



19 September 2011

Trends - Statistical Information for the period 1 January to 30 August 2011

Overview:

The trends observed in 2010 and reported in A/66/224 by the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services (UNOMS) also continue in 2011. Through 31 August 2011, the Office had registered 1164 cases for the Secretariat as compared to the same period through 31 August 2010 when 816 cases had been registered. Based on recent statistics, UNOMS expects to receive approximately 1400 cases for 2011. This represents a 16 per cent increase as compared to 2010.

An increasing number of cases is being referred by stakeholders of formal grievance processes including from the UN Tribunals to the Mediation Service.

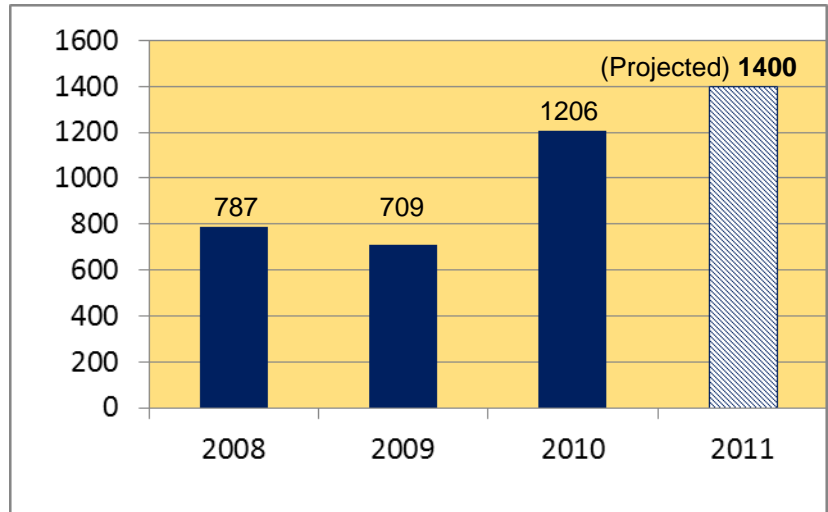
By 31 August 2011 over 6700 cases had been referred to the Ombudsman by United Nations Secretariat staff since the establishment of the Office in 2002. Based on experience, the resolution rate is at about 80 per cent.

Trend in number of cases received from UN Secretariat staff during the period 2008 - 2011

The figures in the chart refer to cases received by staff of the UN Secretariat including staff in field operations.

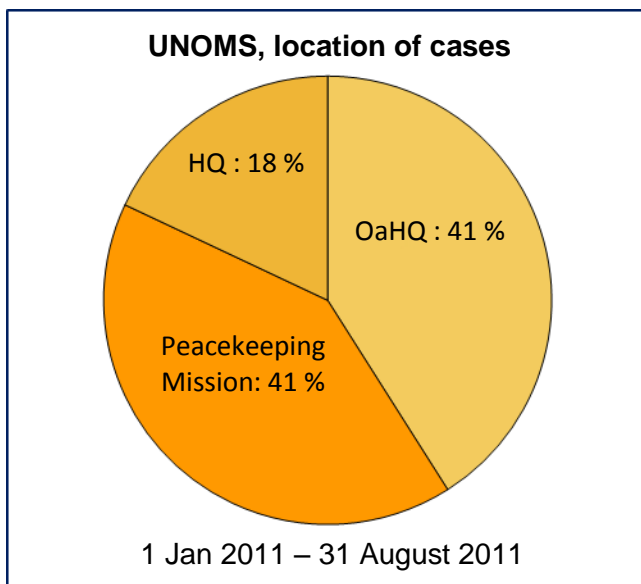
The upward trend observed in 2010 continued in the first two quarters of 2011. In 2011, the Office expects to see a 16 per cent increase as compared to 2010. Through 31 August 2011, 1164 cases have been opened by the Ombudsman.

In addition, this year 346 cases were received from staff in the Funds and Programmes and 32 from staff in UNHCR, resulting in a total of 1542 cases received by all entities covered by UNOMS by 31 August 2011.



The initial spike in the use of Ombudsman and Mediation Services during the first phase of the new administration was due to a combination of a new emphasis on informal resolution by the General Assembly and the increased accessibility through the opening of the regional branches. This was supported by continued efforts to advocate the use of alternative dispute resolution tools through a variety of communication and outreach measures. Additional momentum for informal resolution was provided by the gradual implementation of the incentives for informal resolution (Chapter V, A/65/303) which were endorsed by the General Assembly in its sixty-fifth session (A/RES/65/251).

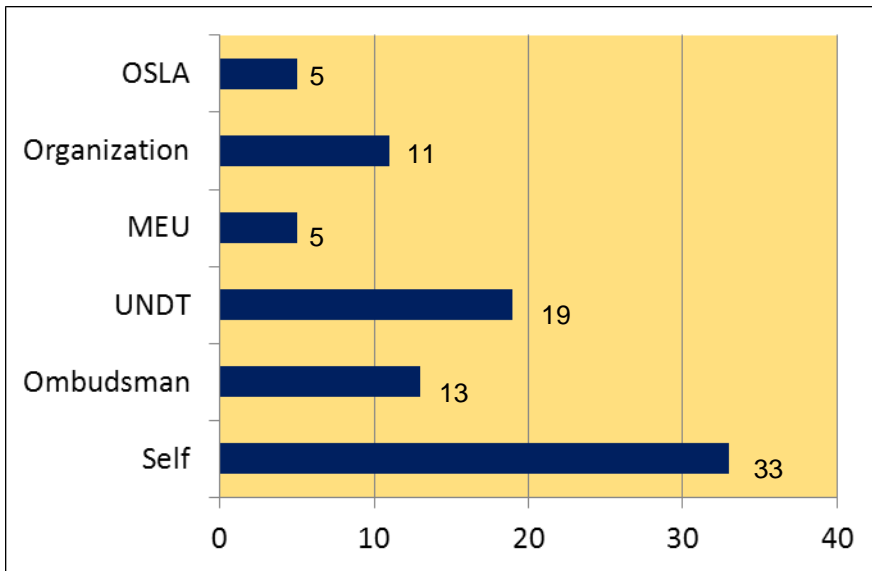
Regional Branches – an effective means of ensuring quick resolution for staff in the field



The Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services has seven regional branches (Bangkok, Geneva, Khartoum, Kinshasa, Nairobi, Santiago and Vienna).

Between 1 January and 31 August 2011, 840 cases have been received by the regional branches directly or where assigned to them. The Regional Ombudsmen receive continuous support from UNOMS staff at HQ as many cases require a decision making at Headquarters. Due to the workload of the Regional Ombudsmen and the lack of a dedicated travel resources for the regional branches, outreach to other key duty stations such as ECA, ESCWA and other regional hubs has been very limited.

Mediation Services – sources of cases 2009 to 2011



The figures in the chart show the sources of cases referred to the Mediation Services between 1 July 2009 and 31 August 2011.

Requests for mediation can come directly from a staff member, the administration or other entities within the United Nations internal system of justice (MEU, OSLA and UN Tribunals).

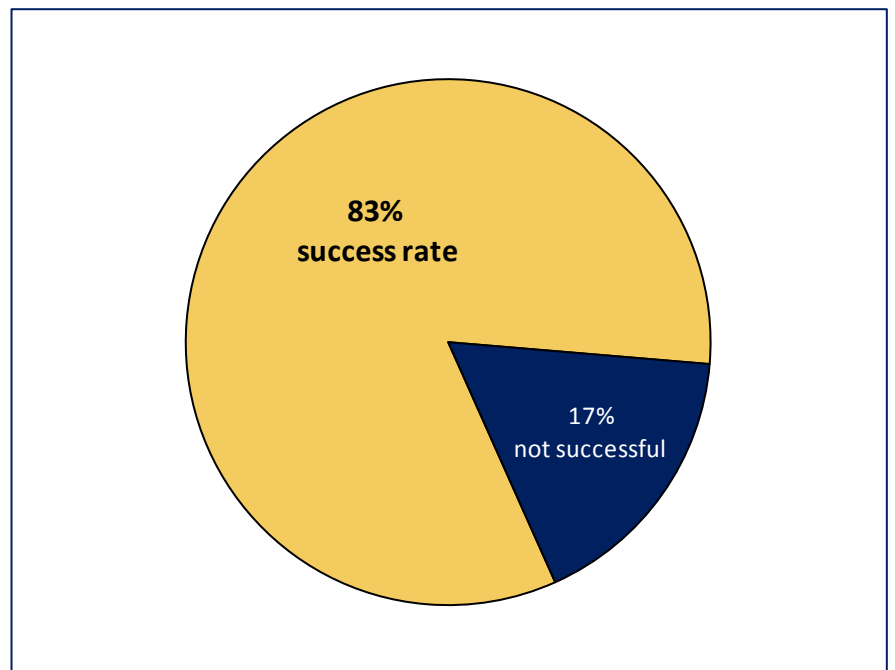
Mediation cases often involve several parties and require multiple sessions. A mediation can be concluded with a Settlement Agreement which is enforceable before the Dispute Tribunal.

Mediation Services – trends and success rate

In the period between 1 July 2009 and 31 August 2011, 86 inquiries for mediation were received. Out of the mediated cases, 83 % were successful.

19 cases were referred by Judges of the UNDT between 1 July 2009 and 31 August 2011. In instances, where cases are referred to mediation during the later stages of the formal complaints process, the Office observed a lower success (around 50 %) due to the fact that parties are more intractable and have hardened their positions.

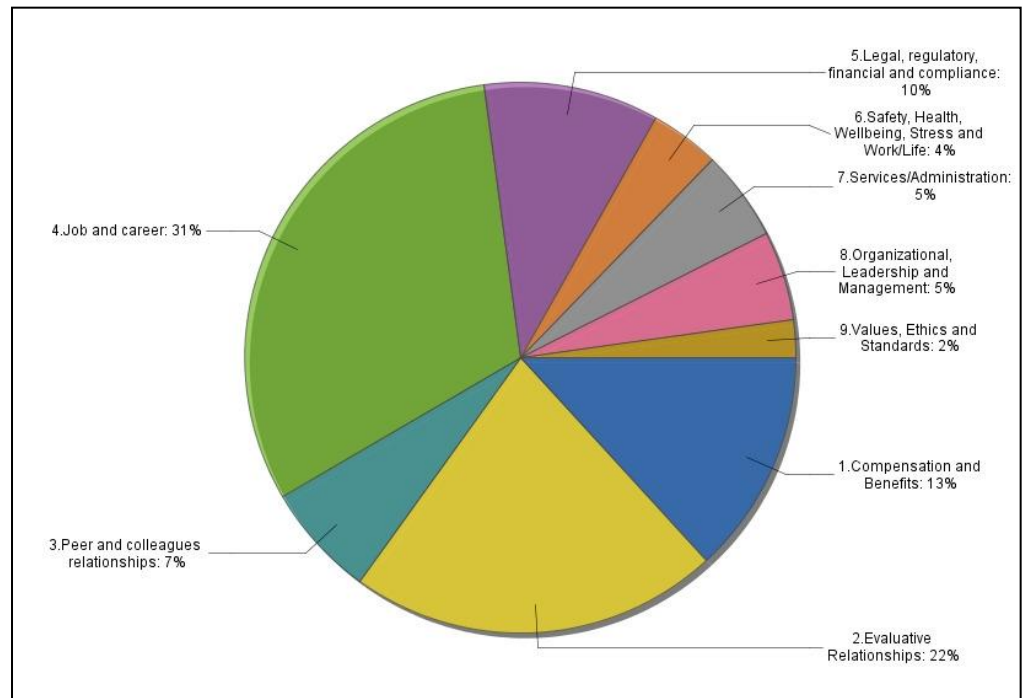
Therefore, UNOMS places great emphasis on early conflict resolution and prevention.



Breakdown of cases by issues for all entities covered by UNOMS (1 January – 31 August 2011)

The figures refer to the percentage of each case type in the total number of cases received by staff of the UN Secretariat, Funds and Programmes as well as UNHCR as of 31 August 2011.

Over the past years, interpersonal relationships have been at the core of many workplace concerns and have caused considerable disruptions in the work place impacting the productivity of the Organization. Traditionally, such issues are best addressed informally rather than through a formal complaints process.



Informal resolution – a cost-saving measure of the Organization

UNOMS helps staff members and managers address workplace conflicts in an informal and preventive manner – before escalation. This is an important element in helping the Organization become more effective to save cost in the long-term:

According to recent studies more than 40 % of a manager's time is spent addressing conflict and allowing a conflict to escalate. If a case proceeds to the UN Dispute Tribunal it can take up to 6 months to settle with additional costs for the organization.

Cost of unaddressed conflict:

1. Stress, frustration, anxiety
2. Loss of productivity
3. Strained workplace relationships
4. Grievances and litigation
5. Presenteeism/ Absenteeism
6. Sick leave / Employee turnover
7. Negative impact on performance
8. Increased client complaints
9. Sabotage
10. Injury and accidents / Disability claims
11. Legal fees

The United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services help to:

- avoid litigation and save resources for the Organization
- diminish administrative burden of dealing with conflicts
- reduce occurrence and lengths of disputes
- resolve issues upstream before resulting in formal redress
- maintain relationships between parties in dispute
- contribute to harmony in the workplace
- add to quality of work life of staff
- increase productivity and efficiency
- identify systemic issues and acts as agent of change
- create a more collaborative culture in the organization