

TO: All Heads of Departments and Offices  
A: (See distribution list)

DATE: 4 December 2009

REFERENCE:

FROM: The Deputy Secretary-General  
DE:



SUBJECT: **Steering Committee on the Implementation of Change Management Measures:**  
OBJET: **Decisions on Work-Life Balance - Strengthening Flexible Working Arrangements**

1. I am writing, as Chair of the Steering Committee on the Implementation of Change Management Measures<sup>1</sup> (Steering Committee on Change Management), to share with you the package of important decisions taken on Work-Life Balance and Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA), and to seek your kind support, cooperation, and, indeed, leadership in improving awareness of, and strengthening implementation of FWA. A copy of the summary record and decisions of the meeting of the Steering Committee on Change Management on 28 October 2009 are enclosed for your ease of reference.

2. I would like to recall that, in furtherance of the Policy Committee's decision of February 2008 on Work-Life Balance, the Secretary-General, by memorandum of 3 April 2008, had requested "Heads of Departments and Offices to embrace modern management methods and foster a healthy work-life balance, including by reviewing and enhancing the implementation of the policies for FWA". Earlier this week, during the 1 December meeting of the Policy Committee on the status of women in the Secretariat, this message was reinforced strongly, with several members emphasizing the importance of FWA for women and men.

3. Among the key decisions taken by the Steering Committee on Change Management at its meeting on 28 October 2009, which senior managers will see reflected in key policy instruments/initiatives between now and early 2010, are the following:

a. **Placement of an objective in the 2010 Senior Managers and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General/Heads of Mission's Compacts to be signed with the Secretary-General, so as to strengthen management commitment to, and encourage implementation of FWA.**

This objective has been approved by the Management Performance Board.

Senior managers, with the support of their Executive Offices, would be expected to ensure that staff is fully informed of the existing FWA options, as outlined in the existing ST/SGB/2003/4, and to prepare a detailed action plan for implementing FWA in 2010.

<sup>1</sup> Information on the terms of reference and work of the Steering Committee on the Implementation of Change Management Measures can be accessed on iSeek, on the Committee's webpage "Change at work".

In this regard, I note the proactive steps taken by the senior leadership of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support to encourage and facilitate the use of FWA by managers and staff, through, inter alia, the establishment of a Task Force on Positive Work Environment.

**b. Implementation of an outreach and communications strategy in 2010 by the Office of Human Resources Management of the Department of Management (OHRM/DM) and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) intended to raise awareness among senior managers and staff, encourage support, and promote responsible use of FWA across all Departments and Offices.**

This is a decision based, inter alia, on a review of the CEB Report on Work-Life Balance of the United Nations system (2008), DM's Telecommuting Survey of January 2009, and OSAGI's FWA Survey of July/August 2009. All three reports identified the critical need for a strong communications strategy to raise awareness and encourage use of work-life balance policies across the Organization.

As set out in the enclosed Annex to the decisions of the Steering Committee on Change Management of 28 October, DM/OHRM and OSAGI will hold a series of Town Hall meetings with staff and Executive Offices of individual Departments and Offices. These meetings will seek to educate, support and actively promote work-life policies.

I trust that your Executive Offices will be the critical drivers and, indeed, active collaborators with DM/OHRM and OSAGI in the implementation of this outreach strategy and in strengthening FWA.

**c. DM/OHRM is engaged in an exercise of updating and modifying the existing ST/SGB/2003/4.**

I expect this review to be completed in January 2010. Once the bulletin has been updated/modified, it will be submitted to the Office of Legal Affairs for review, and then to the usual staff-management consultation process in advance of its promulgation. I expect a new updated Secretary-General's bulletin to be promulgated early in 2010. I count on the active support of DM/OHRM.

**d. The Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT) is engaged in a review of the technological options to see how we might better facilitate telecommuting arrangements.**

This exercise will draw upon lessons learned from the successful experience of the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV), and will deal with issues such as information technology support capability, remote access technology, knowledge sharing and security.

UNOV's experience, DM's survey, and successful telecommuting programmes, tell us that telecommuting should be seen as an organizational benefit, and **not** as a staff entitlement. Executive leadership and supervisory buy-in are critical imperatives to success. And performance measurement, accountability and ITSD support capability are essential building blocs to a successful telecommuting policy.

The ongoing relocation of approximately 5,000 staff members at Headquarters to swing space related to the Capital Master Plan (CMP) will create conditions more conducive to staff working remotely. Furthermore, a new data centre, currently under construction at Headquarters, will, when commissioned in March 2010, address some of the concerns regarding Information Technology capability. I will count on the leadership and support of OICT, DPI and DM, including DM/CMP, as we seek to establish and build an organizational culture and management climate which are friendly to telecommuting.

4. Colleagues, the Secretary-General has led the way with his call for us to embrace "modern management methods and foster a healthy work-life balance". He has stated that "FWA are part of good management and a key tool for achieving gender balance".
5. He has entrusted me with the responsibility to lead the change management process in the Organization. Work-life balance and FWA have been identified as a change management priority in 2010.
6. I believe that, if managed properly, the encouragement and support of these working arrangements can have a positive impact on staff performance and morale, productivity, job satisfaction and organizational commitment.
7. I ask you to join this common endeavour to raise awareness and strengthen work-life balance and FWA across the Secretariat.
8. Begin with your own Departments and Offices.
9. Discuss and engage your staff on the arrangements, how best to utilize them, and even improve their use and implementation.
10. Draw upon the experiences and successes of other Departments and Offices who may be at a more advance stage of applying these arrangements. By learning and sharing experiences, we contribute to greater synergies and efficiencies in our work.
11. Work with, and support the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, DM/OHRM, OSAGI, DPI, and the Steering Committee on Change Management to help shift the organizational culture towards an environment that is conducive to achieving work-life balance, and even higher levels of efficiencies, performance, and organizational commitment.

12. The Management Performance Board, which I also Chair, and which oversees managerial performance in terms of the Senior Managers' Compacts, will recognize the successful efforts of managers towards strengthened work-life balance and FWA.

13. The Steering Committee on Change Management, with the support and leadership of DM/OHRM and OSAGI, will continue to monitor and oversee implementation of these arrangements. We welcome feedback and suggestions on your experiences in the implementation of FWA.

14. I count on you, as senior managers, to be active change agents in promoting this agenda on work-life balance and strengthened FWA.

cc: Mr. Nambiar  
Mr. Adlerstein  
Mr. Kim  
Ms. Mayanja  
Mr. Orr  
Ms. Pollard

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**STEERING COMMITTEE ON THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT MEASURES  
(Steering Committee on Change Management)**

**Wednesday, 28 October 2009**

**Decisions<sup>1</sup>**

**Agenda Item 2 - Work-Life Balance – Report by OSAGI and DM/OHRM on the  
Strengthening of Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA)**

1. ST/SGB/2003/4 of 24 January 2003 should be updated<sup>2</sup>, as appropriate, and *Option 4* modified so as to remove the existing limitation of two days subject to legal clearance (DM/OHRM and OSAGI).
2. Endorsement of the FWA Awareness and Outreach strategy, resulting from OSAGI's FWA Survey as well as DM's Telecommuting Survey, as outlined in attached Annex.
3. Review of Technological options to better facilitate telecommuting arrangements, including lessons learned from the UNOV experience and submission of findings to the December 2009 meeting of the Steering Committee on Change Management (OICT, DM/OHRM and OSAGI).
4. The Deputy Secretary-General, in her capacity as Chair of the Steering Committee on Change Management, should send an appropriate memorandum to all senior managers informing them of the Committee's consideration of FWA, and requesting the support and cooperation of all senior managers and executive offices in the implementation of the awareness and outreach strategy, and related issues.
5. DPI should be requested to work with OSAGI and the Steering Committee on Change Management, to update the Committee's webpage on the decisions taken on FWA and prepare an appropriate iSeek article for posting on the Change at Work webpage.
6. There should be periodic reporting by OSAGI and DM/OHRM to the Steering Committee on Change Management on FWA implementation status and related issues.
7. Senior leadership and managers should be evaluated in their performance compacts and ePAS work plans, respectively, on whether and how they demonstrate ability to create a positive work environment, including through flexible work policies to accommodate staff while maintaining team performance. An objective should be included in the 2010 Senior Managers' Compacts to strengthen managerial commitment to, and encourage implementation of, FWA.

**Agenda Item 3 - Periodic update on the status of implementation of Quick Wins initiatives -  
Update on the outcomes of Online Chat Pilots (DPI, DFS, OICT)**

8. The Deputy Secretary-General, in her capacity as Chair of the Steering Committee on Change Management, should send an appropriate memorandum to all senior managers, informing them of the success to date of the online chat and encouraging its use as a complement to other internal communication tools for engagement with staff at all levels. Due regard should be given to highlighting the importance of maintaining cohesion and unity among staff amidst the challenges of the Capital Master Plan.

<sup>1</sup> As adopted on 13 November 2009.

<sup>2</sup> To take account of subsequent reports of the Secretary-General, decisions of the Policy Committee and the Secretary-General's memorandum to Heads of Departments and Offices of 3 April 2008.

## Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA) Awareness and Outreach Strategy

*FWA for all staff is identified as a change management priority for 2009-2010. In addition, the Secretary-General's reports on the status of women in the United Nations system (A/59/357 of 20 September 2004, A/61/318 of 7 September 2006, and A/63/364 of 18 September 2008) highlight the lack of FWA as an impediment to gender balance. The elements of the FWA Awareness and Outreach Strategy is based on a review of the CEB Report on Work-Life Balance of the United Nations system, DM's Telecommuting Survey, and OSAGI's FWA Survey.*

### Actions

**A memorandum to senior managers from the Deputy Secretary-General, Chair of the Steering Committee on the Implementation of Change Management Measures (Steering Committee on Change Management)**

- Priority of FWA in change management
- Executive Offices' role
- Monitoring

### **Policy**

- Steering Committee on Change Management – Updated/modified Secretary-General's Bulletin
- Gender Strategy – includes FWA (OSAGI, DM/OHRM)

### **OSAGI-DM/OHRM Road Show**

- Senior Management Group briefing
- Town Hall meeting for all staff (DSG, DM/OHRM, OSAGI)
- Department Head meetings with OSAGI, DM/OHRM, Executive Offices and Departmental Focal Points
- Departmental meetings organized by each Focal Point

### **FWA sidebar on iSeek**

Linked to *Change at Work* and OSAGI website with page content as follows:

- Existing policy and guidelines on FWA in the United Nations
- Myths and facts about FWA
- Your stories
- Survey results from DM, OSAGI
- Good practices and comprehensive list of FWA
- Bibliography

### **Monitoring implementation**

- Reporting by Executive Offices as input to the Gender Scorecard
- Periodic FWA staff surveys
- Review of FWA indicators of the Gender Scorecard
- Proposed electronic reporting system to allow staff to register their interest in FWA to Management

### **DM/OHRM-OSAGI training**

- Information brochure
- Inclusion in new Staff Orientation and Junior Professional Officers training
- Discussion with DM/OHRM regarding inclusion in overall training programmes

Office of the Deputy Secretary-General  
Office of the Focal Point for Women  
Office of Human Resources Management/Department of Management  
2 November 2009

<sup>1</sup> As adopted on 13 November 2009.



24 January 2003

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**Secretary-General's bulletin****Flexible working arrangements**

As indicated in my report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387), it is time to align the work practices of the Secretariat with those of many national civil services and other parts of the United Nations system by offering more flexible working arrangements leading to a better balance between the professional and personal lives of the staff of the Secretariat.

To that effect, from 1 February 2003, flexible working arrangements may be authorized in all departments and offices of the Secretariat.

This will be done using the following guiding principles:

- Programme managers and staff are encouraged to rethink the manner in which the work is currently performed and how it could be done in different and better ways for all concerned by using flexible working arrangements;
- All arrangements are at the discretion of the head of department/office, who will authorize them, taking into account the needs of service, including the needs of clients or users, and the needs of the staff members;
- There is no right or entitlement to flexible working arrangements. They require a specific agreement and are purely voluntary for all concerned;
- In determining whether to approve individual arrangements, heads of departments or offices are expected to exercise their managerial discretion and judgement in a reasonable manner. Certain types of flexible working arrangements may not be possible for some jobs. Similarly, increased demands and requirements may lead to suspension of flexible working arrangements at certain periods, for instance when an intergovernmental body serviced by a particular office is in session. The task of the head of department/office is to optimize for the Organization and the staff the benefits of flexibility, while minimizing potential problems;
- Productivity and quality of outputs must be maintained at the same level, or enhanced, following the introduction of flexible working arrangements;
- No extra costs may be incurred by the Organization as a result of flexible working arrangements.



As of 1-February 2003, the options under flexible working arrangements are as follows:

**Option 1: Staggered working hours**

Under this option, staff members are expected to be present during a core period of the working day. The core period will be set at each duty station. Staff must complete the balance of working hours for each day before, after, or partly before and partly after, the core period;

**Option 2: Compressed work schedule: ten working days in nine**

Under this option, all the hours that would normally have been worked during a period of ten working days are compressed into nine working days by distributing among these nine days the hours that would otherwise have been worked on the tenth day. This redistribution of normal working hours allows staff members, every other week, to take off the last day of the normal work week;

**Option 3: Scheduled break for external learning activities**

Staff members wishing to attend courses relevant to their professional development at universities or other institutions of learning may request breaks of up to three hours per day for a maximum of two days per week. The hours spent away from work during a particular week must be made up during that week;

**Option 4: Work away from the office (telecommuting)**

Where consistent with the nature of the work involved, staff members may spend up to two days per week working from an alternative work site, provided they have access to the necessary equipment and may always be reached by telephone or e-mail.

All these arrangements will be adjusted to local conditions, as necessary.

Use of flexible working arrangements will require careful planning and preparation on the part of all concerned. The Office of Human Resources Management and local human resources offices will provide guidance, including model individual agreements for the newer type of flexible arrangements, to ensure the success of this important initiative.

(Signed) Kofi A. Annan  
Secretary-General