

The organization of geographical mobility in WHO could take advantage of the lessons learned by the experiences of OECD and EU Member States in designing effective competency and job frameworks for their governmental workforces. Job frameworks used in advanced HRM systems adopted to manage these workforces are not mere ‘job catalogues’, formed by the addition of job descriptions designed in different governmental bodies.<sup>16</sup> They use **coherent, well-designed, comprehensive and customised systems of competency frameworks** which instil coherence in the system of job families and job descriptions (this is the case, for instance, of the competency framework designed for the British Civil Service, which manages a workforce of over 330,000 full-time agents, and also of the

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<sup>14</sup> According to the *World Bank Data*, in 2017 the total estimated workforce of OECD countries was 637 469 536, not far from 20% (around 18.5%) of the global World workforce (about 3.453 billion). In 2015, general government employment represented around 18.1% of the OECD Member States’ total workforce (OCDE, *Government at a Glance 2017*, p. 90), i.e. about 115.4 million agents. According to available data and estimations, in 2010-2013, in round and approximate numbers, EU Countries’ Public Administrations employed between 25 and 30 million agents.

<sup>15</sup> See Annex A15.

<sup>16</sup> See, for instance: De Beeck, S., and Hondeghem, A. O. (2010), “Managing Competencies in Government : State of the Art Practices and Issues at Stake for the Future”, *OECD Public Employment and Management Working Party*, OECD Publishing, 119 p.

integrated and hierarchically organized system of competency frameworks, job families and job descriptions used in the French State Administration, which manages a workforce of around 2.4 million agents, and whose job classification system was given as an example of “good practice” by OECD experts and policy advisors).<sup>17</sup>

Customized competency and job frameworks pave the way for implementing a coherent and comprehensive system of **standardized job descriptions**, which facilitate HRM operations (by HR and line managers) and are essential for a seamless, effective and equitable implementation of geographic mobility. More fundamentally, they are also key tools for developing practices of **strategic human resource management**, which link HRM operations to the medium- and long-term goals of the Organization and incorporate methods and tools of **forecast planning**.

Annexes A12-A15 summarize some relevant transferable lessons and good practices drawn from the experience of managing governmental workforces in OECD and EU Member States.

#### 4) What are the key requirements identified that need to be fulfilled to optimize the chances of the Policy to achieve its intended benefits?

The information and data collected through the questionnaires, interviews, document reviews, benchmarking analyses and reviews of best practices carried out to perform the annual evaluations of the implementation of the Policy in 2016 and 2017 and this summative evaluation (covering the whole voluntary phase: 2016-2018) have led to the identification of **three sets of requirements** that need to be fulfilled for optimizing the chances of a seamless, effective and equitable implementation of geographical mobility in WHO.

These requirements, which need to be carefully taken into account from the start, may also be used as fundamental **quality criteria** (and “monitoring tools”) to assess the quality of the policy and of its implementation. They may be grouped into three categories : results-related requirements; process-related requirements; and requirements that have a major influence on determining the quality of the implementation (organizational culture, managerial practices, supporting tools).

##### 8 key requirements identified

Results-related requirements	Process-related requirements (Prerequisites)	Requirements related to implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear purpose contributing to the achievement of WHO’s strategic targets</li> <li>• Win-win exercise, inclusive of all key stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance between the number of moving IPs and the number of relevant available positions.</li> <li>• Balance between the policy requirements and the institutional capacities and available resources.</li> <li>• Combination of a fair and inclusive policy of geographical mobility and openness to the incorporation of new talent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared mobility culture</li> <li>• Effective managerial practices to steer and implement the policy</li> <li>• Suitable set of “fit-for-purpose” supporting tools</li> </ul>

<sup>17</sup> See: Huerta Melchor, O. (2013), “The Government Workforce of the Future: Innovation in Strategic Workforce Planning in OECD Countries”, *OECD Working Papers on Public Governance*, No. 21, OECD Publishing, 41 p, p. 24. (See also Annexes A13 and A14).



## 4.1 Results-related requirements

There are two major requirements related to the results of the policy.

### I. Two key requirements related to the results

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|-----|--|
| 1.1 | Geographical mobility needs to have a clear purpose and contribute to the achievement of the strategic targets of the Organization.  |
| 1.2 | The implementation of geographical mobility should be a win-win exercise, satisfying jointly the legitimate expectations of (i) WHO's Member States, (ii) WHO's Secretariat, Departments and Units, and (iii) WHO's Staff. |

- **Geographical mobility needs to have a clear purpose and contribute to the achievement of the strategic targets of the Organization**

Geographical mobility needs to be organized, and perceived by all stakeholders, not as a mere statutory /administrative obligation, but **with a purpose** that serves the interests of the Organization and **helps it to meet its targets and fulfil its mandate**.

- **Geographical mobility needs to be a win-win exercise, inclusive of all key stakeholders**

Geographical mobility is expected to create combined added value :

- (i) for WHO's **Member States**, by helping them to meet their Health Policy targets and to more effectively and efficiently address health emergency situations,
- (ii) for WHO's **Secretariat**, by helping the Organization to have a more agile, experienced, open-minded, competent and polyvalent workforce, and for WHO's **Departments and units** across the Organization, by helping them to improve the quality of their delivery,
- (iii) for WHO's **Staff**, by helping them to improve and diversify their technical, communication and intercultural skills, to deepen their understanding of the functioning of the Organization at its three levels, and to widen their vision and their understanding of regional health contexts.

## 4.2 Process-related requirements

Three major process-requirements need to be satisfied to permit an effective, equitable and seamless implementation of the policy.

### II. Three key requirements related to the organization of the process

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 2.1 | A fair balance needs to be ensured between the number of IPs who have to move in the year as a consequence of the annual rotation exercise and the number of relevant available advertised positions. |
| 2.2 | A balance needs to be ensured between the policy requirements and the available resources and institutional capacities to manage geographical mobility.   |
| 2.3 | A fair and inclusive geographical mobility implementation needs to be combined with openness to the incorporation of new talent.  |

- **A fair balance needs to be ensured between the number of IPs who have to move in the year and the number of relevant available advertised positions**

In geographical mobility rotation exercises, to avoid situations such as those illustrated by the game of musical chairs, the number of available advertised positions needs to be at least equal to the number of IPs who are expected to move. A global balance among the total numbers of moving IPs

and advertised positions, however, is not enough, because geographical mobility usually requires similarity of profiles and skills between the positions vacated and the new positions occupied. A balance among the more specific numbers corresponding, in each case, to the *different areas of competencies (job profiles/job families)* and *professional grades* (jointly considered) is required.

- **A balance needs to be ensured between the policy requirements and the institutional capacities and available resources to manage geographical mobility**

The annual organization of geographical mobility for two hundred IPs, with around half of the moves occurring between regions, as foreseen during the voluntary phase of the implementation of the Policy,<sup>18</sup> entails significant costs that need to be carefully assessed, foreseen and covered. Lessons learned from the experience of other UN agencies<sup>19</sup> show that the annual organization of geographical mobility for a large number of international professionals is a **costly exercise**. Conducting this exercise in alignment with satisfactory quality standards requires the involvement of **a significant number of managers/assistants in the launching and follow-up operations** (as advisors of IPs and managers, assessment assistants, communicators, reviewers and/or coordinators), and they may have - as was the case, for instance, in the UN Secretariat and in WFP in 2017 - to carry out many time-consuming tasks.

Geographical mobility requires the organization of access to language courses, practical information on the receiving countries and duty stations, and information or assistance provided to facilitate adaptation and spouse employment. If geographical mobility is complemented by desirable supporting/complementary measures, such as the **design of career paths** and **individual advice** on them given to moving IPs, or if it is integrated into a broader **talent management** initiative, as is the case in some experienced UN agencies/entities,<sup>20</sup> then the institutional capacity to effectively and successfully conduct annual mobility rounds (complying with the quality criteria described in this section) needs to be strong and multi-faceted. Therefore, an assessment of the suitability of the available institutional capacity and resources to seamlessly and effectively implement the policy and meet its annual targets is necessary. Requirements, resources and quality standards need to be jointly assessed, checked and balanced.

- **A fair and inclusive geographical mobility implementation needs to be combined with openness to the incorporation of new talent**

The natural adaptive evolution of a corporate workforce, which regularly creates, transforms and suppresses jobs (to meet evolving needs of specific skills profiles in specific locations) is usually managed by organizations through a set of complementary staffing tools and procedures. To fill new positions and satisfy new workforce needs, selection and recruitment, lateral transfer, relocation of workstations and geographical or functional mobility are common modalities. Staffing strategies may combine these modalities in distinct ways. In all cases, in dynamic and competitive organizations, **space needs to be left for the incorporation of new talent**.

Although the quality of the organizational design and of the internal operating rules and practices are important for an organization, its value and its capacity to meet challenging targets are determined, first and foremost, by the levels of knowledge, know-how, capacity to innovate, motivation and proactivity of their human resources, by their professional and ethical standards, by their capability to work as a team in an open-minded and enabling environment, and by the guidance, encouragement and inspiration provided by the leadership.

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<sup>18</sup> In 2017, HRD target was to annually organize geographical moves for around 200 IPs, with about 50% of the moves occurring between Regions.

<sup>19</sup> See subsection 3.2, above (in particular the third lesson drawn).

<sup>20</sup> See Annex A1, which summarizes relevant policy measures and managerial practices on geographical mobility adopted in other UN agencies by the end of 2017. Integration of geographical mobility into a broader talent management initiative was recently recommended in the assessment review carried out by the UN Secretariat in 2018.

The implementation of a fair and inclusive geographical mobility policy should not prevent the recruitment of new talent, which is vital for the success of WHO in fulfilling its mandate. Geographical mobility should be, on the one hand, integrated into a wider **policy of career and talent management** and, on the other hand, combined with external recruitment and other staffing modalities within a **global staffing strategy**.

### 4.3 Requirements related to implementation

Three major requirements need to be met for a successful implementation of the policy.

III. Three key requirements related to the implementation	
3.1	A shared results-oriented culture understanding personal geographical mobility as a means to optimize WHO capacity to achieve its targets and fulfill its mandate needs to be in place, and to become part of WHO's identity and image.
3.2	Effective managerial processes and practices to steer and implement the policy need to be in place.
3.3	A comprehensive set of "fit-for-purpose" supporting tools needs to be in place.

- **A shared results-oriented culture understanding personal geographical mobility as a means to optimize WHO capacity to achieve its targets and fulfil its mandate needs to be in place, and to become part of WHO's identity and image.**

The UN agencies/entities which have been most successful in organizing geographical mobility of their staff have a **culture of geographical mobility**. As occurs in countries and communities, corporate cultures establish choices, values, key principles, and expected behaviours in agreement with these choices, values and principles. They become part of the identity and of the image of the organizations and influence the ways they act and define and implement their strategies.

Geographical mobility cultures, where geographical moves are seen as normal events and conveniently managed, and where the added value of these moves is well understood, help organizations to more rapidly and more easily meet their targets. Workforces that are mobilized to work towards the achievement of the organization's goals may thus become more agile, with an enhanced capacity to deliver and a better understanding of the aims and ways of functioning of the organization which employs them. By contrast, cultures that have not incorporated geographical mobility tend to react differently. In cases where **the reasons and purpose that underpin geographical moves are not clear**, the implementation of geographical mobility policies becomes harder and more problematic.

The evaluations carried out in 2016 and 2017 have shown that the corporate culture of WHO, especially the prevailing culture in headquarters, does not value or see geographical mobility as a key requirement for the Organization. Changing this culture and this perception is a challenging main step in the process of fostering geographical mobility in WHO. Managers and staff need to be made fully aware of the added **value of the policy** and of its importance for the Organization. As successfully promoting cultural change usually requires a combination of reiterated sensitization and awareness-raising campaigns with gradual implementation, a **progressive phased implementation of the policy** is recommended. The need for staff and management to adapt to the new paradigms introduced by the ongoing WHO transformation initiative adds weight and relevance to this recommendation.

Succeeding in promoting a “One WHO” is key for optimizing the chances of the Organization to meet its targets. In addition to creating a new paradigm reinforcing WHO’s internal coordination and capacity to deliver, this implies a **shared results-oriented culture**, a **global mobilization of all WHO human resources towards the achievement of the goals set out**, an **open-minded approach to geographical mobility**, and a sense of the need to organize a system which permits both **optimal impact of the actions carried out** (to comply with fundamental requirements of utility, effectiveness and efficiency) and **equitable sharing of the burden of hardship stations** (to comply with a key requirement of equity and fairness).

- **Effective managerial processes and practices to steer and implement the policy need to be in place**

The information gathered through the first and second annual evaluations points to four main requirements regarding the governance mechanisms and managerial processes and practices supporting geographical mobility:

- **Steering responsibility:** In order for geographical mobility to be purposeful and effectively contribute to the achievement of WHO’s overarching strategic targets, WHO’s leadership needs to play a key role in steering the process, at two levels. In continuous dialogue with Staff Associations’ representatives, and with the assistance of HRD:
  - Senior Managers/Directors who are leading WHO’s action towards the achievement of GPW13 targets should be accountable for ensuring that the annual rounds of geographical mobility are strategically oriented and driven by the needs of WHO’s Member States. They should therefore play a leading role in the organization of the overall matching process. For that, they need to have a clear understanding of the countries’ needs and of the available resources.
  - As recommended by the GMC, hiring managers, who are accountable for achieving specific targets, should play a key role in the process of choosing the candidates for positions placed under their responsibility.

The steering responsibility should not be assumed by HRD, which has a supporting role (see Annex A8).

- **HRM specialists in headquarters and in regional offices** in charge of *standardization of job descriptions* and *assistance for the implementation of the geographical mobility policy* need to work **closely together** (see Annex A9).
- **Staff Associations** have key responsibilities in ensuring that geographical mobility is carried out in a fair way, respecting equity of treatment (fairness of assessments and decisions, non-discrimination, gender balance, fairness in sharing the burden of hardship stations) and taking into account the legitimate expectations of Staff regarding the implementation of the policy.
- Implementing geographical mobility requires a set of **supporting services** (e.g. providing access to language courses and relevant information, organizing induction, coaching and needed training) in all offices releasing or receiving moving IPs. The organization and timely delivery of these services need to be effectively managed and coordinated.
- **A comprehensive set of “fit-for-purpose” supporting tools needs to be in place**

In addition to suitable governance mechanisms and managerial processes and practices, a set of **customized supporting tools** is needed to assist the managers involved in the process of steering and implementing geographical mobility.

The most important of these tools are related to (i) **workforce planning**; (ii) **follow-up and monitoring operations**; and (iii) **information and support provided**. The synoptic table included in Annex A10 lists the main types of HRM tools that need to be implemented, in each of these three categories, to conveniently manage geographical mobility.

## 4.4 Translating fundamental quality criteria and requirements into operational practices

### Using this set of requirements as an assessment and monitoring tool

The fulfilment of all these requirements, which needs to be carefully planned at the design phase and methodically implemented from the launch phase of each annual rotation exercise, contributes to significantly enhancing the chances of a successful implementation.

This synthetic assessment framework may be useful for establishing a diagnosis of current or potential implementation difficulties/shortcomings and more easily identify appropriate improving measures. It may also be used to assess the suitability and/or relevance of intended amendments, by checking if they satisfy (or, at least, are compatible with) these fundamental quality benchmarks.<sup>21</sup>

### Translating these eight fundamental requirements (and quality criteria) into operational practices

These fundamental overarching requirements and quality criteria need to be translated into more operational standards, rules, and management practices and tools. The tables below provide additional information on how this may be done in practice. The rationale for the recommendations set out in this report is intimately linked to the key operational requirements highlighted in this section.

#### Operational requirements

##### A. Three operational requirements related to the results

#### 1 Geographical mobility needs to be organized with the overall purpose of facilitating the achievement of WHO's strategic targets, and in line with Member States' and WHO's requirements/expectations of:

- **increasing WHO's presence and action at country level** (Identified country needs should be the major driver of the mobility exercise, and Heads of WHO Offices in Countries, Territories and Areas [HWCOs] should have their say in the selection process);
- **excellence of performance** and effectiveness and efficiency in fulfilling the mandate and meeting the targets of the Organization, in compliance with international standards;
- **fairness, inclusiveness** ("One WHO"), gender balance, nondiscrimination and diversity, as expressed in the Organization's HR policies and in the targets set out in these policies;
- **a fruitful cooperation with other agencies of the UN system** (e.g. through agreements to share knowledge, to foster inter-agency mobility, to organize co-financed common talent/ leadership sources/pools, and to effectively work together in the field).

#### 2 Four IPs' expectations need to be carefully considered:

- **freedom to express their preferences** regarding their next duty stations, when participating in geographical rotation;
- **assistance received from the Organization** to help them fulfil their mobility obligation (especially when their multiple applications are not successful, whereas their professional performance and conduct are positively appraised);

The usual common assistance expected encompasses updated information on the new countries,

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<sup>21</sup> This basic "quality system" incorporating eight key requirements may be used to establish a typology of the main challenges met by WHO (and other UN agencies) in the implementation of geographical mobility. Even with a simplified approach assessing if each of the eight fundamental quality criteria is met or not (YES-NO), 256 (2<sup>8</sup>) situations may be distinguished. Only one situation, among them, answers all the requirements that permit a successful and seamless implementation, in agreement with the combined expectations of relevance, utility, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, realism, consistency and compliance with basic quality standards.

professional environments and workstations, help in finding a place to live and in identifying schools for children and providers of usual needed services, induction and coaching/mentoring at the workplace, help in achieving linguistic and cultural adaptation.

- **fairness of treatment and equity;**

Staff's main expectations include fairness of assessments and decisions, non-discrimination (equal treatment), gender balance, and equity in sharing the burden of hardship stations.

- **attention given to special personal situations (*force majeure*).**

Cases of *force majeure* making it clearly difficult for WHO's IPs to move from their duty station, or limiting the number of possible receiving workstations (e.g. for critical medical reasons), are expected to be taken into account in the Policy. The cases of families with children of school age and/or whose spouses are both working in the same city/area also need to be carefully considered.

**3 Managers are responsible for meeting their respective targets within WHO's GPW, and they therefore need to play an active role in the selection of the members of their teams.**

- At a higher level, **Senior leaders/Directors coordinating WHO's actions** to achieve the Organization's strategic targets should play, in close cooperation with HRD and in dialogue with Staff Associations' representatives, **a proactive role in the organization and management of geographical mobility.**
- **Hiring managers and managers participating in assessment bodies** should receive at least **methodological assistance** and, ideally, brief **relevant ad-hoc training.**

## **B. Four operational requirements related to the organization of the process**

**1 Specific HR forecast-based planning tools, as well as dashboards providing all relevant real-time information on the situation of positions and of IPs, need to be developed, as a complement to the basic set of HR managerial tools listed in Annex A10.<sup>22</sup>**

- To satisfy the first key process-related requirement (2.1), geographical mobility monitoring dashboards should include real-time information on:
  - the distribution of all IP positions by **area of expertise, job family, grade, major office, region, and type of duty station** (H, A, B-C, D-E, Non-Family), with the possibility of multi-criteria filtering and analysis to help prepare managerial decisions;
  - the **distribution of the positions that are included in the rotational pool and advertised as such for each annual mobility exercise,<sup>23</sup>** this will highlight the **annual expected moves** in relation to (i) each area of expertise, (ii) each grade, and (iii) each job family/profile (with the possibility of considering these criteria individually or combined).

<sup>22</sup> An example of a planning and monitoring tool for managing geographical mobility using customized spreadsheets is shown in Annex A11.

<sup>23</sup> I.e. the distribution of all the positions, open to inclusion in geographical mobility rotation rounds, that need to be filled in country offices, regional offices and headquarters, in agreement with the needs assessments carried out (underpinning the Country Support Plans and the Country Cooperation Strategies with WHO).



## **2 Available resources and institutional capacities to manage geographical mobility need to be assessed.**

- To fulfil the second key process-related requirement (2.2), a careful **forecast of the costs** of each forthcoming mobility exercise is needed.<sup>24</sup> The same applies to (i) the **time and workload required** (generally considered by HR professionals of UN agencies interviewed as very important, see Annexes A1 and A2), (ii) the **need for HR specialists to carry out all the required tasks** (also considered important by interviewed UN specialists), and (iii) the **material and virtual resources** that will need to be mobilized (e.g. for maintaining relevant updated information available to IPs and managers).

When **talent pools** are organized, and/or when accompanying measures are introduced or envisaged (e.g. incorporation of geographical mobility into a comprehensive system of **career management**, and development of counseling services to offer personal career advice), the costs and workload of the mobility rounds organized may be significantly increased.

## **3 Geographical mobility needs to be combined with openness to the incorporation of new talent.**

- Geographical mobility and external recruitment need to be combined into a coherent integrated **staffing strategy** that ensures both **annual rotation of IPs**, as required by the policy, and **openness of the Organization to capture and retain new talent**.

## **4 Three critical issues need to be clarified and regulated by a fair and suitable system of rules.**

- Decisions taken vis-à-vis the issues of **non-rotational positions** and **links between geographical mobility and possibilities for promotion** (as well as a system of pre-established **incentives**<sup>25</sup>), need to be clarified, justified and fairly and suitably regulated.

The first two of these issues, which gave rise in 2017 to two HRD proposals submitted to the GSMC, were discussed in the report of the Second Annual Evaluation of the implementation of WHO's Geographical Mobility Policy. This report included two boxes summarizing the experience of the UN agencies surveyed. These boxes are reproduced in Annex 4. A discussion on the issue of incentives, which was raised in a number of interviews carried out for the three annual evaluations, is included below, in section 6 of this report.

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<sup>24</sup> The global cost of each mobility round (for two or three hundred IPs) is high and can only be justified if the return on investment is clearly demonstrable. Several UN agencies have met challenging barriers to the implementation of their geographical mobility policies linked to shortage of financial resources, and in some cases had to significantly limit their scope. The evaluation team could not collect precise and reliable estimations of the average cost of a geographical move in WHO (including all relevant expenses). The limited number of moves through the compendium exercises in 2016 and 2017, during an experimental phase, does not offer a representative sample for reliable estimations of the final costs. In interviews with resource persons, grossly estimate amounts comprised in the range of USD 20,000-50,000 per move were mentioned. An analysis of the direct financial implications of geographical moves in WHO that were communicated to the evaluation team and the information available for costs of moves in the UN Secretariat (A/72/767, paras. 36-38, A/73/569, para.7) seem to confirm the relevance of this range. This means that each annual geographical mobility round organized for 200 IPs will cost between 4 and 10 million USD (in ten years, between 40 and 100 million USD). This is another good reason to avoid geographical moves that are not driven by obvious (demonstrable) needs (at country level, where the needs arise and the impact is measured) and which are not meant to significantly contribute to the fulfilment of the strategic targets of the Organization.

[NB: The determination of average direct and indirect costs per person and per move is not easy. See, on this issue: UN General Assembly, *Mobility, Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*, para. 7 (A/73/569, 15 November 2018). Sometimes overlooked, indirect costs may be very high. A list of indirect costs identified for the organization of geographical mobility in the UN Secretariat is included in the UN SG's report: UN General Assembly, *Mobility, Report of the Secretary-General*, paras. 39-41 (A/72/767, 27 February 2018)].

<sup>25</sup> Similar to the incentives recommended in the list of "lessons learned" of the summative 2018 assessment of the implementation of the geographical mobility policy of the UN Secretariat. See the Report of the Secretary-General on Mobility, document A/73/372/Add.2, 10 September 2018, para. 64.

### C. Three operational requirements related to the implementation

**1 A results-oriented culture in which geographical mobility is understood as a means to optimize WHO's capacity to achieve its targets and fulfil its mandate needs to be shared by a majority of WHO IPs.**

- An assessment of communication needs to effectively promote the value of geographical mobility in WHO, integrating data already collected through the evaluations and online surveys carried out, is recommended to help design a **customized communication strategy** (including involvement and participation of senior management) targeting attitudes of staff towards geographical mobility.
- Such a strategy should be implemented more intensively and with particular care during the initial period of implementation of the new WHO operating model (acclimatization and learning period). To be fully successful, this strategy needs to be accompanied by a **policy/system of geographical mobility that is fair and target-oriented, whose justification and utility are understood by all staff.**

**2 Effective managerial processes and practices to steer and implement the policy need to be in place.**

- **Senior managers** steering WHO's action towards the achievement of its strategic targets and outcomes (as defined in GPW13) should play a **key role in the steering of annual geographical mobility rounds**, which should be **strategically oriented** and **demand-driven** (based on the needs of WHO's Member States).
- **HRD activities** should be carefully **harmonized across the three levels of the Organization** for :
  - (i) designing and implementing a **comprehensive WHO competency and job framework, harmonized and standardized position descriptions, matched forecast and monitoring dashboards, consistent career paths and career management practices, and workforce forecast-based planning** (see Annex A9),
  - (ii) **effectively and seamlessly managing geographical mobility.**
- The current policy should be **revisited and refined to match the new requirements** following the adoption of GPW13, and to more clearly and consistently make geographical mobility a **win-win exercise** (see sections 5 and 6, below).

**3 Customized tools designed to facilitate the management of geographical mobility (equivalent to the standard set of tools listed in Annex A10) need to be implemented, and training provided to effectively use them in a consistent way across the three levels of the Organization.**

- Customized and effective workforce planning, monitoring and communication/support tools should be implemented uniformly (coherently) across the three levels of WHO.
- Training should be provided to HR and line managers on the use of these tools to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and consistency, and facilitate dialogue and team work.



### **A consistent and comprehensive WHO Job Framework is needed**

A **consistent system of job titles and position descriptions** is necessary to organize relevant, effective and fair geographical moves.

This system could serve as the beginnings of a **WHO job framework** and would allow clear identification of corresponding positions in different regions/countries and working units. At its initial stage, this customized and simplified framework could include:

- 1 **generic position descriptions** (corresponding to types of jobs); and, **affiliated to them,**
- 2 **specific job descriptions**, corresponding to actual positions in the Organization.

Later on, the framework should be further developed.

Generic and specific job descriptions in this framework **should include information about their replicability and their geographical distribution\***

No good policy is possible without clear visibility based on relevant and reliable information.

## Fundamental and operational requirements summarized

### Fundamental requirements (8)

#### I. Results-related

- 1.1 Clear purpose contributing to the achievement of WHO's strategic targets and mandate.
- 1.2 Win-win exercise, inclusive of all key stakeholders.

#### II. Process-related

- 2.1 Balance between the number of moving IPs and the number of relevant available positions.
- 2.2 Balance between the policy requirements and the institutional capacities and available resources.
- 2.3 Synergic combination of a fair and inclusive policy of geographical mobility with openness to the incorporation of new talent (*integrated staffing strategy*).

#### III. Related to implementation

- 3.1 Shared results-oriented and geographical mobility culture.
- 3.2 Effective managerial processes and practices to steer and implement the policy.
- 3.3 Effective set of "fit-for-purpose" supporting tools.

### Operational requirements

#### A. Results-related

- i. A mobility system ensuring that the fundamental expectations of (i) WHO's Member States, (ii) WHO's Secretariat, and (iii) WHO's Staff are met.
- ii. Directors accountable for the achievement of WHO's strategic targets play a key role in the organization of annual rotation rounds. Hiring managers participate in the selection process. IPs are assisted in rotation.

#### B. Process-related

- i. Suitable forecast-based planning tools and mobility-monitoring dashboards are used to ensure a balance between the number of moving IPs and the number of relevant available positions.
- ii. Sufficient resources are available.
- iii. Rules are established to ensure complementarity and synergic use of rotation and new recruitments as means of creating and maintaining a "workforce of excellence".

#### C. Related to implementation

- i. An assessment of communication needs to effectively promote values and behaviours of geographical mobility in WHO is carried out, and a communication strategy is designed and implemented.
- ii. Processes and practices described in this report (4.3) in relation to key requirement 3.2 are implemented.
- iii. Customized tools supporting the management of geographical mobility listed in Annex A10 are implemented and used by managers.

## 5) What are the current main challenges that need to be addressed?

Within the UN System, WHO has **strong specificities** that need to be considered in corporate management operations, and in particular in the organization and management of geographical mobility. Moreover, WHO is currently undergoing an **in-depth transformation** that has major repercussions on its operating model. This section, intended to highlight the main challenges that need to be addressed, briefly reviews WHO's specificities and examines the impact of the current transformation initiative on the organization of geographical mobility.

### 5.1 Specificities of WHO

#### Challenges related to the scope of the mandate

As the main specialized UN Agency mandated to help improve the health situation of the World's population, WHO has a very challenging mission. Three of the 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and 7 of their 21 targets were directly related to health. Although only one of the 17 goals of the more comprehensive system of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is fully focused on "good health and well-being" (goal 3), all other SDGs have direct or indirect ties with health. Of the 169 SDG targets, 22 are closely related to health.<sup>26</sup>

Although WHO has mainly a normative, advisory, catalytic and convening role in health assistance initiatives, the challenges met are huge and expanding. With only around 2,100 IPs.<sup>27</sup> WHO needs to have a well-organized, highly motivated, competent and agile workforce to successfully face these challenges.

#### Specific features of WHO's workforce

The relatively limited size of WHO's IP staff, which highlights the necessity of maintaining a highly dynamic, competent, agile and mobile workforce focusing on priority needs and targets, is not the only characteristic that needs to be considered. Three other features which also strongly impact the organization of geographical mobility deserve equal attention: the *high level of compartmentalization of WHO*, its *decentralized structure*, and the current *weak geographical mobility culture of the Organization, especially in headquarters*.

**High level of compartmentalization linked to a wide range of areas of expertise:** As happens in other Specialized Agencies of the United Nations system (such as UNESCO, ILO and FAO), which tend to have a higher diversity of skills and job profiles in their workforces than UN Funds and Programmes, WHO has a wide range of areas of expertise. Over 30 programme areas, classified into six main categories, were identified for the preparation of GPW12 (2014-2019) and the corresponding Programme Budgets.<sup>28</sup> The combination of a relatively modest IP workforce and highly-differentiated areas of expertise results in limited "pools" of IPs belonging to the same area of expertise. This represents a barrier to the organization of geographical moves, even more so considering that, in general, geographical mobility also requires the same or similar grades in the former and new positions.

**Decentralized structure:** The **decentralized structure of WHO**, whose Constitution grants significant autonomy and decision-making power to regions, is an added challenge for the implementation of global policies. The implementation of geographical mobility requires a **shared vision** and **standardization and harmonization of procedures, practices and tools** (in particular in the area of HR management), and therefore agile negotiation and agreements, and ongoing dialogue. The same applies for the proposed new operating model for the Organization currently being discussed, designed to facilitate the implementation of the new overall strategy, and into which WHO's

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<sup>26</sup> See: <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.sdg.tp-1?lang=en>.

<sup>27</sup> PAHO IPs not included.

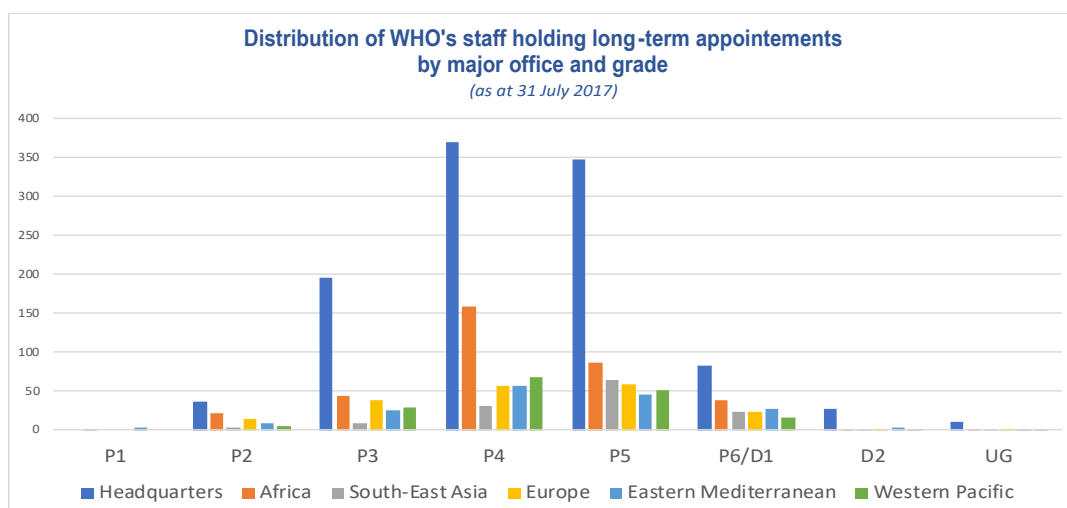
<sup>28</sup> The operating structure of WHO during the period 2016-2018 is shown in Annex A5.

Geographical Mobility Policy needs to be integrated. Without a harmonized approach, the implementation of the policy will meet with recurrent barriers.

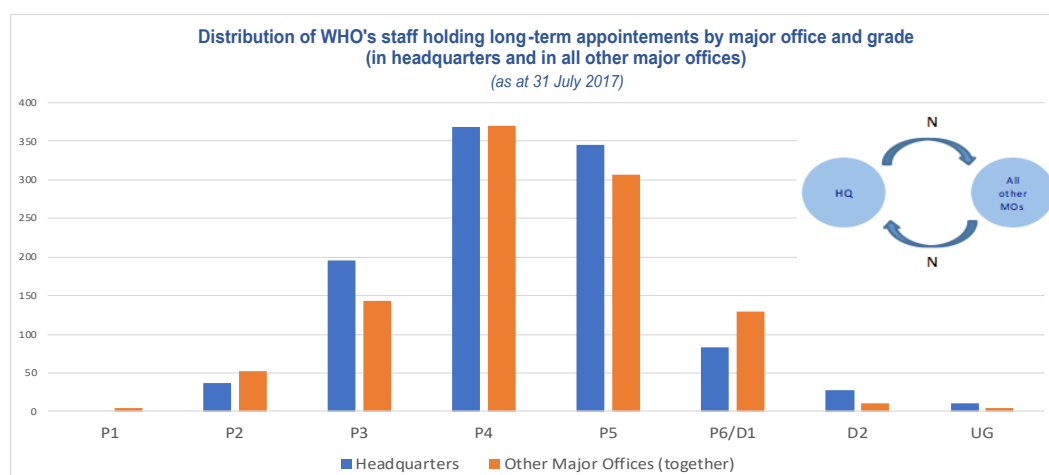
**Weak geographical mobility culture:** As compared to several other UN Organizations, such as UNICEF, WFP or UNHCR, which have well-established traditions and internal cultures of geographical mobility, WHO does not have a deeply rooted culture of geographical mobility. The evaluations carried out in 2016 and 2017 have shown that average yearly rates of geographical mobility depend on regions and major offices: they are within the range of 10%-14% in the European, Western Pacific, Eastern Mediterranean and South-East Asia Regions, close to 25% in Africa, but **much lower in headquarters** (around 3%-4% only).

The weak rate of geographical moves in headquarters has a strong impact on the fluidity of implementation of geographical mobility because around half (51%) of WHO's IPs are currently working in headquarters. The following graphics show that, in the current context, the fundamental dynamics of geographical mobility in WHO is not among regions, but between headquarters and all the other major offices (considered together), and that a weak flow of geographical moves from headquarters strongly limits the overall flow of moves:

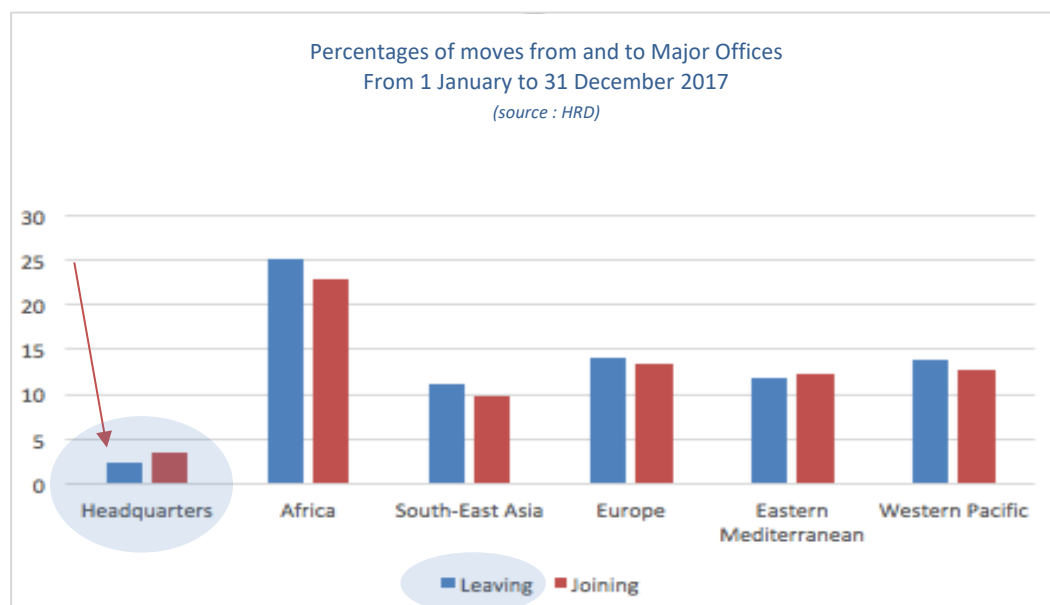
- the first graphic shows the distribution of IPs, by grade, among major offices (July 2017); the overwhelming concentration of IPs (of all grades) in headquarters is very apparent;



- the second graphic, which presents a very different picture, shows that there is a balanced distribution of IPs, by grade, between headquarters and all the other major offices taken together; it follows that the involvement of IPs working in headquarters is a major factor of regulation of the flow of moves that take place in geographical mobility rounds;



- the third graph shows the different rates of geographical mobility recorded in 2017, in major offices; the weak percentage of IPs leaving headquarters, made apparent by this graph, limits the overall flow of annual rotation exercises.



## 5.2 WHO is undergoing a bold transformation to prepare the Organization for the next decades

### A new operating model

WHO has designed a bold and ambitious strategy for the next 5 years (2019-2023), in line with the scale of the huge and expanding health challenges faced by the world's population. The key drivers of this strategy are the triple billion targets and the nine outcomes that are expected to contribute to the achievement of these targets.

#### WHO's overarching framework of 3 strategic targets and 9 outcomes (GWP13)

Universal health coverage	Health emergencies	Healthier populations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome 1.1. Improved access to quality essential health services</li> <li>Outcome 1.2. Reduced number of people suffering financial hardships</li> <li>Outcome 1.3. Improved access to essential medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and devices for primary health care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome 2.1. Countries prepared for health emergencies</li> <li>Outcome 2.2. Epidemics and pandemics prevented</li> <li>Outcome 2.3. Health emergencies rapidly detected and responded to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome 3.1. Determinants of health addressed</li> <li>Outcome 3.2. Risk factors reduced through multi-sectoral action</li> <li>Outcome 3.3. Healthy settings and Health in All Policies promoted</li> </ul>

In order to deliver the outputs needed for the achievement of these outcomes and targets, WHO is elaborating a new operating model, revisiting and redesigning the overarching dynamics which determine (i) the key drivers of WHO's activities; (ii) the organization of component structures (major offices, departments, units) and processes (the contributions of each component, job descriptions, work, output and information flows, lines of accountability); (iii) the corresponding internal distribution of roles, responsibilities and sets of skills required; (iv) the enabling systems supporting the main workstreams; and (v) the relations with the "final clients" (Member States) and partners.

The main focus of the strategy is the generation of measurable benefits at country level, addressing countries' needs and expectations, and putting them at the centre of WHO's concerns and activity. To create capacity to meet these demanding goals, WHO is deploying renewed efforts to ensure a highly capable and fit-for-purpose workforce.

### **A well-trained and motivated workforce of excellence**

In all organizations, **human resources** (staff) are the actors who take decisions, deploy efforts and **achieve goals**. Structures and processes are there only to facilitate their action. This is the reason why the main component of any comprehensive and relevant initiative to improve the operating model of an organization is the development of a **competent, motivated and fit-for-purpose workforce**.

As with all other components of HR management, **geographical mobility** needs to be designed and implemented in order to contribute to the generation and maintenance of this "fit-for-purpose" and capable workforce.

GPW13 describes how WHO's new workforce should be composed and operate (in para. 114, reproduced in the box below).

#### **WHO WORKFORCE REQUIREMENTS (GPW-13)**

114. WHO's strategic and organizational shifts **will require a workforce that is fit for purpose, highly competent and cutting edge, motivated, high-performing and empowered**. In order to achieve this, several changes should be put in place.

- **Fit for purpose.**  
Increased diversity achieved by fostering gender parity and geographical representation across all levels of the Organization; workforce rejuvenation and forward-looking succession planning supported by strategic and timely recruitment and enhanced opportunities for young professionals; and **full implementation of WHO's geographical mobility policy**. WHO's focus on SDG implementation *will require a broader professional and skills mix to work with many different sectors and provide not only technical but also strategic and policy advice to countries*.
- **Highly competent and cutting edge.**  
Professional development and empowerment through *career pathways* and fostering a learning culture; enhancement of managerial capabilities, increased authority and related accountability and **a reorientation toward a country-centred organization**; rewarding of innovation and collaboration.
- **Motivated, high-performing and empowered.**  
Staff performance management with enhanced opportunities for high performers and increased use of professional development and learning tools; making progress towards a culture of collaboration; enhancing respect within WHO as a core value.

### 5.3 WHO's Geographical Mobility Policy needs to fit WHO's new operating model

It would not make much sense to design or readjust a customized geographical mobility policy, expected to be effective and successful, and to select further the most convenient managerial options for its implementation, **before the operating model for the implementation of the new overarching WHO Strategy** to achieve its triple billion targets has been clarified and agreed upon.

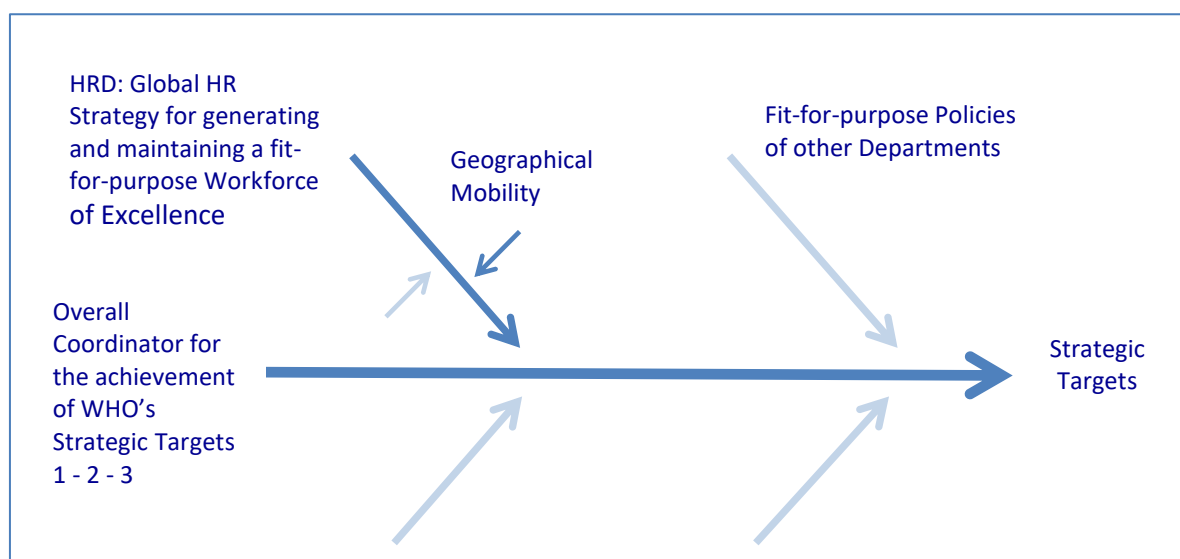
#### The logical top-down organizational chain

Intended to ensure the most objectively measurable impact at country level, the **new operating model** will have decisive repercussions on the (i) **design of internal organizational and functioning mechanisms**, (ii) **roles and responsibilities** at the **three levels of the Organization** (headquarters, regional offices, country offices), and (iii) **overarching network of lines of accountability and global flows of work, information and outputs** (intermediate and final).

This will impact, in turn, on the choice of the **best options** for the **organization and maintenance of the “fit-for-purpose” workforce of excellence** outlined in para 114 of GPW, and for its management. The **most suitable distribution of human resources** (namely IPs), and the **most convenient sets of skills and competencies** required at the different levels of the Organization, as well as their evolution, will be more easily and more clearly identifiable once the new operating model is determined.

HRM policies designed to meet this “fit-for-purpose workforce of excellence” target,<sup>29</sup> closely related to the overarching institutional triple billion targets,<sup>30</sup> form a coherent whole, and **geographical mobility of IPs is an integral part of this whole**.

#### Geographical mobility as a key HRD policy contributing to the maintenance of a fit-for-purpose Workforce of Excellence (which, in turn, contributes to the achievement of WHO's Strategic Targets)



<sup>29</sup> Annex A7, included as a counterpoint to para. 114 of GPW13, reviews the set of key requirements recommended to set up a *workforce of excellence*.

<sup>30</sup> See the diagram in next page. Annex A6 further highlights the links between geographical mobility and the operating model of the Organization.

### **A top-down organizational chain**

The fishbone diagram above illustrates the logical top-down chain that links the organization and management of geographical mobility to WHO's Global Strategy.

**WHO's strategic targets** stated in GPW13 influence the choice of the new overall organizational architecture and of the new operational rules and procedures (**WHO operating model**). This model specifies, in particular, the contributions of each component unit to the fulfilment of WHO's mandate.

As with all policies in the Organization, **WHO's HR Policy** needs to fit these new rules and to contribute in the best possible way to the achievement of the new overarching institutional goals. The main contribution expected from the implementation of this key sectoral Policy is the maintenance and professional development of a fit-for-purpose "**workforce of excellence**" that is necessary to permit the Organization meet its targets.

**WHO's staffing and HR professional development strategy** plays a key role in the development and maintenance of WHO's workforce of excellence. **Geographical mobility** is one of the components of this strategy and needs to be organized in line with this more fundamental approach and with the key targets of the Organization.

### **A period of transition**

The new Operating Model for the implementation of GPW13 (2019-2023) is still currently under discussion. As a consequence, the most suitable distribution of WHO's workforce and skills remain at this point uncertain. It is too early, therefore, to formulate specific recommendations in this regard to guide the implementation of the Geographical Mobility Policy.

At this transitional stage of structural change and limited visibility, there is another reason for caution and patience. Based on the findings of a comprehensive review of the first two years of implementation of the new geographical mobility policy of the UN Secretariat (2016-2017), the UN Secretary-General has recommended the adoption of a new approach to geographical mobility, to be developed in 2019 in consultation with management and staff, and where the mobility system will be a core element of a wider approach to talent management and fully integrated into career development.

Once a decision is made regarding the new operating model for WHO and lessons learned are concomitantly considered, it is very likely that the current Geographical Mobility Policy will need to be revisited.

## **5.4 The specific challenges currently faced by WHO need to be addressed**

Learning from experience and pinpointing the key requirements for a sustainable system of geographical mobility are only the first two steps in the process of identifying the best options for the successful implementation in WHO of a suitable (effective, efficient, equitable and sustainable) system of geographical mobility. The specificities of the Organization briefly reviewed in this section and the requirements generated by the ongoing transformation of WHO's operating model, lines of accountability and ways of working need also to be carefully considered.



## 6) Conclusions

### 6.1 Recommendations that may be made at this stage

Based on the findings of the evaluations conducted during the voluntary phase and the lessons learned, and considering the current transitional situation in WHO (change of operating model), three kinds of recommendations may be made at this point:

- 1 recommendations addressing changes in the **provisions** and **governance mechanism** of the policy to incorporate the lessons learned and to adapt the policy to WHO's new operating model;
- 2 recommendations related to the **reinforcement of WHO's institutional capacity** to successfully manage geographical mobility of IPs; these recommendations (such as standardization of job descriptions, coordinated work of HR managers at the three levels of the Organization, assistance provided to moving IPs) address needs that are present in all contexts of implementation of the policy (they are independent of the options chosen to orient the policy and its implementation);
- 3 finally, recommendations on the **steps** that may be taken to go from the present situation to the full implementation of a suitable and sustainable policy of geographical mobility contributing to the achievement of the targets set out in the GPW13 and responding to the expectations of key stakeholders ("roadmap" recommendations).

### 6.2 The implications of the new operating model

#### **The new operating model requires a new paradigm for geographical mobility**

GPW13 puts countries at the centre of WHO's work, and WHO's strategy for normative work and technical assistance will focus on the priority needs at country level. The overall architecture and the activities of the Organization are being reorganized to ensure that WHO's action is strategically oriented and demand-driven, and that available resources (including human resources) are used to optimize WHO's assets to meet its targets.

The organization of geographical mobility needs to be in line with the new WHO operating model. In addition to facilitating and fostering staff's professional development and knowledge of the Organization, by exposing them to different professional environments and by widening the range of their skills and competencies, geographical mobility is (with external recruitment and lateral moves) one of the main streams of staffing. Therefore, the geographical mobility scheme has to be suitably integrated into the overall staffing strategy designed to swiftly and effectively satisfy the demands which follow from the implementation of WHO's new operating model.

WHO's Geographical Mobility Policy, launched in 2014, and slightly amended in 2016-2017, was designed in the context of the implementation of GPW12, and in line with the corresponding operating model at that time. The shift towards the new operating model supporting the implementation of WHO's new strategy requires an adjustment of the paradigm underpinning the organization of geographical mobility. Whereas geographical mobility was firstly designed to offer staff the possibility to comply with their mobility statutory obligations, the new strategic direction of WHO requires a geographical mobility scheme that is more demand-driven, addressing the priority needs of WHO's Member States.

#### **A transitional period is desirable for refining and preparing implementation of the new approach**

The interviews carried out in December 2017 with HR managers implementing geographical mobility policies in eight UN agencies have highlighted that the implementation of these policies often requires a change of mindset and a learning and adaptation period for both the Organization and the staff. The experience gathered in the first years of implementation has led several agencies to readjust the provisions included in their policies and to modify their managerial practices.

In some cases, the changes introduced are important. They may even be quite radical. The UN Secretariat, which has the largest IP workforce within the agencies, funds and programmes of the UN System, adopted in 2014 a Geographical Mobility Policy that was implemented in two of its networks in the period 2016-2017. A UN report of 15 November 2018<sup>31</sup> notes that managed mobility ended up with relatively few moves. Of the 374 geographical moves reported for its POLNET network, less than 10% took place under managed mobility. Implementation was paused in 2018. Following the publication of the findings of a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Policy carried out during the first semester of 2018, the UN Secretary-General has decided to propose to the UN General Assembly a new comprehensive mobility framework for the Secretariat, based on a new approach, the details of which will be developed in consultation with management and staff during 2019 and presented to the UN General Assembly for consideration at its seventy-fourth session (September 2019).<sup>32</sup>

Interestingly, the report of the UN Secretary-General indicates that the 2014 mobility framework was “based on the experiences of other United Nations entities without considering the specificity of the Secretariat and the dual nature of its entities: normative and operational”. It also underlines that, unlike other UN entities, which have more focused mandates and more easily interchangeable workforces, the Secretariat workforce covers a wider range of functions.<sup>33</sup>

Although having a much smaller IP workforce, WHO faces similar challenges and has followed a quite similar path. WHO’s Geographical Mobility Policy was also promulgated in 2014 and went through a 2-year period of implementation in 2016-2017. Accounting for less than 10% of the annual moves, managed mobility had similar disappointing results. The implementation of the Policy was paused in 2018, and a summative evaluation was carried out in 2018.<sup>34</sup> WHO has both normative and operational mandates and, like several other UN specialized agencies, has an IP workforce covering a wide range of functions (working in different areas of expertise and with distinct competency profiles). Given the smaller size of WHO’s IP workforce, it will meet greater challenges than those met by the UN Secretariat in the organization of rotation rounds within specialized areas of expertise.<sup>35</sup>

The specificities of WHO’s overall organization, which grants a large degree of autonomy to regions, pose further challenges for the organization and implementation of geographical mobility.

Even more importantly, the adoption of a new operating model, which is meant to introduce major changes in the geographical distribution of WHO’s workforce and in the way the Organization functions and delivers, adds to the necessity of readjusting and refining the geographical mobility scheme designed in 2014.

At this point, lessons learned and identified challenges may be translated into a set of key requirements to assist in the preparation of the new framework.

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<sup>31</sup> Mobility – Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. UN General Assembly, document A/73/569, para. 6.

<sup>32</sup> See: UN SG’s report: UN General Assembly, *Mobility, Report of the Secretary-General*, paras. 66 and 68 (A/73/372/Add.2, 10 September 2018).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, para. 35.

<sup>34</sup> The two Organizations experienced change of senior leadership in 2017. The new UN Secretary-General took office on 1 January 2017, and the new WHO Director-General on 1 July 2017.

<sup>35</sup> Managed mobility ended up with relatively few moves both in the UN Secretariat and in WHO. In 2016, of the total number of 374 geographic moves reported for the network POLNET of the UN Secretariat, only up to 33 (less than 10%) were actually taken under managed mobility (A/73/569, 15 November 2018, para. 6). A similar situation was observed in WHO, where only 12 geographical moves (out of a total of 162) were organized through the compendium. (For additional information on this point, see: A/73/372/Add.2, *Mobility, Report of the UN Secretary-General*, 10 September 2018, paras. 53-54, and the previous evaluation reports on the implementation of the Policy (2016, 2017)).

## 6.3 Key requirements for the preparation and assessment of the new framework

Drawing on available knowledge and lessons learned from experience, it is good practice among learning organizations to carefully identify the key requirements (*specifications*) of the new managerial systems designed to foster their capacity to deliver and the quality of their functioning. The suitability of the systems thus designed depends primarily on the relevance and completeness of the list of specifications set out and on the capacity of the organizations to find solutions that satisfy them.

The table below summarizes the key requirements that may help design a system of geographical mobility that is tailored for WHO, in line with its new overall strategy and operating model.<sup>36</sup>

### Key specifications for a suitable geographical mobility framework (WHO)

Synoptic list based on the findings of the evaluations of the implementation of the policy (2016-2018)

Key specifications
<i>Member States' expectations</i>
Impact on the quality of WHO assistance: the geographical mobility policy is expected to contribute, in a demonstrable way, to the improvement of the quality and effectiveness of WHO's assistance to countries. This is a major requirement linked to the <i>raisons d'être</i> and strategic goal of WHO.
<i>WHO Secretariat and Management expectations</i>
The system needs to be effective, efficient, affordable and easy-to-manage, in line with other policies and strategies of the Organization. It is expected to contribute to generate a more agile workforce, and to strengthen and widen the skills and competencies of IPs. It is also expected to contribute to enhance solidarity ("One WHO").
<i>Staff expectations</i>
The system needs to be inclusive and fair (in particular regarding burden sharing in hardship duty stations), comply with WHO's equity policies (non-discrimination, gender balance), offer effective assistance to moving IPs and opportunities for career development. It should be designed in consultation with staff representatives.
<i>Requirements linked to the incorporation of HRM Good Practices</i>
Geographical mobility needs to be combined with other staffing modalities in a coherent staffing strategy. The geographical mobility scheme needs to be designed and implemented within a wider framework, which includes career management, talent and knowledge management, succession planning and performance appraisal.

## 6.4 Exploring new options

Taken together, the requirements summarized above provide a set of viable options within which suitable schemes of geographical mobility may be designed and creative and innovative tailored solutions explored.

These solutions need to be brainstormed, assessed and refined by mandated working groups having the suitable combination of expertise. Three critical topics that need to be carefully considered in geographical mobility frameworks are given here as examples of policy components that may be explored and refined using new approaches.

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<sup>36</sup> The specifications listed may also be used as assessment criteria to appraise the geographical mobility options and schemes reviewed.

## Ensuring equity in burden sharing

A major concern in geographical mobility schemes adopted by UN agencies is the need to ensure equitable burden sharing, in particular regarding service performed in hardship duty stations. The system included in WHO's 2014 policy is similar to those adopted in other UN organisations. It is based on the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) classification of duty stations.

Two parameters help build the framework designed to ensure equity: the *standard duration of assignment* (SDA), establishing the upper limit of the period during which a post may be encumbered by an IP; and the *Time-in-Post*, setting out the minimal duration of service before the IP encumbering a position may apply for another position. SDAs and Time-in-Post vary depending on the category of duty stations. They are lower in D, E and Non-family duty stations, and higher in H and A duty stations.

The problem encountered with this system, which was designed to ensure equity, is that it does not always work well in practice. In the interviews with WHO staff and management, as well as with HR specialists managing mobility in other UN agencies, a number of interviewees pointed out that (i) it is often difficult to find staff accepting to encumber positions in hardship duty stations (cases of defection were mentioned, even after initial acceptance), and (ii) burden sharing is not an established common practice, nor a corporate culture (in some cases/regions, the same IPs successively encumber positions in different hardship duty stations).

One of the three principles behind the geographical mobility framework of the UN Secretariat adopted in 2014 was "ensuring burden-sharing".<sup>37</sup> However, one of the seven key findings highlighted in the comprehensive summative review of the implementation of the policy carried out in 2018 was that "burden-sharing was limited".<sup>38</sup>

On the other hand, mobility from headquarters in UN agencies which do not have a well-established mobility culture (among them, WHO) is, in general, limited. In addition to hampering geographical mobility, this situation generates a feeling of unfairness which was often voiced in the interviews with WHO staff. The current system of SDA and Time-in-Post does not seem able to offer a suitable solution to these two situations.

These two critical issues need to be more equitably and effectively managed. One possible option would be to adopt a credit (or points) system, already used in HRM to evaluate job positions and design compensation schemes, and similar to those used in all schools and universities around the world to assess competencies, and to most systems designed to assess performance (e.g. in sports championships and in professional environments).

In such a system, instead of using SDA and Time-in-Post (or in addition to using a similar system), each year of service of a WHO IP would be credited a certain number of points with regard to burden sharing. IPs serving in hardship duty stations (D, E and Non-Family) would receive more credits per year of service than those serving in H and A duty stations, as shown in the table. An average number of credits would be given to IPs serving in B and C duty stations (and to those encumbering non-rotational positions, if non-rotational positions are identified).<sup>39</sup> Thus, inequality among living conditions in duty stations would be compensated ("One WHO"). The credits earned by IPs would be taken into account in the performance appraisal system and for professional advancement, as suggested hereafter.

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<sup>37</sup> UN General Assembly, *Mobility, Report of the Secretary-General*, 10 September 2018, A/73/372/Add.2, para. 35.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 44-48.

<sup>39</sup> Moreover, as an incentive and compensation measure, a lump sum of additional credits (corresponding, for instance, to one year of service in H Duty Stations, i.e. 2 points in the example shown in the table) might be awarded to IPs moving to hardship Duty Stations which experience difficulties in receiving the needed assistance.

**Two systems for managing equity  
in relation to service performed in different categories of Duty Stations**

ICSC Classification of Duty Stations	Equity Systems (Duty Stations)		
	SDA and Time-in-Post <sup>40</sup>		Weighted WHO geographical mobility experience
	SDA	Time-in-Post	Credits (points) per Year of Service
H Duty Stations	6	3	2
A Duty Stations	5	2.5	3
B and C Duty Stations	4	2	4
D and E Duty Stations	3	2	5
Non-family Duty Stations	2	2	6

A credits system offers multiple advantages, as evidenced by the following comparative table.

**SDA and Time-in-Post System compared to a System of Geographical Mobility Credits**

	SDA and Time-in-Post	Geographical Mobility Credits
ICSC Hardship Classification	Both systems use the ICSC Hardship Classification of Duty Stations.	
Guiding Principles	Based on Standard Duration of Assignment (SDA) and Time-in-Post.	Based on a system of credits earned by IPs serving in different types of duty station (the credits awarded per year of service depend on the hardship classification of the duty station, as shown in the former table).
Status	A common system in UN agencies.	A new approach to the issue of equity and fairness in relation to service in duty stations belonging to different hardship categories.
Equity and Fairness	Equity is difficult to achieve, as often staff tend to avoid D, E and Non-Family duty stations and hesitate to leave H and A duty stations. The burden is not fairly shared. This critical issue is met by other UN agencies.	Burden inequity is prevented, or at least eased (compensated), on an “ongoing” basis, by awarding a larger number of geographical mobility credits per year of service to staff serving in duty stations where living conditions are harder.
Trust and Motivation	Interviews with staff have pointed out that (i) many staff members do not trust the burden-sharing system included in the current mobility framework, (ii) levels of motivation are often low, and (iii) there are sometimes renewed difficulties in filling positions in hardship duty stations.	The geographical mobility credits are taken into account in the system of performance appraisal and in competition for promotion, thus compensating for difficult living conditions for staff members working in hardship duty stations.

<sup>40</sup> WHO Geographical Mobility Policy (23 January 2017), para 7.

	<b>SDA and Time-in-Post</b>	<b>Geographical Mobility Credits</b>
Integration into Career Management	The SDA and Time-in-Post system offers limited possibilities for being integrated into career management.	The system of credits may be easily integrated into career management (as shown hereafter).
Integration into Performance Appraisal	The SDA and Time-in-Post scheme offers limited possibilities for being integrated into a system of performance appraisal.	The scheme of geographical mobility credits may be easily incorporated into a system of performance appraisal (as shown hereafter).
Adaptability	The SDA and Time-in-Post system offers limited possibilities of adaptation and/or evolution.	The system of mobility credits, which offers the possibility of using weighting coefficients and may be combined with other quantitative assessments, is very flexible and may easily be adapted to new contexts.
Continuity of Service	The SDA and Time-in-Post scheme exposes hardship duty stations to a higher risk of disruption of service, as a consequence of weak attractiveness.	By more confidently ensuring motivation of staff, the system of geographical mobility credits offers better chances of continuity of service in hardship duty stations.

### **Linking geographical mobility to performance appraisal**

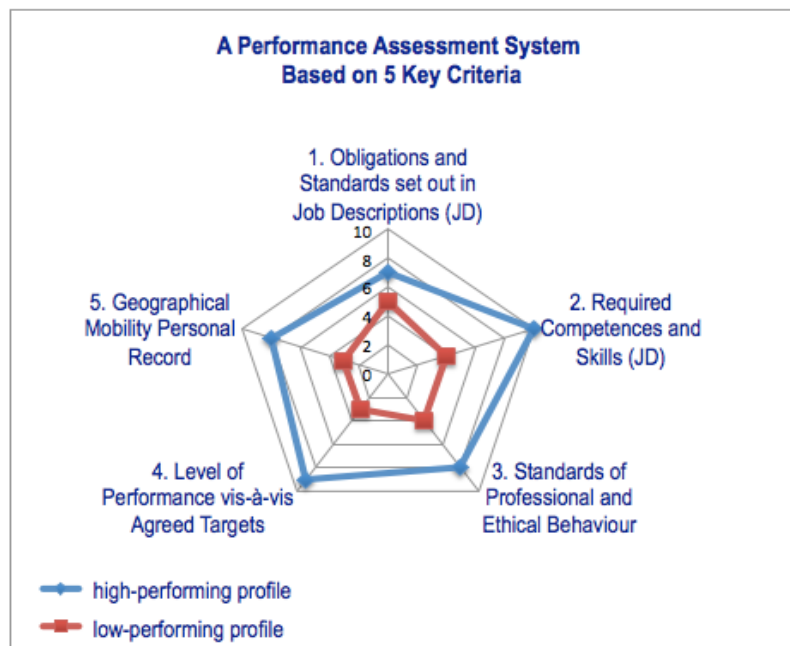
The new paradigm in the organization and functioning of WHO aims at making the Organization more strategically oriented. Either centralized or decentralized, strategic management generally institutes a top-down chain of key objectives and targets linking the actions and performance of each individual to the overall action conducted by the Organization. Action at all levels is thus better coordinated and given a clearer sense of direction, and resources are more efficiently used. Strategic management, which is also currently adopted by other UN entities, tends to result in organizations having a stronger impact and working more effectively and efficiently.

A current practice in organizations adopting strategic management is to organize annual interviews between each staff member and his/her immediate supervisor. During these interviews, four main topics are usually addressed: (i) the level of achievement of the agreed targets for the past year is assessed; (ii) new targets for the forthcoming year are set out; (iii) in the light of these new targets, competency levels are assessed, and training needs are identified; (iv) perspectives of career advancement (including mobility opportunities) are explored. Geographical mobility may thus be more closely integrated into career management, on an ongoing basis (with assistance provided by career counselors).

These annual interviews are also the main tool for conducting a coordinated and comprehensive performance assessment. Strengths and challenges may be thus identified and monitored within the whole Organization, and appropriate capacity building actions decided accordingly. Individual performance is usually assessed against four frames of reference: (i) the set of obligations (and standards) included in job descriptions; (ii) competences and skills required by the job to ensure satisfactory/high levels of performance; (iii) standards and norms of expected behavior, based on institutional values and professional and deontological codes, and capacity to effectively participate in team work (or to lead team work, depending on the position encumbered); and (iv) agreed targets.

When efforts are being deployed to obtain a more agile and mobile workforce, capable of better serving the Organization, and to implement a burden sharing policy, as is the case when geographical mobility policies are implemented, a fifth assessment criterion should be added to the performance assessment framework: the geographical mobility record. The geographical mobility credits (including burden sharing credits) may thus be integrated into the assessment framework, as shown hereafter.

### Example of a performance assessment framework incorporating IPs' geographical mobility records



#### Links between geographical mobility and opportunities for career advancement

Geographical mobility records should also be taken into account, in a similar way, in career advancement. The set of assessment criteria used to select among different candidates applying for a position should include the geographical mobility record. In addition, depending on the situation and on available resources, a system of bonuses could be instituted to acknowledge good mobility records.

This system is very flexible and allows to more easily and more effectively balance and manage the attractiveness of positions in different regions and duty stations, thus ensuring that all Member States receive the appropriate assistance. Depending on the difficulties met in encumbering positions, a WHO committee may decide to periodically adjust the number of credits awarded for moves to hardship duty stations.

SDA and Time-in-Post	Geographical Mobility Credits
Geographical rotation is generally understood by UN agencies as taking place, in principle, at the same grade.	Each new geographical move may be rewarded by a standard number of geographical mobility credits. <sup>41</sup>
Possibilities to apply for higher positions may be granted to staff moving to hardship duty stations, to encourage mobility.	The geographical mobility personal record (credits accumulated) is taken into account in annual performance appraisals and in competition for promotion.
Geographical mobility may be required for P4-P5 and higher positions.	In addition, the Organization may decide that staff be entitled to receive a geographical mobility lump sum allowance (bonus) every time they accumulate a standard number of new credits. Promotion to positions of P5 and above should require working experience in other duty stations within the Organization.
	This system of incentives to encourage and reward geographical mobility needs to be designed and developed in agreement with the institutional rules for financial and HR management, available resources, and equity standards/ requirements.

<sup>41</sup> E.g. a number of credits equivalent to the average amount of credits earned by staff per year of service (in a 2-6 scale, 4 credits).



## Non-rotational positions

Most of the UN agencies interviewed in December 2017 have identified non-rotational positions. Apart from the categories of staff members who are exempt from the geographical mobility policy,<sup>42</sup> there are at present no non-rotational positions identified in WHO. However, there is no guarantee that non-rotational positions will not be established in the future, especially if a new framework is adopted.

In a system of credits, non-rotational positions may be integrated into the system by being awarded an average number of credits.

### Non-rotational positions

SDA and Time-in-Post	Geographical Mobility Credits
Once identified and published (for a period), non-rotational positions appear as distinct from the rest of the positions, which are submitted to the obligation of mobility. This disruption may generate a feeling of unfairness.	They are part of the system. Staff encumbering non-rotational positions receive an average number of credits (e.g. in a 2-6 credits scale, they would receive 4 credits per year of service).

## 6.5 The capacity to manage geographical mobility needs to be enhanced

As highlighted in the second annual evaluation, a seamless implementation of the geographical mobility policy requires suitable steering and coordination mechanisms, coordinated HR networks across the three levels of the Organization that are using standardized and harmonized managerial practices, and a comprehensive set of fit-for-purpose tools. The evaluations carried out during the voluntary phase of the implementation of the policy have highlighted that capacity reinforcement actions are needed in WHO in all these areas.

Annexes A8-A16 review a set of key requirements based on good practices that may help build up in WHO a robust and effective managerial capacity to implement the policy.

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<sup>42</sup> WHO Geographical Mobility Policy (23 January 2017), para 5.

## 7) Recommendations

### 7.1 Reasons underpinning the recommendations

#### **The policy needs to be in tune with the new strategic directions set out by GPW13**

There are two main reasons for reassessing and adjusting the approach currently underpinning the policy:

- GPW13 (2019-2023) is oriented towards delivering results at country level and achieving its three strategic targets in an effective and efficient manner. This means that the Organization's resources, and firstly human resources (the real actors of development) need to be deployed in the best possible way. As with all other policies in the Organization, geographical mobility needs to be tailored to the new global strategy and effectively support it.
- The lessons learned from the implementation of the policy during the voluntary phase, highlighted in the annual evaluation reports, have shown that the current policy (promulgated in 2014, in a different context) has essentially been perceived as a tool to help IPs to satisfy their statutory obligations, with weak links to the achievement of the strategic targets of the Organization and to career management.

An adjustment of the framework underpinning the organization of geographical mobility seems highly desirable to place WHO's geographical mobility policy at the service of the overall strategy and goals adopted by the Organization and to fully integrate the lessons learned. The new framework should better incorporate geographical mobility of IPs into a wider policy of career management; and integrate geographical mobility into a global staffing and talent management strategy contributing to the professional development of a WHO workforce of excellence (as described in para. 114 of the GPW13).

#### **A policy adapted to the new strategy and refined by the incorporation of lessons learned**

It seems reasonable for WHO to take steps similar to those decided by the UN Secretary-General with regard to mobility in the UN Secretariat. Based on the lessons learned, on the agreements achieved among WHO senior management at the different levels of the Organization, and on the requirements generated by the new strategy adopted, an updated and refined approach to geographical mobility needs to be developed, in consultation with management and staff.

The preparation of the new framework could be carried out during the course of 2019. It would benefit from the concomitant implementation of the new operating model and from the clarifications brought by the approval of the proposed Programme Budget 2020-2021. At the same time, the institutional capacity of WHO to manage geographical mobility should be enhanced, preparing the Organization for a seamless implementation of the policy as from 1 January 2020.

#### **The capacity of WHO to suitably implement the policy needs to be strengthened**

The recommendations made earlier this year to strengthen WHO's capacity to manage geographical mobility<sup>43</sup> are still relevant. The steering and governance mechanisms, the current managerial practices and the tools used need to fit the requirements and goals of the new strategy and to comply with the quality standards recommended by best practices.

### 7.2 Recommendations (see next page)

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<sup>43</sup> See the recommendations issued in the Evaluation Office's *Report on the 2nd Annual Evaluation of the Implementation of WHO's Geographical Mobility Policy* (February 2018).

## Recommendations

### Adjust the policy to the changes introduced by GPW13

- R1 The Secretariat should consider preparing a **new framework** for the implementation of geographical mobility which takes into account the new strategic orientation of WHO, the organizational changes accompanying this transformation, and the lessons learned through the annual evaluations carried out during the voluntary phase of the implementation of the policy. In addition to incorporating the expectations of all key stakeholders, the new framework should be developed in consultation with management and staff. It should:
- combine geographical mobility and other staffing modalities into a **coherent staffing strategy** that is aligned with WHO's overall corporate strategy and remains open to recruitment of new talent;
  - be designed to be implemented within a wider framework including **career management, talent and knowledge management, succession planning and performance management**;
  - facilitate **inter-agency mobility** within the UN system.

### Implement enabling capacity-development actions

#### *Ensure Suitable Planning and Monitoring Capacity*

- R2 HRD and regional HR managers should develop and implement across the 3 levels of the Organization:
- a **customized WHO job framework for IPs** supporting a **unified and coherent system of job titles and position descriptions**, and highlighting an overall WHO IP structure of job families, position grades and career paths;
  - a set of **basic forecast-based workforce planning tools** customized for managing geographical mobility of IPs;
  - **monitoring dashboards** customized for managing geographical mobility of IPs, providing **real-time information** on the overall situation and including a **set of relevant key indicators**, designed to inform and guide the managing team on an ongoing basis.

#### *Ensure Suitable Implementation Capacity*

- R3 HRD and regional HR managers should implement across the 3 levels of the Organization:
- updated **standard operating procedures** targeting line managers and HR/administrative staff involved in geographical mobility, and providing guidance on the implementation of measures aimed at facilitating moves, settlement in the new living environments and induction;
  - a customized "toolbox" designed to facilitate **knowledge-sharing and mentoring**, including examples of good managerial practices, recommendations and tools;
  - a **communication and information action plan** on the *raisons d'être*, expected benefits and implementation rules of the new policy framework, supported by fit-for-purpose **tools** and targeting IPs and managers. *(This measure needs to be implemented in synergy with Recommendation R4).*

#### *Ensure Favourable Institutional Culture*

- R4 The Secretariat should design and implement an **awareness campaign** targeting all managers and IPs and explaining clearly the **purpose** of the policy and **how it benefits both the Organization and staff**. *(This should be done with participation of senior management.)*