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Improving the selection policy

Paper submitted by the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council to SMC VIII

The selection process is one of the pillars of the Human resources policy at the UN. The current policy in relation to the selection process which is contained in ST/AI/2010/3 can be improved, in order to better serve the interests of the staff and the Organization. Management suggested amendments to the current policy back in 2018. However, staff unions believe that these amendments don't cover some of the main issues that need to be fixed.

Examples of areas where improvements can be made include the following:

1. Management of job vacancies: Many vacant positions remain unfilled for a long period of time without any objective justification. There is a need to regulate this issue by imposing a 2-month-deadline for the opening of a vacancy once a position becomes vacant.
2. Internal candidates: The practice of having all job vacancies opened externally and internally is transforming the selection process into a lengthy one that is requiring a lot of time and resources for all involved parties. Selecting an external candidate is often source of demotivation for internal staff who don't see any career prospects for them despite their commitment and dedication to the Organization. That is why, it is suggested to give preference to internal candidates when the requirements are equally met.
3. Use of roster: The use of the roster is currently left to the discretion of the Hiring manager who may decide to select a candidate from the roster or run a new selection process. This creates a lot of false expectations among candidates and makes the placement of candidates on a roster a meaningless exercise where subjectivity in their selection may prevail.
4. Use of the ePAS document: The current selection system doesn't foresee the use of the ePAS document and the Competency based interview (CBI) is the only tool used by the Hiring manager to make the selection decision. While it is understood that the ePAS is discarded in the selection process to ensure equality of treatment between external and internal candidates, it remains important to use it as part of the selection process.
5. Role of the Central review bodies (CRBs): The CR bodies have currently very limited or non-existent role in the selection process. The decisions they take aren't binding. Moreover, members of these bodies have limited access to some basic information (the tests, the grading, the audio recording of the interviews if needed, etc.) that would allow them to make considered decisions, and their secretariat is comprised of representatives of HR, which does not always guarantee the independence and impartiality of decisions. These concerns need to be addressed.

These examples give an idea about the different aspects that need to be addressed in the selection process. The staff unions suggest that a joint working group with Management be put in place in order to deal with these issues and others that might arise.