

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CIRCULARS**Date: 11 June 1998****OED98/004****Spouse Employment****1. Background**

WFP, along with other UN agencies, has long recognized the problem of lack of employment for spouses of professionally recruited staff who are recruited from outside the host country or headquarters location and who are often expected to be mobile. Spouses, who frequently hold professional qualifications of their own, must face the possibility of allowing their careers to stagnate or even end in order for the other spouse to be hired or to continue employment with WFP.

2. Objective of Policy

This policy on spouse employment is established to facilitate the recruitment and retention of the best qualified professional staff of both genders within existing Staff Rules and Manual provisions. It is also established to encourage mobility on a world-wide basis.

3. Principles

To the maximum extent possible, WFP, under existing Staff Rules and relevant Manual Provisions, will facilitate and encourage the employment of professionally qualified spouses of professional staff members at all locations. Employment may be with WFP, other UN Agencies, and with NGOs, as outlined under Eligibility below.

In any WFP employment situation, the following rules will apply:

- normal selection procedures will be followed;
- one spouse will not be assigned to a post which is subordinate to the other in the line of authority;
- one spouse will not participate in any process of making or reviewing administrative decisions concerning the other spouse;
- both spouses must sign an understanding that in accordance with their terms of employment they may be subject to transfer, and the fact that both are working at the same duty station does not exempt either from being assigned to a different duty station in the future. The Programme will make efforts to facilitate the assignment of both spouses to the same duty station. If that is not possible, the mobility and operational requirements for those staff in the Unified Service/Core Project in particular will take precedence over assignment of the spouse;
- the staff member and the spouse will not be assigned where it could be perceived that there is a conflict of interest because of the nature of their work;

- Directors/Regional Managers/WFP Representatives will not recommend or approve the employment of their respective spouses, nor participate in the appointment, evaluation or promotion for posts within WFP.

4. Eligibility

Within the principles stated above:

Professionally qualified spouses of staff members in the Professional category holding a fixed-term or continuing appointment may be selected for any type of Professional employment for which they qualify in WFP in the field and Headquarters, including Reimbursable Loan Agreements, Authors' Contracts, Consultants and Special Service Agreements, as well as for short-term and fixed-term appointments.

Professionally qualified spouses of staff in the Professional category holding a fixed-term or continuing appointment will be provided assistance in finding employment as professional staff with other UN Agencies in the field and Headquarters.

Spouses of staff members holding a fixed-term or continuing appointment in the Professional category located in the field are also eligible for assistance in finding employment for which they are qualified with other UN Agencies and NGOs.

5. Responsibilities

The Director, HR will be responsible for: will be responsible for:

- the overall implementation of the policy;
- monitoring the execution of the policy;
- reporting to the Executive Director annually on the implementation of the policy;
- making efforts to obtain cooperation from other UN Agencies for employment opportunities for spouses in Headquarters;
- assistance to spouses looking for employment in Rome;
- approval of all WFP employment of spouses in Headquarters and employment in the field under types of contracts where authority is not delegated to the field.

Regional Managers and Country Directors will be responsible for:

- approval of employment under their delegated authority;
- reporting annually to the Director, HR, on the number and types of contracts issued to spouses as well as any problems encountered;
- making efforts to obtain cooperation from other UN Agencies and NGOs for employment opportunities for spouses;
- assistance to spouses looking for employment in their regions/countries.

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