Chief Executives Board
for Coordination

Meeting of CEB HR Network
FAO, Rome, 12 to 14 March 2008

Agenda item III.G(c)

WORK/LIFE BALANCE IN THE ORGANIZATIONS
OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

At the Summer 2007 Session of the HR Network (CEB/2007/HR/14), it was agreed that the CEB Secretariat would proceed with the services of a consultant to look at work/life balance issues in the UN system. The aim of the consultancy was to do an inventory on the joint and individual activities that are taking place across the UN system on issues concerning work/life balance.

The consultant has completed the report contained in this document. The goal of the report is to provide you with an insight into what is being undertaken system-wide and what organizations are doing individually, leading to the identification of gaps and overlaps and makes the business case for investing in work/life balance initiatives. The report will assist us in keeping track of the various programmes and best practices within the organizations and in the private sector. It also provides a valuable conceptual framework for analyzing work/life balance practices and proposes a three-level categorization of standards.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Work/life balance (WLB) is a key human resources theme across public and private sector organisations today. Many policies and programmes within the UN system are geared to facilitating and improving work/life balance and staff wellbeing (SWB). Some organisations see them as part of legislation that needs to be complied with, others use them as tools to achieve their organisational aims and objectives and to recruit and retain high quality staff. A few organisations have created special units and initiatives on work/life balance and staff wellbeing and are collating results and impact both on the organisational deliverables and on staff morale and productivity. However, uptake is not uniform and the long working hours and 24/7 approach still prevail. In addition, the lack of coordinated and harmonised action and programme development across the system results in widely varying benefit packages for staff members of UN organisations, causing discontent and sub-optimal performance. In addition, the UN faces a set of specific challenges such as the large number of staff that are soon to retire, the increasing war for talent and the fact that some 80% of staff members are expatriates, and will remain expatriates throughout their career.

In the analysis of the work/life balance and staff wellbeing programmes, the following patterns can be discerned:

(a)   Organisations with mandates that include service in emergency situations, that have a broad field presence with many duty stations and highly mobile staff (such as the UN Peace Keeping Operations, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, UNAIDS, UNOPS etc. and the World Bank) implement programmes such as rest & recuperation, staff counsellor, basic security training, pandemic preparedness, stress management and dual career & staff mobility;

(b)   Headquarters-based organisations (such as WMO, ILO, UPU, ICAO) tend to focus on flexibility of time provisions and less on generally supportive provisions and a significant number do not support telecommuting;

(c)   Large organisations have a wide variety of generally supportive programmes;

(d)   Flexi-time, maternity, paternity and family leave are provided by all.

A framework for the organisational analysis and management of work/life balance and staff wellbeing programmes is proposed that identifies the principles, strategies and tactics that underpin these programmes. The principles are laid down in the system-wide policies that have been developed by specialists and agreed by the executive heads of the organisations of the UN system. The strategies are agency-specific and are influenced by a variety of factors such as the organisation's mandate, mission and objectives, operational nature, human resource management objectives, governance structure and financial position. The tactics are the various programmes and initiatives that help achieve the goals of the strategy. They are more generic in nature and can be shared across the system or adapted to organisational need.

Given the wide variety of mandates, missions, organisational and system-wide objectives and HR strategies, it is almost impossible to provide a single standard for WLB and SWB programmes. Clearly, one size will not fit all. In an effort to harmonise and coordinate WLB and SWB programmes, a minimum, medium and 'gold' standard based on UN policies and good HR

practices could be useful. It would give organisations the opportunity to check their position against a standard and set aims and objectives for the further development of their programmes within the organisational HR strategy.

Recommendations for improved work/life balance and staff wellbeing fall into 2 categories: those that broaden the UN-specific analytical basis on which these programmes rest and those that facilitate and improve their implementation and management within the organisations of the UN system.

UN specific analytical basis:
  o   Further analyse existing WLB and SWB programmes to assess their impact on staff engagement and productivity;
  o   Develop a set of components for the UN-specific cost-benefit analysis of WLB programmes;
  o   Research and analysis of WLB programmes from the corporate world against the mandate, needs and challenges of the UN system.

Implementation and management of WLB/SWB programmes:
  o   Advocate with system-wide management and leadership for better work/life balance and wellbeing, for men and women alike;
  o   Broadly discuss and then advocate for the uptake of minimum, medium and golden standards;
  o   Include 'management on outputs' in all UN leadership and management courses and promote results-based management practices;
  o   Promote clear communications to all staff about existing WLB & SWB programmes in all organisations;
  o   Harmonise and coordinate practices across the system with the help of an inter-agency focal point;
  o   Include WLB/SWB programmes in the deliverables and measurables of the "Delivering as One" Pilot projects.

Work/life balance and staff wellbeing are key in the battle for the heart and thus important building blocks in any HR strategy. They merit the highest attention and consideration. The UN's achievements and impact are determined by the creativity, versatility, engagement and commitment of its people and it must therefore place investment in those people high on the priority list, so that they can continue to deliver for the nations of this world.

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1. Introduction

1. Work/life balance is a key human resources theme across public and private sector organisations today. The same is true for the United Nations system, where peaks of interest and investment in work/life balance (WLB) and staff well being (SWB) have emerged at regular intervals. Over time, a set of policies and joint agreements have created the management framework that has been interpreted and adapted to the specific needs and mandates of UN organisations. This has led to some highly successful programmes and initiatives, which have supported and developed the people that make the UN system what it is today. Recently, the pressure to recruit and especially retain highly qualified staff has intensified the focus on work/life balance. Almost every meeting of the Human Resource Directors of the UN system (gathered in the HR Network) has discussed one or more issues pertaining to this topic and has lead to the commissioning of this report.

2. Work/life balance and staff wellbeing are becoming increasingly important in the attraction, recruitment and especially the retention of staff and so this report aims to answer some of the questions surrounding these programmes and initiatives across the UN. It provides a framework for strategy development both at the organisational level and across the system and identifies areas where further investigation and research would be beneficial to the fine-tuning and optimising of existing programmes and initiatives. By providing insight into how staff wellbeing and work/life balance have been addressed and implemented, gaps or overlaps can be identified and good practices and lessons learned disseminated, leading to harmonisation and better coordination in alignment with the push for 'Delivering as One' set out by the High Level Panel on UN system-wide Coherence in November 2006[1].

2. Definitions, policy and context

3. The development of the field of work/life balance dates back to the 1950s and 1960s, when women started to enter the workforce in larger numbers. However, it has greatly developed since then. For ease of reference in this document, the latest definitions are set out below.

- The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), one of the leading British organisations in the development and management of people, defines work/life balance as follows:
  'a state where an individual manages real or potential conflict between different demands on his or her time and energy in a way that satisfies his or her needs for wellbeing and self-fulfilment'.

- Staff wellbeing is defined as:
  'creating an environment to promote a state of contentment which allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organisation'.

4. Other CIPD research shows that employee engagement influences a range of variables, including employee turnover and absence, and that wellbeing at work requires organisations to actively assist people to maximise their physical and mental health.

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[1] United Nations, 2006a.

5.   Work/Life balance policies fall into three categories[2]:
1. Those that allow for flexibility of time (flexi-time, part-time work, compressed work week, parental leave[3], emergency leave, home leave, special leave without pay (SLWOP) etc);
2. Those that allow for flexibility of location (telecommuting, working from a neighbourhood office); and
3. Those that are generally supportive towards a flexible and fulfilling work environment (child care, dependent care, wellbeing and fitness, dual career programmes etc).

6.   The implementation of these policies is most effective when accompanied by a supportive culture and infrastructure. Some of the infrastructure can be provided by technology, but the supportive culture is vital for effective and successful work/life balance and staff wellbeing programmes to succeed. Many of the elements of the supportive culture are more successful if they are modelled by organisational leadership and HR departments and actively promoted within an organisation.

7.   The context for the focus on work/life balance is determined, in part by the world economy and by a number of factors that revolve around the economic and work force/labour market situations. One of the main issues is the so called 'war for talent'. Though maybe not so apparent in the UN system where there is often an abundance of applicants for a post, much of the world is finding it very difficult to attract, recruit and retain highly qualified staff.

8.   At a recent AHRMIO seminar[4], Goran Hultin, former Assistant Director General at the International Labour Organisation, presented the latest developments in the drivers of labour markets as follows:
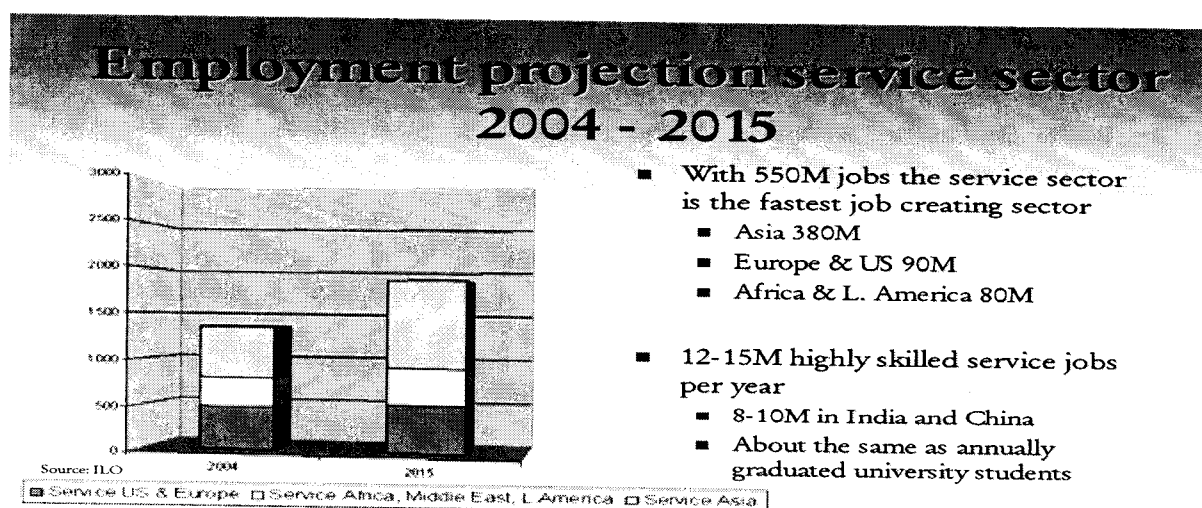
Employment, Skills and Human Capital
Geneva, 3 October 2007

9.   According to Hultin, large emerging markets such as India and China face a huge skill gap as they move into higher value services while only 13% of university graduates from those countries meet the

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[2] Clutterbuck, 2003
[3] Includes maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave and all other forms of special leave related to being a parent
[4] *Future Work Forum debate on the Worlds of Work,* Seminar by the Association for HR Management in International Organisations held in Geneva on 3 October 2007. See details on the website: www.ahrmio.org and http://www.ahrmio.org/en/News-services/Events/, accessed 30-10-2007.

expectations of global business. In order to maintain their growth and expansion, India and China are starting to tap the global talent pool and, together with Brazil, Russia and the Middle East, are starting to merge with and acquire companies in the developed world.
So clearly, the war for talent is not limited to the northern hemisphere. And the traditional flows (from developed to developing regions) of business and talent are being reversed. Hence, in Europe, 27%-40% of companies are unable find the people they need, while in Japan, that percentage rises to 61.

10.   In addition to the war for talent, there are demographic issues at play: in the US and Europe, large portions of the 'baby boomer' generation (born between 1945 and 1960) are reaching retirement age and the following generations will be too small to fill all the jobs that are being left behind. The youngest generation now entering the workforce, Generation Y (born after 1980), is globally mobile and sees technology as an enabler and a force for good. A survey[5] of more than 3000 respondents from over 59 countries on work and the work place revealed that 'Achieving a good work/life balance' and 'Wanting to be happy in whatever I do' feature in the top 4 items of the 'very important category'. With the global need for high quality people and the changing demographics, these young knowledge workers will have a wide variety of employment choices and employers in the public sector will have to work hard to attract them and keep them on board.

11.   Clearly, work/life balance and staff wellbeing are high on the list of key issues for HR management, given the war for talent, the characteristics of the next generation and the increased pressure on a work force of limited and decreasing dimensions. Though traditionally, WLB and SWB programmes were seen as just another set of employee benefits, evidence suggests that it is at least a 'two way street'; one that also holds benefits for the organisation due to increased staff engagement, commitment and productivity. The Content example above shows that work/life balance is now also being used as part of an effective new tool to attract, recruit and retain the staff that best fit within the culture and structure of a company or organisation.

3.   The business case for investing in work/life balance and staff wellbeing

12.   The business case for work/life balance has been exhaustively made, especially in the corporate world, but a small recap is useful.

13.   In the corporate world, increased balance between work and personal life through flexible working arrangements has shown results in improved financial performance and staff productivity, increased sales value and improved quality of production or service because it has generated greater staff engagement and commitment.

14.   Clutterbuck identifies a work/life balance profit chain with profit as the bottom line as follows:

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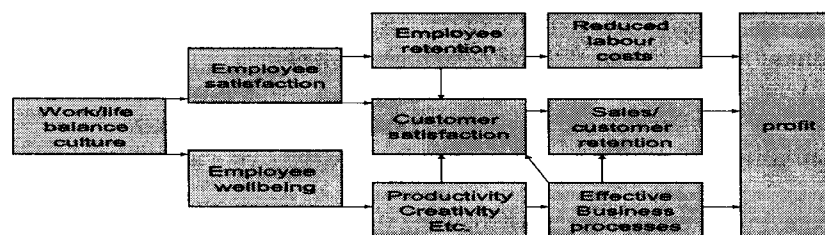
[5] Generation Europe and the FutureWork Forum, 2006

15.   The business case for the UN system does not revolve around a financial bottom line or a profit margin as it does in the corporate world. But issues such as client satisfaction, effective business processes, productivity and creativity are very important for the success and impact of the UN and can be measured. In today's world of limited aid budgets and large numbers of active and very effective players in the area of humanitarian aid, development and emergency relief, it is key that the UN remain in the fore of the best performers. So improving work life balance should not only be used to increase employee productivity, but also to manage the limited financial and human resources in the most efficient manner and be accountable to clients and donors for providing the best service possible.

4.   The situation in the UN system

Background

16.   The specific and tailored set of skills and capacities required by international civil servants was acknowledged at the founding of the United Nations and is captured in its Charter (article 101.3 - '...securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity') . A wide variety of subsequent papers further details the need for staff to be 'highly qualified, versatile and independent in order to be able to contribute to the success of the Organisation and carry out the increasingly complex mandate entrusted to it'[6].

17.   It is recognised that highly qualified and versatile staff members need to be recruited, nurtured and supported in their development in order to carry out the UN mandate and respond to its unique and specific programmatic needs. To do this, the system has developed programmes that provide staff members with opportunities to develop their skills and gain the required experience. For example, by promoting staff mobility across the UN system, supporting career development, mainstreaming gender and developing the junior programme officers, the organisations are taking advantage and managing the diversity of their workforce. To make the best possible use of all these programmes, especially in the light of organisations' increasingly complex mandates, they need to be balanced with supportive working environments and attention for staff wellbeing and work/life balance.

18.   A broad set of policies and papers shows that the UN has been aware of the need for and impact of good work/life balance for a long time. The policy on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment was adopted by the UN organisations in 1994; the Work/Family Agenda was adopted in 1995, as was the Policy on the Advancement of Women; the Reform of Human Resources Management in the UN System was agreed in 1998; and the Inter-Agency Mobility Accord was agreed in 2003. In 2000, the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) adopted a Framework for Human Resources Management[7] to enable the organisations of the UN system to manage their human resources effectively within the principles of the UN Charter, which are:

- the independence of the international civil service;
- the need for organisations to recruit staff with the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity;
- the need for recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible; and
- the need for equal participation of men and women in the work of the organisation.

19.   The abovementioned policies have been adopted by the Executive Heads of all the organisations of the UN system and thus lay out the principles from which work/life balance and staff wellbeing are addressed and managed. The UN and its Funds, Programmes and Specialised Agencies have taken these policies and

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[6] United Nations, 2006b.
[7] ICSC, 2001.

adapted them to their specific mandates and needs, thus creating a wide variety of work/life balance and staff wellbeing initiatives and programmes, in varying stages of development and implementation.

Expatriation

20.   UN Personnel statistics show that on average, 85% of UN staff members are expatriates. But in individual agencies, this percentage is sometimes closer to 95%[8]. Many of them are expatriates throughout their career, which means they have to build and re-build social- and support networks in various locations and repeatedly throughout their lives. In addition, in many cases, frequent duty travel takes staff members away from their families for long stretches of time, making the re-building or networks almost impossible. Anecdotal evidence shows that these situations lead to increased isolation and burn-out, often resulting in sleeping problems, substance abuse and even domestic violence. In cases of family break-down, families are then forced to deal with extremely emotional and challenging problems within the context of a foreign culture and foreign legislation regarding family law. Work/life balance thus takes on even greater importance as both a supportive and a preventive measure.

21.   In addition, many UN staff in high-mobility organisations have so-called dual career families, which means that there is additional pressure when accepting a new assignment to ensure that there is fulfilling employment or other activity for the accompanying spouse or partner. A UNDP staff survey of 2005 showed that 'spouse employment' is of vital importance to staff. It is important to note that, of the international assignments that fail, more than 60% are due to family issues.

War for talent

22.   As stated above, there are no widespread reports of the war for talent hitting the organisations of the UN system. There is oftentimes a very large number of applicants for publicly announced vacancies as many applicants are attracted by the organisation's humanitarian mandate and its emergency relief programmes. However, the number of applications for posts is not a representative figure for the assessment of the effect of the war for talent on the UN system, nor does it indicate the capacity to recruit high quality staff. The reality for several organisations shows a decrease in the quality of applications received and increasing difficulty in filling posts with people who have the required capacities and experience, sometimes leading to several rounds of application and selection before the right person can be appointed.

Retirement

23.   The UN personnel statistics show a large number of organisations with staff members close to retirement age, which means that they can expect a surge of retirements in the coming 5 years can be expected. The chart below shows that 40% of staff across the system is 50 – 55 years of age and older, and will be retiring in the coming 5-10 years, leaving an enormous gap in skilled and experienced staff.

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[8] UN personnel statistics 2006, CEB website: https://hr.unsystemceb.org/statistics/analysis/stats/2006 accessed 10 December 2007.

UN System: Age Distribution of Professional Staff at Headquarters and Other Established Offices
2006, Grades P1 to UG (%)

Legend:
- < 30
- 30 to 34
- 35 to 39
- 40 to 44
- 45 to 49
- 50 to 54
- 55 to 59
- 60 to 64
- >= 65
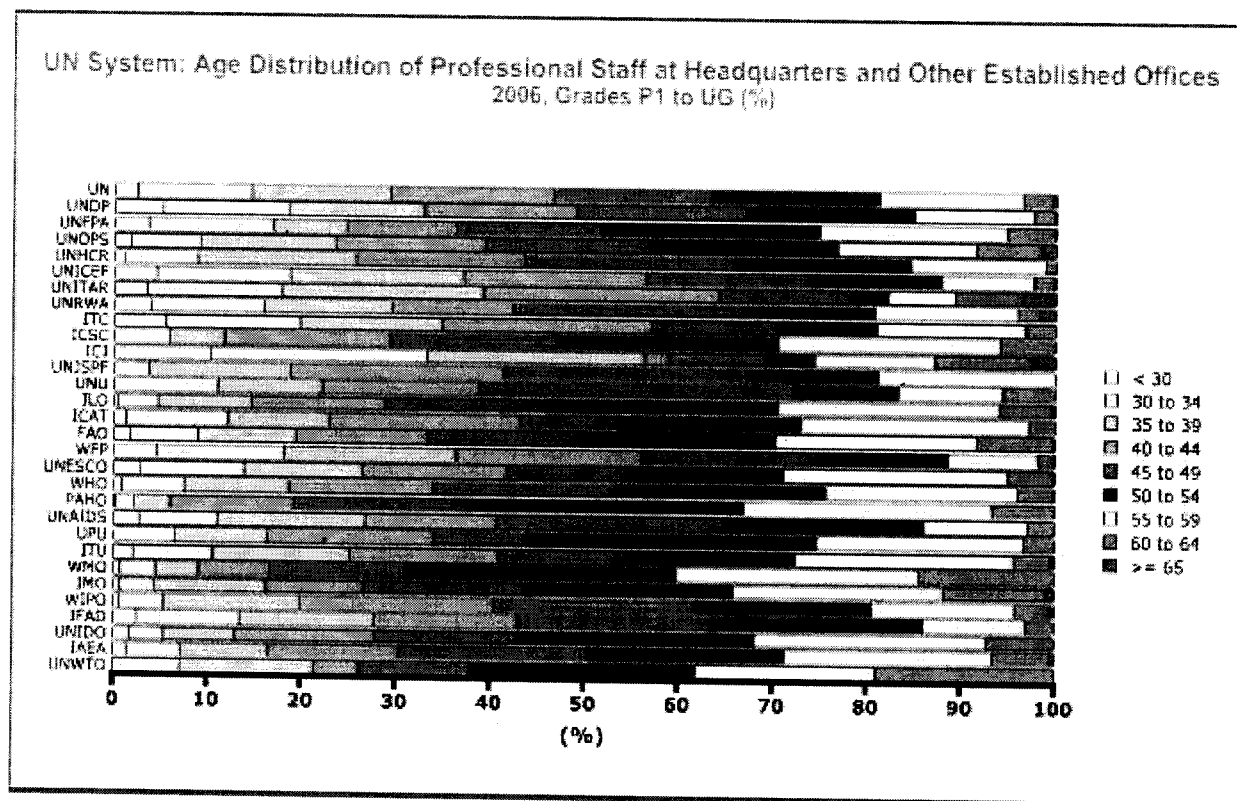
UN reform

24.   In 1997 the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, initiated the UN reform. This has led to a number of initiatives on, amongst others, results-based management, harmonization and coordination of country activities etc. In support of this work, many assessments and reports have been produced, including that of the High Level Panel on United Nations system-wide Coherence published in November 2006 (see footnote 1), which calls for coherence and consolidation of UN activities in line with the principles of country ownership, an overhaul of UN business practices and the effective delivery as 'One United Nations' at country level. This report and its subsequent change agenda have created renewed momentum and commitment to harmonization and coordination across the system, including in the field of human resource management. Existing and future WLB and SWB programmes and initiatives will be able to benefit from this change effort and prove their contribution to greater UN impact and better service delivery at country level. Harmonisation of these programmes will also help decrease disparity between staff support and benefits at the field level which sometimes leads to unnecessary competition between organisations and change-over of staff (seeking the employer with the best benefits package), resulting in the overall loss of skills and capacities.

25.   In conclusion, the UN presents a unique set of characteristics that bring specific needs and challenges to the agenda of work/life balance and staff wellbeing.

5. __Methodology and results__

A. Methodology

26.   To gain insight into the diversity of programmes and initiatives, an initial set of general information-collection questions was sent to the members of the HR Network[9] in July 2007. These questions were followed-up by interviews with informed respondents and an opportunity for respondents to validate responses.

27.   Participants were asked about:
1. The programmes and initiatives the organisation runs in the light of optimising the work/life balance for staff.
2. Those programmes that are run in conjunction with other agencies such as the UN Cares initiative, or the Spouse Employment programme.
3. Those programmes that are run individually, be they extensions of the joint programmes or completely separate.
4. The kinds of staff members that can benefit from these programmes.
5. The costing mechanisms used for those programmes.
6. The number of staff members employed to run these programmes.

28.   As answers were received the set of WLB and SWB programmes and initiatives currently implemented within the UN, was completed. Recent data collected for a paper on the status of women in the secretariats of the UN[10] added to the information gained from the questionnaire. To validate some of the responses received and better understand the work/life balance and staff wellbeing measures that are in place, in-depth interviews were conducted with UNDP, WHO, WMO, UNHCR and the World Bank. These agencies were selected to ensure a balance between large (UNHCR, WHO) and small organisations (WMO), those with a strong focus on WLB (UNDP, World Bank) and those without (WMO).

29.   All the information was collated in a set of tables, which were returned to the respondents in the various organisations to be corrected, validated and completed[11]. A full set of tables is provided in Annex 1. Finally, two interviews were conducted with representatives of staff associations to gain insight into the role staff associations play in promoting the uptake of WLB/SWB programmes by staff members.

30.   Twenty five HR Network members and the World Bank responded.   Using Clutterbuck's segmentation for the programmes and initiatives in the UN system, the following categories are identified:

A. Policies on flexibility of time are:
- flexi-time,
- compressed work week,
- part-time work,
- job sharing,
- parental leave (maternal, paternal, adoption, for breastfeeding),
- special leave (compassionate leave[12], home leave, (un)certified sick leave, and leave with or without pay)

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[9] The Human Resources Network gathers the directors of HR departments of the UN system. It currently comprises: FAO, IAEA, ICAO, IFAD, ILO, IMF, IMO, ITC, ITU, PAHO, UN, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNOPS, UNRWA, UNWTO, UPU, WFP, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO. The World Bank was also surveyed, especially because it is strong on work/life balance programmes.
[10] Peters, M.J., 2007.
[11] It is important to clarify that not all agencies validated their entries in the tables
[12] leave related to a death in the family

- compensation for overtime (either in money or in time off).
B. Policies on flexibility of location are:
  - telecommuting
C. Policies that support work/life balance in general are:
  - rest & recuperation,
  - basic security training,
  - pandemic preparedness,
  - staff support (ombudsperson, counsellor, staff outreach, stress management, workplace- and sexual harassment prevention initiatives, workplace initiatives[13]),
  - career development[14],
  - support for moving to a new duty station[15],
  - family events, on- or off-site childcare facilities,
  - allowance for single mothers or breastfeeding mothers travelling with their child,
  - health campaigns[16],
  - on- or off-site gyms,
  - UN Cares and/or HIV in the Workplace programmes.

B. Results

31.   Responses indicate that flexible working arrangements are most unanimously adopted across the system. The vast majority of agencies have a flexi-time system (96%) and all allow for part-time work. In addition, several agencies support job sharing (42%) and allow for a compressed work week (42%) (compressing 10 days of work into 9.5 or 9 days). All agencies provide maternity leave (100%), Paternity leave (100%) and adoption leave (92%). Some also allow parental leave (27%) to take care of disabled or severely sick children. Often this is categorised as family leave (paid or unpaid), uncertified sick leave, or special leave without pay. Finally, almost all organisations provide compassionate leave (77%), compensate overtime (92%)(either in money or in time off, though oftentimes not to professional staff) and allow one or two hours per day for breastfeeding mothers (81%) for which they sometimes set up a special breastfeeding room. In a few instances, breastfeeding or single mothers travelling with child receive an extra allowance (42%). Many organisations give home leave (85%), which is an important component of maintaining work/life balance.

32.   Flexibility of location mainly translates to telecommuting (working from home, or from neighbourhood office) and is supported by 13 organisations (50%). Given the fact that large groups of UN staff undertake duty travel, most organisations have the technological capacity to allow telecommuting. So the low percentage could be explained by the fact that telecommuting might not be seen as a specific programme.

33.   Policies that are generally supportive for a better work/life balance are less ubiquitous within the system. Rest & recuperation programmes, pandemic preparedness and basic security training are included as WLB programmes because they decrease stress in situations of unexpected emergency or catastrophe. In many organisations these are mandatory programmes. Together with staff counselling and/or staff outreach support and stress management, they make up the bulk of the WLB/SWB programmes. The ombudsperson is included here because their services often help alleviate difficult and stressful situations at work.

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[13] To decrease stress in the workplace, for example through initiatives to prevent repetitive strain injuries (RSI), provide ergonomically correct chairs and desks, organise office outings and joint activities, identify the most stressful aspects of working in a given office and find acceptable solutions etc.

[14] Career support workshops, career development resource materials, Career Development Roundtables

[15] Dual Career & Staff Mobility programme, support for spouses/partners/family members in obtaining work permits, Welcome packs

[16] For example on healthy nutrition, smoking cessation, alcohol use/abuse, keeping fit etc.

34.   Programmes that are generally supportive for work/life balance and staff wellbeing score as follows:
   o   Gym or other sports facility on- or off-site: 92%
   o   Basic security training: 88%
   o   UN Cares and/or HIV in the workplace: 85%
   o   Staff counsellor or staff outreach support (SOS): 81%
   o   Career development options and support: 81%
   o   Work place and sexual harassment: 77%
   o   Dual Career & Staff Mobility programme and/or support in obtaining local work permits for family members: 73%.
   o   Stress management courses: 69%
   o   Health campaigns: 69%
   o   Pandemic preparedness: 65%
   o   Rest & recuperation: 62%
   o   Policies and procedures on workplace- and sexual harassment: 62%
   o   Ombudsperson or mediator: 62%
   o   Workplace initiatives on work/life balance and/or staff wellbeing: 58%
   o   Family events: 54%
   o   Allowance for single mothers or breastfeeding mothers travelling with their child: 38%
   o   Child care facilities, on- or off-site: 38%

35.   Staff surveys are carried out by 65% of organisations, but some are limited in scope and few are conducted such that long-term trends and developments can be identified.

36.   Information about the number of staff members working specifically on WLB and SWB programmes in the UN organisations generated a mixed response. Most organisations run these programmes through the HR department and/or medical services, adding the tasks to those of existing staff members. Others, such as UNHCR, UNDP and WFP, have specific units within the HR department. In addition, some of the UN programmes such as UNICEF, UNOPS, UNDP and UNFPA, share services such as the ombudsperson.

37.   Data on the costs of running these programmes is currently not available. When asked, most agencies stated that these activities are covered by the regular human resources or medical services budgets. UNDP is the only organisation that runs a specific SWB unit and has a project budget for its activities. This gives a good start to costing some WLB/SWB programmes, but not enough basics for a sound cost-benefit analysis across the UN system.

38.   Finally, it is important to note that the abovementioned percentages are based on the results that organisations have validated. A few organisations did not respond to the validation request and their data have thus been entered based on their answers to the questionnaire. Some of the organisations on the right hand side of the graph were contacted by phone to complete their data so as to give as true a picture as possible of WLB and SWB across the system.

6.   Analysis and discussion

39.   In general, the majority of UN organisations have taken up the system-wide policies that contribute to work/life balance and staff wellbeing, especially those that are statutorily mandatory, such as flexible working arrangements, basic security training, rest & recuperation and workplace or sexual harassment.

40.   The graph below will help discern some generic trends and patterns in work/life balance and staff wellbeing provisions across the system.

	UNDP	UN	UNFPA	WHO	UNESCO	UNICEF	WTO	IAEA	UNHCR	PAHO	UNAIDS	ITU	WIPO	ILO	UNOPS	FAO	ITC	WBank	UNWTO	UNRWA	UNIDO	WFP	IFAD	WMO	UPU	ICAO
Flexitime	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Job sharing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X				X		X				X			
Part time	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Compressed workweek	X	X	X			X	X	X		X		X	X			X	X					X				
Family leave – paid	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Family leave – unpaid	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Maternity leave	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Paternity leave	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Adoption leave	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	
Parental leave				X	X		X	X				X									X					
Home leave	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X				X	X	X
Compassionate leave			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X
Overtime paid/ compensated	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Time off to breastfeed	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X			
Allowance to travel with child	X		X	X		X			X	X						X	X			X		X				
Telecommuting	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X							X	X	X				X	X			
Staff counsellor or SOS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	
Ombudsperson	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X								
Stress mgt course	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X				
Basic security training	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X	X			X	X	
Rest & recuperation	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X			
Pandemic preparedness	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X					
Career development options	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X
Workplace & sexual harassment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X				X			
Workplace WLB initiatives	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		X		X	X			X		X	X		X		X		
UN Cares/HIV in workplace	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X		X
Gym on- or off-site	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	
Health campaigns	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X		X			X	X		X		X	X		
Dual career & staff mobility	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		X			X	X		X	X		X	X	X		
Support for work permits	X	X		X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X						X	X		X	X		X	X
Family event	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X											X	X	
Child care facilities	X	X	X		X		X	X						X							X				X	
Staff surveys	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X			X	X			X	X	X			X	X	X	
Number of staff on WLB	2	0	3	3	2	6	3	1.5	5.5	3	1	3	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	6	3	0	0	1	0

41. The following patterns can be discerned:

    A. Organisations with mandates that include service in emergency situations, that have a broad field presence with many duty stations and highly mobile staff (such as the UN Peace Keeping Operations, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, UNAIDS, UNOPS etc. and the World Bank) implement programmes such as rest & recuperation, staff counsellor, basic security training, pandemic preparedness, stress management and dual career & staff mobility;

    B. Headquarters-based organisations (such as WMO, ILO, UPU, ICAO) tend to focus on flexibility of time provisions and less on generally supportive provisions and a significant number do not support telecommuting;

    C. Large organisations have a wide variety of generally supportive programmes;

    D. Flexi-time, maternity, paternity and family leave are provided by all.

42. It is encouraging to see that many agencies have put in place supportive programmes such as gym facilities, career development support, health campaigns, special workplace initiatives to increase work/life balance, and family events. However, there is only a small percentage of child-care facilities that are made available to staff, while this is often identified as one of the most effective means of facilitating work/life balance.

43. Some preliminary conclusions can be drawn from these patterns, although more detailed information and follow-up is needed to validate them.

    (a) Organisational mandate, goals and activities dictate the kinds of WLB programmes organisations invest in. An organisation that does not work in emergency relief or have staff in hardship duty stations will not invest in rest & recuperation measures, nor in dual career & staff mobility programmes.

    (b) System wide policies determine the mandatory nature of some programmes and some of the organisations have limited themselves to these mandatory policies.

    (c) Often, organisations overlook measures that would support WLB at low cost. A good example is telecommuting: allowing staff to work from home and thus avoid long commutes in heavy traffic and distractions at the office. Due to the decreasing cost of computer technology and connectivity, telecommuting could reap great rewards for organisations with small HR budgets, but it seems to be largely overlooked as a low-cost, high yield investment.

    (d) Smaller organisations tend to have fewer WLB/SWB programmes, which might relate to smaller overall budgets.

44. Currently available information fails to show the extent of proactive investment into the implementation of WLB/SWB policies and their direct impact on staff wellbeing and work/life balance. Further research is required, especially in the form of detailed discussions and interviews, to identify what is best suited and most effective in the various UN organisations.

45. Though the lack of sound financial and costing data precludes a cost-benefit analysis of WLB and SWB programmes, there are other ways of measuring the results and impact of such programmes. In the private sector, companies measure the success of their WLB programmes on three levels: customers, the individual staff member and the company as a whole. Measurements range from customer satisfaction, staff engagement and commitment, staff turnover, speed and efficiency of service delivery and overall production levels (to name a few). Although these may not all translate directly to the UN system and not all increases in these indicators can be directly

accredited unilaterally to SWB and WLB programmes only, regular surveying of a set of performance and result-oriented indicators could provide good insight into which kinds of programmes and initiatives improve the delivery of services and thus the impact of the UN organisations.

46.   Implementing WLB and SWB programmes requires a strong communication strategy so that all staff members are aware of the possibilities and feel free to use them. This should be supported by statements and examples from leaders of the organisation and visualised by good role models and champions. In addition, proactive measures are needed to deal with the stigmatisation of the uptake of WLB measures as career limiting and the conclusion that they are therefore only for general service staff. Though the questionnaire did not ask about this specifically, it emerged from some of the in-depth interviews that these supportive measures and proactive changes of culture are not common. The representatives of staff associations were interested in the potential role they could play in this area, but reported that, to date, nothing had been undertaken in that direction.

7.   Framework

47.   All the information above can be synthesised and depicted in a framework that helps HR departments develop WLB & SWB programmes. The framework that is proposed builds on three concepts: principles, strategies and tactics.

- The principles are laid down in the system-wide policies that have been developed by specialists and agreed by the executive heads of the organisations of the UN system.
- The strategies are agency-specific and are influenced by a variety of factors such as the organisation's mandate, mission and objectives, operational nature, human resource management objectives, governance structure and financial position.
- The tactics are the various programmes and initiatives that help achieve the goals of the strategy. They are more generic in nature and can be shared across the system or adapted to organisational need.

48.   An image of the framework is found below:
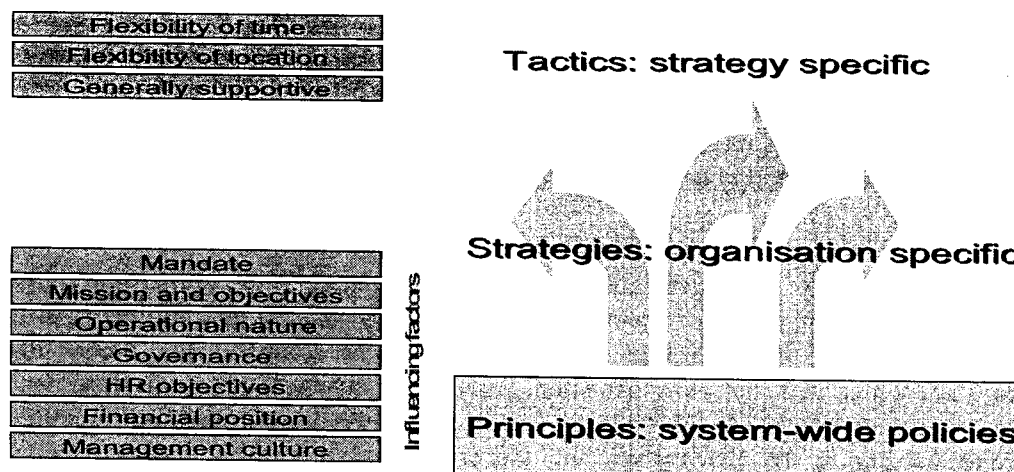
49.   Principles form the base of the framework as they underpin human resource management within the UN. They include the need to acquire highly qualified staff in order to accomplish mission objectives, the need for mobility to promote shared principles and values, create versatility and stimulate interagency collaboration in achieving UN service delivery. This is supported by career and performance management, staff development and training, good governance and leadership and the administration of justice. All of these principles are laid out clearly in the *Framework for Human Resources Management*, developed and adopted by the ICSC in 2000[17].
Further detailed principles have been developed in specific policies such as the Work/Family Agenda, the Interagency Mobility Accord, the policy on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment, the policy on HIV in the Workplace and others.

50.   From this base of principles, organisations develop their human resource strategies, which are influenced by a set of specific factors:

- o   The organisational mandate determines the area of work an organisation is in charge of, e.g. health, labour, peacekeeping, meteorology, trade etc.;
- o   The organisation's mission and objectives identify how the mandate is to be carried out. This can include missions to the field, technical support, development of standards and guidelines, negotiations, emergency relief;
- o   The operational nature of the organisation determines how the mission and objectives are to be carried out. Some organisations focus on headquarters and desk activities, others need strong field presence with staff in difficult and sometimes dangerous situations and in hardship duty stations;
- o   Governance structures vary per organisation, some are UN programmes or funds and others are specialised agencies. Decision-making processes are determined by the governance structures and thus so are the management strategies, policies, objectives and results of the organisations;
- o   The HR objectives of an organisation should reflect its mission and objectives as well as its operational nature. Organisations which have many duty stations and manage a wide variety of local support tasks will have different HR objectives from those that are mainly involved in, for example trade or labour negotiations;
- o   The financial position of organisations often impinges on their (perceived) ability to provide WLB/SWB programmes;
- o   The management culture of an organisation also determines on how it can effectively bring SWB and WLB programmes to fruition. For example, if directors, heads of departments and heads of field offices are not yet geared to managing staff based on outputs and results rather than on 'desk presence', then creating and implementing a successful WLB programme can be quite a challenge.

51.   The list of programmes that support work/life balance and staff wellbeing across the UN system, divided into flexibility of time, flexibility of location and general support categories, completes the framework by constituting the tools that are used to carry out the strategy.

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[17] ICSC, 2001.

52.   If this were to be translated into an example, one could consider the following:

The mandate of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) is to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its mission and objectives are to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees and to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or resettle in a third country[18]. Its operational nature is field-oriented, with a large number of staff in hardship duty stations and an organisational workload that is dependent on the geo-political situation of the world with unforeseeable number of new crises annually. One of the main HR objectives is to have a highly mobile and versatile staff, and so UNHCR maintains a strong mandatory rotation and mobility policy. Though the organisation's financial position is not glorious it has the means to keep up its work and the required human resources. And so the organisation has in place a wealth of tools (tactics) to achieve its HR objectives and ensure the health, wellbeing and productivity of its staff both in the field and at headquarters. For staff in hardship and non-family duty stations it provides for rest & recuperation and other forms of special leave, basic security training, pandemic preparedness programmes, etc. Putting in place flexible working arrangements for staff in emergency situations is hardly useful as they will be working more than 8 hours a day anyway; but for staff at headquarters and stable duty stations, this is a very productive WLB measure. On the other hand, rest & recuperation programmes are very effective for staff in hardship duty stations.

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[18] UNHCR website, 'basic facts', accessed 7-11-2007.

WLB/SWB PROGRAMMES AT UNHCR			
Programme	**Headquarters**	**Stable duty station**	**Hardship duty station**
Flexibility of time			
Flexible working arrangements	√	√	
Part time	√	√	
Job sharing			
Compressed work week	√	√	
Parental leave (maternity, paternity, adoption)	√	√	√
Family leave (paid or unpaid)	√	√	√
Leave without pay	√	√	√
Compassionate leave (or unpaid sick leave)	√	√	√
Home leave	√ P staff only	√	√
Overtime compensated	√ GS staff only		
Time off to breastfeed	√	√	
Flexibility of location			
Telecommuting	√	√	√
Generally supportive for WLB			
Rest & recuperation			√
Basic security training	√	√	√
Pandemic preparedness	√	√	√
Staff counsellor or SOS	√	√	√
Ombudsperson or mediator*	√	√	√
Stress management training	√	√	√
HIV in the Workplace	√	√	√
Workplace and sexual harassment	√	√	√
Dual Career & Staff Mobility, or support in obtaining work permits	√	√	
Health campaigns			
Career development	√	√	√
Child care facilities			
Sports facilities	√		
Specific to UNHCR			
Special Constraints Panel*	√ P staff only	√	√

* based at headquarters, accessible to all staff

53.   In the case of an organisation without field presence, the flexibility of time provisions are similar, though often without job-sharing or compressed workweek. The generally supportive programmes focus on staff counselling, career development and gym or sports facilities rather than on rest & recuperation and stress management.

54.   Similar exercises could be undertaken for all UN organisations and each one would show a different image, with tactics geared to specific HR strategies that underpin the organisational mandate, mission and objectives.

8. The golden standard

55.   Given the wide variety of mandates, missions, organisational and system-wide objectives and HR strategies, it is almost impossible to provide a single standard for WLB and SWB programmes. Clearly, one size will not fit all. However, harmonisation and coordination of efforts is essential to ensure equity for staff in duty stations around the world, to promote interagency mobility and 'delivering as one' and also to learn and share the best practices that are tailored to the specific needs and situation of the UN.

56.   In an effort to harmonise and coordinate WLB and SWB programmes, a minimum, medium and 'gold' standard based on UN policies and good HR practices could be useful. It would give organisations the opportunity to check their position against a standard and set aims and objectives for the further development of their programmes within the organisational HR strategy. It is important for these standards to be discussed in greater detail by HR departments across the system to ensure the greatest possible harmonisation and coordination as well as to develop a data collection and evaluation mechanism to measure effectiveness. A proposed set of standards is given below as a starting point.

57.   The *minimum standard* would include the following:
— Flexi-time
— Parental leave (see footnote 7)
— Home leave
— Compassionate leave
— Compensation of overtime for GS staff
— Basic security training
— A form of special leave (with or without pay) for family emergencies
— Ombudsperson or mediator
— Stress management training
— Mandatory time off after duty travel, as per staff rules
— Career development programme
— A programme on HIV in the workplace
— A programme on workplace- and sexual harassment

58.   The *medium standard* would contain the above with some additional programmes:
— Part-time work
— Time to breastfeed
— Telecommuting
— Rest & Recuperation
— Pandemic preparedness
— Staff counsellor or staff outreach support programme
— Dual Career & Staff Mobility programme
— Health campaigns
— Sports facilities
— Child care facilities

59.   The *golden standard* would additionally include:
— Job sharing
— Compressed work week
— Compensation of overtime for all staff (including P staff)
— Child care facilities or a child care allowance in all duty stations
— Specific WLB activities in all duty stations

60.   Though this categorisation is, to some extent, arbitrary, it is based on the fact that the minimum standard represents what organisations are legally or statutorily obliged to provide, the medium standard includes policies used by organisations with field presence, emergency relief mandates and highly mobile staff and the gold standard adds policies that are not mandatory, but very effective to increase work/life balance and wellbeing.

61.   Based on the HR strategy mentioned above, organisations would be able to identify the standard that best fits the synergy of their influencing factors. The fact that several organisations will adopt the same standard is a building block towards greater harmonisation and coordination. It will allow organisations to benchmark against sister organisations, compare results, share best practices and make an informed decision about whether and when to move to the next level.

9.   Work Life Balance often lives in small measures

62.   Work/Life balance programmes are not always enormous, costly undertakings. Some interesting examples show that great advances can be made without big cost implications. For example, UNDP regularly contacts its offices and asks what could support the work/life balance. Some suggest child menus on the days that children are off school so that they can join their parent for lunch. Others prefer a regular office outing or sports activity. Another office asked that some of the authorisation procedures be lightened so that three signatures would suffice, rather than ten, thus decreasing workload and improving the speed of office administration. Coordination of headquarters' requests to country offices is also often mentioned in this regard. And finally, office orientation packs for newcomers have proven extremely useful and time-efficient.

63.   Raising awareness about the importance of ergonomically correct work spaces contributes significantly to wellbeing. Small things like the placement of computer screens in relation to light sources, the working position behind a computer, the need to regularly alternate sedentary activities with ambulatory ones etc, are vital and can easily be highlighted via organisational intranets and internal bulletins. UNHCR has recently established 'Standards for Living and Working Conditions in the Field', which outlines the minimum basic requirements of office space and working environment, accommodation and living environment, residential security, water, food and hygiene, and recreational facilities. They come accompanied with an implementation guide and financial and administrative guidelines, which clearly stipulate the responsibilities and accountability of managers.

64.   Staff working in a variety of situations, both in field offices and at headquarters can be greatly helped with negotiation courses and clear guidelines and standards for dealing with the ethical and other aspects of corruption and bribes. Being able to fall back on overall organisational policy makes interactions with interested parties and stakeholders easier to deal with and reduces worry and anxiety about follow-up activities and next encounters.

65.   In some situations even small time management tips, such as dealing with emails at specific moments in the working day (not first thing in the morning) can be useful. Office policies that support the work/family agenda could include the rule that no office meetings should be scheduled to start after 5pm. Ultimately, time management courses and overall office policies on working practices can bring a level of work/life balance that is understood and supported by all involved.

66.   Clearly, role-modelling, supportive leadership and an enabling environment go a long way towards making WLB interventions successful. Changes in culture and attitude are free of charge and can improve the uptake of the existing measures and increase their impact, both on staff members and the organisation as a whole. Managing on outputs, for example, creates a new working dynamic that moves away from the amount of hours spent behind the desk and gives employees tangible responsibilities and accountability. It gives greater autonomy and accountability which is usually rewarded with greater staff engagement, contrary to what is often expected.

10.   Opportunities and challenges

67.   This is a time of great opportunity for work/life balance and staff wellbeing within the UN and it is clearly not without reason that the HR Network requested some analytical work be done in this area. To name a few opportunities: the majority of the policies are in place, global developments in the area of work and personal life are fuelling a re-think of the current working practices, there are great lessons and success stories to be learned from the corporate sector and the incoming generation of workers is ready to function within a new work/personal life dynamic. In addition, the UN reform calls for harmonisation and coordination across the board and is allocating a significant amount of resources to this effort.

68.   But the challenges are also manifold. Organisations are facing zero-growth budgets for yet another year, a variety of core administrative functions are being off-shored, the number of peace-keeping and emergency relief missions is increasing and the UN is competing for limited financial resources with an ever-growing pool of consultants, development agencies, NGOs and consulting firms. The war for talent is raging on and will increasingly affect the UN organisations. Successes from the corporate world do not apply generically to the UN context and need to be carefully analysed and translated to the mandate, needs and constraints of the system. The current leadership and management styles across the UN are being challenged by new developments in HR such as (output-oriented) management and the core role that technology is acquiring in the work place. Though the momentum created by the UN reform agenda is invigorating it will be lengthy process that could risk losing its appeal to the UN and its donors, recipient countries and partners.

69.   Overall, with regard to the important role that work/life balance is obtaining in the world of work, the UN organisations are not in a bad place. It is time to focus on the implementation of the programmes and on ensuring that the smaller organisations find ways to use the best lessons and good practices from their sister organisations to step up their approach to work/life balance. It is also time to become proactive about work/life balance by ensuring that all staff are familiar with the available programmes, that leadership sets a good example and identifies a few champions to bring about the change of culture that is needed to make work/life balance a reality for everyone. Staff associations can play a strong role in this and need to be actively brought on board to support the organisation-wide effort. Exit interviews and staff surveys should be used consistently and comparatively across the system to generate better information on issues such as premature separation, presenteeism and absenteeism, as well as on the impact current policies have on staff

members' working life. This would guide and fine-tune the implementation of WLB programmes as well as feed into a much needed cost-benefit analysis. The information generated would then help strengthen wider goals such as staff development, interagency mobility, results-based management, harmonisation and coordination.

11. <u>Recommendations</u>

70.   Recommendations for improved work/life balance and staff wellbeing fall into 2 categories: those that broaden the UN-specific analytical basis on which these programmes rest and those that facilitate and improve their implementation and management within the organisations of the UN system.

<u>UN specific analytical basis</u>:

o   *Further analyse existing WLB and SWB programmes to assess their impact on staff engagement and productivity.*

Analysing existing programmes will generate a better insight into whether and how they increase staff engagement and productivity. The insights can then be compared across the system and the most successful components of WLB practices identified. This will help tailor-make existing and new WLB programmes to the needs of the UN and to the varying needs of the organisations within it.

o   *Develop a set of components for the UN-specific cost-benefit analysis of WLB programmes.*

Collecting better HR data across the system is important and including data on turn over rates, length of stay with organisations, absenteeism, cost of WLB programmes, number of staff members working on WLB programmes, uptake of WLB programmes, quality of service delivery at country level etc. is vital for the effective implementation of these programmes as well as for the development of a cost benefit analysis. A small working group should be instigated to discuss, develop and test data and indicators for this purpose.

o   *Research and analysis of WLB programmes from the corporate world against the mandate, needs and challenges of the UN system.*

The cost-benefit analysis and the assessment of the impact of current programmes will provide a set of criteria and success factors to facilitate the further adaptation of WLB programmes from the corporate sector to the UN environment. This will allow organisations to link into the latest developments and adapt them to their advantage, whilst building a UN-specific body of knowledge at the same time. New recruitment approaches such as the one based on the mentality model, can also be adapted to fit the UN system.

It is important to note that staff surveys and exit interviews are key tools for these analytical activities, but they are not yet used consistently and coherently enough across the system. Making better use of these tools would provide invaluable insight into challenges and opportunities at relatively low cost.

Implementation and management of WLB/SWB programmes:

o   *Advocate with system-wide management and leadership for better work/life balance and wellbeing, for men and women alike.*

A strong advocacy campaign conducted by HR and staff wellbeing or medical departments, based on facts, cost-benefits and success stories will help leaders understand that work/life balance and staff wellbeing are to be taken seriously, because they have a profound effect on the quality of staff and the quality of service delivery. Also, leadership plays a vital role in bringing these issues out of the domain of women and supporting the culture change that will stop the uptake of WLB provisions being regarded and experienced as career-limiting.

o   *Widely discuss and then advocate for the uptake of minimum, medium and golden standards.*
By standardising programmes across the system, coordination, harmonisation and development of good practices is facilitated. It also provides organisations with a sound basis for deciding to move to the next level. However, discussion within the HR Network is needed to agree these standards and their role as guidance and development tools.

o   *Include 'management on outputs' in all UN leadership and management courses and promote results-based management practices.*

In order to effectively manage departments where work/life balance is honoured, managers need skills to manage on outputs and not 'hours behind the desk'. A significant amount of work will be done outside the sight range of managers, which creates new dynamics with regards to departmental results and staff performance management. Without supporting the people who are responsible for departmental outputs, efforts to improve work/life balance will flounder and momentum lost.

o   *Promote clear communications to all staff about existing WLB & SWB programmes in all organisations.*

As identified above, the policies and programmes for WLB and SWB are generally available across the system. However, their successful implementation depends heavily on WLB and SWB becoming part of a true dialogue. It is therefore vital to strengthen the 'push factor' (HR department to staff) by providing a constant stream of information about WLB/SWB to all staff and actively promoting the uptake of provisions by using organisational champions and addressing the stigmatisation of WLB programmes. At the same time, a 'pull factor' (staff to (HR) management) is needed. This can be created by groups of staff members or staff associations through dialogue and focused promotional campaigns.

o   *Harmonise and coordinate practices across the system with the help of an inter-agency focal point.*

To be most efficient with the limited resources that are available for work/life balance and staff wellbeing, an interagency focal point would be extremely useful to strengthen the analytical basis described above, and to support the management and implementation by organisations. Exchange of best practices and approaches, adaptation of corporate programmes to the needs of the UN, adaptation of programmes that are successful in large organisations to the needs and (financial) capacities of the smaller organisations and the development of advocacy materials and strategies is just an initial set of activities that could be undertaken.

o   *Include WLB/SWB programmes in the deliverables and measurables of the Joint Office Pilot projects.*

The most direct implementation of coherence and coordination is currently being undertaken in the Joint Office Pilot projects. Ensuring that WLB and SWB programmes are included in the deliverables of these projects and that the outcomes and outputs are measured will go a long way towards strengthening these programmes for all UN organisations. It is important to take full advantage of this unique opportunity.

12.   Conclusion

71.   Many policies and programmes within the UN system are geared to facilitating and improving work/life balance and staff wellbeing. Some organisations see them as part of legislation that needs to be complied with, others use them as tools to achieve their organisational aims and objectives. A few organisations have created special units and initiatives on work/life balance and staff wellbeing and are collating results and impact both on the organisational deliverables and on staff morale and productivity. However, uptake is not uniform and the long working hours and 24/7 approach still prevail. In addition, the lack of coordinated and harmonised action and programme development across the system results in widely varying benefit packages for staff members of UN organisations, causing discontent and sub-optimal performance.

72.   UN reform is creating the momentum and the framework to address system-wide work/life balance and wellbeing and is fuelled by global developments in the fields of technology, working practices and the young generations of workers. However, specific attention to these topics within organisations is vital to further develop WLB and SWB programmes and ensure that they bring the best possible results to organisations, staff and clients of UN programmes and services. Inter- and intra organisational dialogue is needed to help organisations find and sustain the best way to invest in their most important resource: people.

73.   Further research and analysis is needed in some areas, but in the mean time, successful implementation and management can be led by examples of successes and failures from organizations that are actively developing and implementing their WLB and SWB programmes. Smaller organisations can be especially helped by accessing information and good practices from sister agencies. An inter-agency focal point could be extremely useful for disseminating and translating the good practices to the wider community of UN organisations.

74.   Though the urgency of the war for talent does not seem to be recognised within the UN, it is a reality that the organisation will soon need to engage in the 'battle for the heart' of current and future employees. Therefore it is imperative that HR departments and managers get the chance to play their pivotal role within the development of organisational and system-wide strategies and objectives so that a move to proactive recruitment will ensure sufficient skills and capacities to continue to carry out the important UN mandate in the future. Work/life balance and staff wellbeing are key in the battle for the heart and thus important building blocks in any HR strategy. They merit the highest attention and consideration. The UN's achievements and impact are determined by the creativity, versatility, engagement and commitment of its people and it must therefore place investment in those people high on the priority list, so that they can continue to deliver for the nations of this world.

ANNEX 1

Work/Life Balance and Staff Wellbeing Programmes and Initiatives across the UN System

POLICIES THAT ALLOW FOR FLEXIBILITY OF TIME AND LOCATION					
UN Common System Organization	Flexi-time	Job sharing	Part time work	Compressed w/week	Telecommuting
UN	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
UNDP	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
UNICEF	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
UNHCR	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
UNFPA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
UNRWA	Being explored		Yes		
UNAIDS	Yes	Yes	Yes		
ITC	Yes	No formal policy, but may result from staff going part-time.	Yes (50 or 80%)	Yes	Yes
ILO	Yes		Yes (50 or 80%)		
WFP	Yes	Yes	Yes (50 or 80%)		Yes
WHO	Yes	Yes	Yes (range from 50-90%)		
PAHO	Yes		Yes, range from 50% to 90%		
FAO	Yes	Being explored	Yes	Being explored	Yes
UNESCO	Yes	Yes	Yes		Pilot to be introduced in 2008
ITU	Yes	Yes	Yes (range from 50-90%)	Yes	
WMO	Yes		Yes, (50% or 80%)		
ICAO	Yes		Yes		
UNIDO	Yes		Yes (50 or 80%)	Yes, for medical reasons	
WIPO	Yes		Yes (50 or 80%)	Yes	
UPU	Yes		Yes (50 or 80%)		
IAEA	Yes		Yes (50 or 80%)		Yes
IFAD	Yes		Yes	Exploring	Exploring
UNOPS	Yes		Yes	Exploring	Exploring
UNWTO	Yes		Yes		
OTHER UN:					
WTO	Yes	Yes	Yes (50 or 80%)	Yes	Yes
WORLD BANK	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (excludes most short term consultants)

POLICIES THAT ALLOW FOR FLEXIBILITY OF TIME						
UN common system organization	Family leave-paid, or uncertified sick leave	Family leave-unpaid, or special leave without pay	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Adoption leave	Parental leave[19]
UN	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (4 weeks)	Yes (8 weeks)	
UNDP	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (4 weeks)	Yes (8 weeks)	
UNICEF	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (4 weeks, 8 weeks for internationally recruited staff in non-family duty stations)	Yes (8 weeks)	
UNHCR	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (4 weeks)	Yes (8 weeks)	
UNFPA	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes, including sabbatical	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (4 weeks)	Yes (8 weeks)	
UNRWA	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (4 weeks), 8 weeks for staff in non-family duty station	Yes, 8 weeks	SLWOP
UNAIDS	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (4 weeks)	Yes (8 weeks)	
ITC	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (4 weeks)	Yes, 8 weeks	
ILO	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes, 4 weeks. Up to 8 weeks in case of internationally recruited staff serving at a non-family duty station and in other exceptional circumstances.	Yes, 7 weeks for adopting mothers, 5 weeks for adopting fathers. Currently exploring extension of duration for both.	Yes, special leave without pay may be granted to care for newborn or adopted child upon exhaustion of maternity, paternity or adoption leave.
WFP	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (up to 10 weeks)	Yes (8 weeks)	

[19] After maternity, paternity or adoption leave, usually for a certain cumulative period

POLICIES THAT ALLOW FOR FLEXIBILITY OF TIME						
UN common system organization	Family leave- paid, or uncertified sick leave	Family leave- unpaid, or special leave without pay	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Adoption leave	Parental leave[19]
WHO	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes, special leave without pay for up to 2 calendar weeks.	Yes, 16 weeks for single births, 20 weeks for multiple births.	Yes, 4 weeks. 8 weeks in non-family duty stations or exceptional circumstances	Yes (8 weeks)	Yes, special leave without pay for up to 2 years upon exhaustion of maternity, paternity or adoption leave. Additional 2 years in case of serious disability, injury or illness of the child.
PAHO	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (4 weeks)	Yes (8 weeks)	
FAO	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (4 weeks)	Yes, (10 weeks)	
UNESCO	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes, 16 weeks + additional 4 weeks in exceptional circumstances such as multiple births.	Yes, up to 4 weeks	Yes, up to 8 weeks	Yes, up to 2 years, without pay. Exceptionally up to 3 years in case of multiple births, injury, disability or serious illness of child.
ITU	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (4 weeks)	Yes	Yes, SLWOP
WMO	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (4 weeks)		
ICAO	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)			
UNIDO	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes	Yes	
WIPO	Up to 5 days per year	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes, 3 days	Yes, 16 weeks	
UPU	Up to 3 days per case	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (2 weeks)	Yes (2 weeks)	

POLICIES THAT ALLOW FOR FLEXIBILITY OF TIME						
UN common system organization	Family leave-paid, or uncertified sick leave	Family leave-unpaid, or special leave without pay	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Adoption leave	Parental leave[19]
IAEA	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (4 weeks)	Yes (8 weeks)	Unpaid leave for mother or father up to 96 weeks or till child's 2nd birthday
IFAD	Up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (4 weeks, + 4 additional weeks for fathers working in non-family duty stations)	Yes (8 weeks)	
UNOPS	Yes, up to 7 days of uncertified sick leave may be used	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (4 weeks)	Yes (8 weeks)	
UNWTO	Up to 5 days per year		Yes	Under consideration		
OTHER UN						
WTO	Yes, up to 7 days	Yes	Yes (16 weeks)	Yes (4 weeks)	Yes (8 weeks)	SLWOP, up to 2 years
WORLD BANK	5 days	Yes	60 days	5 days	60 days	

POLICIES THAT ALLOW FOR FLEXIBILITY OF TIME					
UN common system organization	Home leave	Compassionate leave	Overtime paid or compensatory time off	Time for breastfeeding	Allowance for breastfeeding - or single mothers travelling with child
UN	Yes		Yes	Yes	
UNDP	Yes		Yes, GS staff only	Time off twice daily	Yes
UNICEF	Yes		Yes	Yes, special room provided	Yes, 10% of cost of mother's ticket and 10% of applicable DSA for infants under 2 years.
UNHCR	Yes		For GS staff only	Yes	Yes
UNFPA	Yes	Yes, up to 7 days uncertified sick leave may be used	For GS staff only	Yes	Yes
UNRWA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
UNAIDS		Yes (3 days for death in immediate family + 2 if travel involved)	GS staff only		
ITC	Yes		Yes	Yes	
ILO	Yes	Yes (3 days for death in immediate family + travel time, if applicable)	Yes	Yes, twice 30 minutes daily. Special room provided at HQ.	

POLICIES THAT ALLOW FOR FLEXIBILITY OF TIME					
UN common system organization	Home leave	Compassionate leave	Overtime paid or compensatory time off	Time for breastfeeding	Allowance for breastfeeding - or single mothers travelling with child
WFP		Yes (3 days for death in immediate family + 2 if travel involved)	Yes	Yes, one hour daily, special room provided	Yes
WHO	Yes	Yes, 3 days for death in immediate family + travel time. Up to 7 additional uncertified sick leave days may be used or special leave without pay for up to 2 calendar weeks.	Yes	Yes, 2 hours per day for 4 months. Special room provided at HQ and in some regional offices.	Yes. In exceptional circumstances, either parent can undertake duty travel with infant.
PAHO	Yes	Yes (3 days for death in immediate family + 2 if travel involved)	Yes	Yes, special room provided	Yes
FAO	Yes	Yes (3 days for death in immediate family)	Yes	Yes	Yes
UNESCO	Yes	Yes, up to 7 days + travel time	Yes, only for GS staff	2 hours per day	
ITU	Yes	1 day	Yes	Yes, special room provided	
WMO	Yes	1 day	Yes		
ICAO					
UNIDO		Yes			
WIPO	Yes	Yes (3 days for death in immediate family)	Yes, GS staff only	Yes, individual arrangements	
UPU	Yes	Yes (1-3 days)	Yes	Under discussion	
IAEA	Yes	2 days death of immediate family member + travel time;	Yes	Yes, one hour daily	
IFAD	Yes	Yes (3 days for death in immediate family + travel time)	Yes	Yes, one hour daily, room provided	
UNOPS	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
UNWTO	Yes	Yes	Yes, only for GS staff. Experimenting with P staff travelling on weekends	Yes	
OTHER UN:					
WTO	Yes	Yes (3 days for death in immediate family + travel time)	G staff only	Yes, twice 45 minutes up to 2 years of age	
WORLD BANK		3 days	Yes		

POLICIES THAT ARE GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE FOR WORK/LIFE BALANCE

UN common system organization	Staff Counsellor and/or Staff Outreach Support (SOS)	Ombudsperson	Stress management courses	Basic security training	Rest & Recuperation programme	Pandemic preparedness	Career development[20] options and support
UN	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
UNDP	Yes, SOS	Yes	Yes	Yes, mandatory	Yes	Yes	Yes
UNICEF	Yes	Yes		Yes, mandatory, as is the advanced security training	Yes		Yes
UNHCR	Yes	Yes, mediator	Yes	Yes, mandatory	Yes	Yes	Yes
UNFPA	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Career counselling by DHR staff. Educational assistance programme – 50% reimbursement of tuition and fees for approved courses Sabbatical programme – time off for approved studied while remaining on payroll.
UNRWA			Yes	Yes	Yes		
UNAIDS	Yes	Yes		Yes, mandatory	Yes	Yes	Yes
ITC	Yes, at UNOG	Yes, also an internal panel consisting of staff volunteers.	Yes, via UNOG training service	Yes, mandatory	Conforms to UN policy, but currently no staff in non-family duty stations	Yes	Yes, via UNOG training service
ILO	Yes, Staff Welfare Officer	Yes, mediator	Yes	Yes	Yes, according to field working group decisions	Yes	Yes, 10 days per year provided for career development courses
WFP			Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
WHO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
PAHO	Yes	Yes	Yes, currently ad-hoc, arrangement being institutionalised	Yes, mandatory	Yes	Yes	Yes

[20] Career support workshops, career development resource materials, Career Development Roundtables such as those organized by UNESCO in 2006

POLICIES THAT ARE GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE FOR WORK/LIFE BALANCE

UN common system organization	Staff Counsellor and/or Staff Outreach Support (SOS)	Ombudsperson	Stress management courses	Basic security training	Rest & Recuperation programme	Pandemic preparedness	Career development[20] options and support
FAO	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	
UNESCO	Yes	College of mediators	Yes	Yes, mandatory	Yes	Yes	Yes
ITU	Yes	Yes		Yes, mandatory		Yes	Yes
WMO	Yes			Yes			
ICAO							
UNIDO	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
WIPO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	
UPU	Yes			Yes, for those travelling to countries in a security phase			Yes
IAEA	Both		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
IFAD	Yes						Yes
UNOPS		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
UNWTO	Recruiting		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
OTHER UN							
WTO	Yes		Yes	Yes	Not applicable	Yes	Yes
WORLD BANK	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes

POLICIES THAT ARE GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE FOR WORK/LIFE BALANCE

UN common system organization	Workplace & Sexual harassment	Workplace initiatives[21] for well being and work/life balance	UN Cares/HIV in the workplace	Gym or other sports facilities (on-site or off-site)	Health campaigns[22]	Dual Career & Staff Mobility/spouse employment
UN	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
UNDP	Yes, training for prevention	Yes	Yes Policy for the whole organisation Implementation in duty stations with high HIV prevalence rate	Yes, depending on duty station	Yes, in some duty stations	Yes Policy for the whole organisation Implementation as interagency initiative in 36 duty stations
UNICEF	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes
UNHCR	Yes		Yes	Yes		Being explored
UNFPA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, off-site	Yes	Yes
UNRWA		Under development	Yes		Yes	Being explored
UNAIDS	Yes		Yes	Yes, off-site	Yes	Yes
ITC	Yes		Yes	Yes, on-site	Yes	
ILO	Yes		Yes, policy on HIV in the workplace and information sessions	Yes, at HQ	Yes	Being explored
WFP			Yes	Yes		Yes
WHO	Yes	Yes	Yes, WHO Lives and UN Cares	Yes, on-site	Yes, on World Health Days and seminars with outside facilitators	Yes
PAHO	Yes	Yes	Yes	On site gym classes	Yes, weight watchers, toastmaster	Being explored, no formal arrangements
FAO	Yes	Yes	Being explored	On-site classes in yoga, pilates, stretching etc		Yes
UNESCO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, on-site	Yes	Yes

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21 To decrease stress in the work place, for example through initiatives to prevent repetitive strain injuries (RSI), provide ergonomically correct chairs and desks, organise office outings or joint lunches etc.

22 For example on healthy nutrition, smoking cessation, alcohol use/abuse, regular exercise etc

POLICIES THAT ARE GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE FOR WORK/LIFE BALANCE

UN common system organization	Workplace & Sexual harassment	Workplace initiatives[21] for well being and work/life balance	UN Cares/HIV in the workplace	Gym or other sports facilities (on-site or off-site)	Health campaigns[22]	Dual Career & Staff Mobility/spouse employment
ITU	Yes	Yes, through medical services	Yes	Just starting a project	Yes	Being explored
WMO		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ICAO						
UNIDO		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
WIPO	Yes	Yes, medical service	Yes, medical service	Yes	Yes, medical service	Yes
UPU				Yes		
IAEA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, on-site	Yes	Yes
IFAD	Yes			Yes, on-site	Yes	Yes
UNOPS	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes
UNWTO	Yes	Yes, medical service		Yes, off-site	Yes	Yes
OTHER UN:						
WTO						
WORLD BANK	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes

POLICIES THAT ARE GENERALLY SUPPORTIVE FOR WORK/LIFE BALANCE

UN common system organization	Support for family members in obtaining work permits	Family event[23]	Child care facilities (on-site or off-site)	Staff surveys
UN	Yes	Yes	Yes, at headquarters	Yes
UNDP	Yes, where possible	Yes, depending on duty station	Yes, depending on duty station	Yes, Global Staff Survey once a year.
UNICEF	Yes	Yes		Limited
UNHCR		Yes		Yes, annually since 2006
UNFPA		Yes	Yes, off-site	Yes, annually
UNRWA	Yes			Limited
UNAIDS	Yes	Yes, @ WHO		Yes, annually
ITC				
ILO			Yes, off-site at HQ	- Gender audits - Client satisfaction survey - Work/life balance survey soon to be launched.
WFP	Yes	Yes		
WHO	Yes	Yes		Yes, periodic 'climate surveys'
PAHO	Yes	Yes		Being explored as an option under new HR structure
FAO				
UNESCO	Yes	Yes	Yes, day care facility for children 18 months to 3 years and club for 4-11 year olds.	
ITU	Yes	Yes	Yes	
WMO	Yes	Yes		Yes
ICAO				
UNIDO	Yes	Yes	Yes	
WIPO	Yes	Yes		
UPU	Yes		Yes	Yes, every 3 years
IAEA	Yes, but limited		Yes	Yes, every 4 years
IFAD				Limited
UNOPS				Yes
UNWTO	Yes			Encourage the staff association to conduct surveys
OTHER UN:				
WTO	Yes	Yes	Yes	
WORLD BANK	Yes			Yes

[23] Like a Christmas or other festive celebration, family sports day etc.

ANNEX 2

Numbers of UN staff working on Work/life balance and Staff Wellbeing programmes

UN common system organization	Total staff involved	HR department	Health Unit	Special SWB/WLB Unit	Counsellor	Ombudsman
UN						
UNDP	2	2		Part of HRD		2, part-time, shared with UNICEF, UNOPS and UNFPA
UNICEF	6	3	1			1
UNHCR	5.5	2 PT, 20-35%	1 (HIV in the workplace)	3 (staff welfare officers)	1	
UNFPA	3	3, for a portion of their jobs. - Policy/Legal specialist - HR specialist on global staff survey and some wellbeing issues - Chief, Planning & Policy branch involved in interagency wellbeing initiatives			Internal staff trained as SOS providers (staff outreach support), who provide confidential counselling to colleagues on a needs basis.	1, shared with UNDP, UNICEF and UNOPS
UNRWA	0					
UNAIDS	1	1	@ WHO		@ WHO	@ WHO
ITC	0					
ILO	5	3, HR officers for a portion of their time	1 medical doctor + support staff		1 staff welfare officer + 1 assistant (50%)	1 mediator + 1 assistant (50%)
WFP	2-3			2-3		
WHO	3		1		1	1
PAHO	3	1	1			1
FAO	2		1		1	
UNESCO	2 (+ 8 medical staff)	1	2 medical doctors and 6 nurses		1	

UN common system organization	Total staff involved	HR department	Health Unit	Special SWB/WLB Unit	Counsellor	Ombudsman
ITU	3-4	1 HRO, 1.5 GS	@ UNOG	1 social services officer	1 legal officer	1 P-staff, 1 GS, both part-time
WMO	**1.5 currently, 0.5 post to be created**		0.5		1	
ICAO	**0**					
UNIDO	**0**					
WIPO	**6**		3	2		1
UPU	**0**					
IAEA	**1**	Various	Various		1	
IFAD	**1.5**	Various	Various			
UNOPS	**0**				recruiting	
UNWTO	**0**					
OTHER UN:						
WTO	**3**	1, part-time	1.8		1	
WORLD BANK						

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