



5 April 2000

Administrative instruction

Sabbatical leave programme*

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/1 of 28 May 1997, and for the purpose of defining the conditions under which staff members may be granted sabbatical leave, promulgates the following:

Section 1 General provisions

1.1 The objectives of the sabbatical leave programme are:

(a) To provide an opportunity for staff members to bring added value to their contribution to the Organization and to enhance their professional growth through the pursuit of studies and research projects on issues related to the work of the United Nations;

(b) To enhance dialogue and build contacts between the United Nations and other organizations and institutions engaged in related work worldwide, as well as to expose United Nations staff members to state-of-the-art research and practices on issues on the international agenda.

1.2 Sabbatical leave may be approved for eligible staff members seeking to pursue projects of study and research not only in recognized universities but also in independent institutions worldwide, in participating research and training centres of the United Nations University, or in institutions that are members of the Academic Council on the United Nations System. The participating research and training centres of the United Nations University and institutions that are

members of the Academic Council on the United Nations System are listed in the annual information circular on the sabbatical leave programme.

1.3 Staff members shall be responsible for:

(a) Identifying the institution in which they propose to carry out their studies;

(b) Securing their acceptance by that institution for the purpose of carrying out the proposed studies at a specified time during the year for which the sabbatical leave was approved;

(c) Ascertaining the type of support services and facilities that the institution is prepared to provide during the period of sabbatical leave.

Section 2 Eligibility

The programme is open to United Nations staff members with five years of service with the Organization and who are expected to serve for no less than two years after the completion of the sabbatical leave.

Section 3 Duration

Sabbatical leave may be approved for a period normally not in excess of four months, subject to release of the staff member by the head of office or department concerned. Staff who require an extension on an exceptional basis may request it in accordance with section 5.2 of the present instruction.

* *Personnel Manual* index No. 4475.

Section 4

Application and selection process

4.1 Eligible staff members interested in the programme shall submit an application in accordance with the detailed provisions contained in the annual information circular on the sabbatical leave programme.

4.2 Applications shall be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

(a) Importance of the study. This element shall be assessed on the basis of the importance of the issue in the proposed field of study and its relevance to the current and future work of the United Nations and to the current or future responsibilities of the applicant;

(b) Feasibility of the proposed study and whether it can be undertaken and completed within the proposed period of the sabbatical leave;

(c) Appropriateness of the planned methodology;

(d) Quality of the proposal, demonstrating awareness of the latest developments in the area of study;

(e) Suitability of the candidate, including demonstrated ability to perform independent work. This element shall be assessed on the basis of the staff member's qualifications and/or experience and the references provided by the applicant;

(f) Expected usefulness of the completed study to the United Nations.

4.3 The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, assisted by a selection committee, shall review the proposals submitted and make a final selection. The Committee shall be composed of representatives of the Academic Council on the United Nations System, senior United Nations staff members with experience in the substantive areas of the proposals submitted for consideration that calendar year and the staff.

4.4 The Office of Human Resources Management shall consult the heads of offices and/or departments to confirm the release of selected staff members.

4.5 The selected staff member shall be informed of the decision and be requested to accept in writing the specified conditions of the award.

Section 5

Terms and conditions of sabbatical leave

5.1 The sabbatical leave shall normally be taken during the calendar year following the year in which the application was submitted.

5.2 The staff member shall be placed on special leave with full pay for the sabbatical leave period. Staff members on sabbatical leave shall continue to receive salary, post adjustment and all related entitlements, such as rental subsidy and education grant, applicable to their regular duty station. The provisions of appendix D of the United Nations Staff Rules shall cover initial and return travel, as well as activities directly related to the course of study and on school premises. Should the staff member request additional time to complete the study, leave without pay may be granted on an exceptional basis subject to exigencies of work and contingent on the approval of the office or department concerned.

5.3 While on special leave with full pay, staff members shall continue to accrue service credits towards sick, annual and home leave, salary increments, seniority, termination indemnity and repatriation grant. If the sabbatical leave continues after four months, on special leave without pay, no credits shall accrue during that period. In accordance with section 8.1 (b) of ST/AI/1999/17 of 23 December 1999, if a staff member is in receipt of a special post allowance before going on sabbatical leave for a period of three months or longer, such allowance shall be discontinued as of the first day of the sabbatical leave period.

5.4 The United Nations shall pay for the cost of one round-trip travel for the staff member to the place of study and for the cost of unaccompanied shipment by air of 50 kilograms (110 pounds) each way. The staff member shall be responsible for the cost of any other travel for himself or herself and for any dependants, as well as for the cost of books, educational materials, fees for attendance or participation in conferences, courses or other meetings and activities.

5.5 A stipend to cover partial living expenses, in an amount to be determined yearly by the Office of Human Resources Management, shall be paid to staff members during the period of sabbatical leave with full pay, provided the institution is beyond commuting distance from the duty station and the staff members

have actually rented accommodation in the area near the institution. Staff members shall be informed in advance of the amount of the stipend.

5.6 Within six months of completion of their sabbatical leave, staff members shall submit a report on the study they have undertaken to the head of the office or department concerned, who shall forward a copy to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management. In order to assess the impact of the sabbatical leave programme, in the year after the completion of the programme, the Office of Human Resources Management shall require staff members and their supervisors to complete a follow-up questionnaire to determine the benefits of the programme for the department concerned and for the staff member.

Section 6

Final provisions

6.1 The present administrative instruction shall enter into force on 1 May 2000.

6.2 Information circular ST/IC/1996/41 of 11 July 1996 is hereby abolished.

(Signed) Joseph E. **Connor**
Under-Secretary-General
for Management
