

Document No 10

For Discussion

STAFF POLICY

I. Recruitment, Selection and Retention

Policy

The council's goal in recruitment and selection is to hire and retain the most qualified individuals. Directors/Managers are encouraged to first consider applicants from within their area of work ("department") or other areas from within the council who express interest in the position.

If authorized positions remain unfilled after internal council-wide recruitment, the Human Resources Office will assist departments by coordinating all aspects of the employment process to present qualified applicants from a variety of church, ecumenical and other sources external to the WCC. The recruitment process, application review, reference and background checking, and the selection and hiring processes for all leadership and programme executive staff positions are subject to governing body special requirements. Recruitment efforts are coordinated by Human to ensure compliance with Swiss law and staff rules and regulations.

Staff appointments are made on the basis of the qualifications, experience and personal qualities required for each role without regard to race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, disability, age, etc. Governing bodies will also set, from time to time, certain balances (confessional, regional, etc.) which best represent the diversity of the fellowship amongst its programme and leadership staff.

Information on the recruitment process, including job posting procedures, official application forms, interviewing guidelines, and salary offers, is available from the Human Resources Office.

Procedures

Human Resource Staff are available to provide consultation throughout all aspects of the employment and hiring process to all departments of the WCC. They will provide assistance in posting vacancies, developing and implementing recruitment strategies, identifying and selecting candidates, assuring all pre-employment requirements are met, and confirming job offers. These are detailed out in the Human Resources Policy and Procedures manual (under preparation) which will detail out the recruitment process at all levels of the council.

II. Limiting Years of Service for programme executive staff

1. Introduction

The WCC 9th Assembly, Porto Alegre, Brazil adopted the report of the Finance Committee which, among others, recommended that the “WCC review its staff rules and regulations and personnel policies...including reaffirmation of the concept that programme executive staff contracts are not normally renewed more than once (at present, four years plus three years).” (Reg. II 1.13 and 1.14 where members of the staff appointed by the Central or Executive Committee shall receive a fixed term contract of up to four years' duration on first appointment with the possibility for renewal for a further three-year period.)

Since the 1970s the Executive and Central Committees have periodically discussed, and implemented decisions on the concern of limiting the number of years that staff responsible for programmes and relationships can serve in the WCC.

The current staff regulations do not address the issue of limiting years of service definitively. The regulations simply make a provision for how renewals of contracts are to be carried out. It should also be noted that according to the Swiss Code of Obligations, a second renewal of a time-defined employment contract will render the contract indefinite. This means that those staff members whose contracts are renewed more than once would then be governed by the regulations for indefinite contracts (Reg. II 6.03 and 6.04). Past discussions have identified both advantages and disadvantages in a policy that set a maximum tenure of service for programme staff. A few examples are summarized below:

2. Some arguments for limiting years of service

- a) Limiting years of service of programme executive staff will intentionally facilitate a measure of representation of staff from the member churches as a key for nurturing close relationships with churches (through a resultant high staff turnover).
- b) Such a policy could facilitate flow of ecumenical insights back to the churches and new insights from the churches into WCC and the ecumenical movement.
- c) The policy will work towards ensuring that the WCC secretariat avoids the risk of developing into a permanent bureaucracy in Geneva divorced from the churches.
- d) The policy will offer the possibility of employing younger staff who will bring their own creativity and enthusiasm to the work of the council.

3. Some arguments against limiting length of service

- a) Any such policy must have justifiable exceptions and it is difficult in a policy document to list objective criteria for extending the period of service.
- b) The rule could lead to high turnover of directors/programme staff which potentially might undermine the functioning of a primarily “knowledge based organization” and makes it more difficult to attract quality staff with mid-term and long-term options elsewhere. A too short tenure might also mean that just as a staff person has learnt about the complex organizational structure and working style of the council including the necessary sensitivities in relating to the wide spectrum of churches in the fellowship he or she will have to leave.

- c) It may be assumed that programme staff of the WCC once hired becomes “ecumenical staff” serving the fellowship of churches as a whole and not only representing the interests of an individual church.
- d) It may discourage potential programme executive staff from applying as there will be concern about the education of children- returning home and re-adjusting to educational systems can affect the educational possibilities of children

4. Implementing the Assembly decision

- a) The WCC 9th Assembly, Porto Alegre, Brazil adopted the recommendation that the “WCC review its staff rules and regulations and personnel policies...including reaffirmation of the concept that programme executive staff contracts are not normally renewed more than once (at present, four years plus three years). The first full Central Committee after Porto Alegre in September 2006 affirmed that new contracts “be new for four years, with the possibility of renewal for one term of three years only; with the understanding that *exceptions may be necessary upon approval by the executive committee*. Except for the number of years of service, this recommendation is almost similar to the earlier “nine year rule” first introduced in a central committee meeting in 1973 and was established as policy at the executive/central committee meeting in Bad Saarow and West Berlin in August 1974 . “The normal years of service would be six years and that a maximum would be nine years. *This term could be extended but only upon special recommendation of the general secretary*”. The Central Committee reconsidered the situation and dropped the rule in 1987.
- b) The implementation of this call by both the Assembly and Central Committee needs to be done bearing in mind the reasons for the rule and insights gained from the nine year rule experience:
 - i) Implement this within the recommendation to review the staff rules and regulations as called for by both the Assembly and central committee.
 - revisit 4 + 3 contract arrangement from the light of experience
 - Would another more flexible contract arrangement work best in the spirit of the Assembly and central committee decisions (3 + 3 plus exception? 5 + 3 plus exception? 6 plus exception?)
 - ii) Realism and managing the transition
 - Responsibility to staff already with more than seven years service
 - Responsibility towards staff within two to three years to retirement
 - Impact on children of primary and secondary education
 - iii) State the kinds of exceptions that will be acceptable to the Executive Committee, for example
 - Contract would end within 18 months of Assembly or a critical commission and the staff was a key person in the process?
 - Where attempts to recruit successor has failed and it is deemed necessary not to create a vacancy?
 - If council is within a restructuring process and the staff concerned is needed for that process?
 - iv) State maximum extension period
 - v) Establish a time-line when this policy will be standard practice at the WCC

5. New Staffing Policy

The Assembly recommendation had two main parts:

- WCC review its staff rules and regulations and personnel policies, covering in particular the following aspects: i) renewal of contracts, including reaffirmation of the concept that programme executive staff contracts are not normally renewed more than once (at present, four years plus three years); ii) the encouragement of the recruitment of competent younger staff who may thus also have their role in the transformation of the organization; iii) the recruitment procedures be transparent and open to external applicants;
- Statistics on staff costs, headcount and full-time equivalents is reported regularly in a consistent manner, with written definitions of the staff and consultant categories concerned.

The recommendation regarding staff statistics is already being implemented. The recommendation regarding revision of the staff rules and regulations and personnel policies is the subject of this paper. The language of the recommendation, however, is almost similar to the regulations as shown below.

Reg. II 1.13
Contracts "*de durée maximale*"
Members of the staff appointed by the Central or Executive Committee shall receive a contract "*de durée maximale*" **of up to** four years' duration on first appointment. The aforementioned contract can however be terminated by both parties before its expiry in accordance with the provisions of Reg. II 6.03.

Reg. II 1.14
Extension of contracts "*de durée maximale*"
The contract referred to in Reg. II 1.13 may be extended **only once** for a further three-year period by the Central or Executive Committee. In case of a further extension, an indefinite contract will be established, which will be subject to the procedures for the renewal or non-renewal of contracts which include a review of other factors besides individual performance, including the needs of the World Council of Churches.

The one difference is that the Assembly recommendation states that the first contract be for four years, while it is "up to" four years in the regulations though the practice to date has been to grant four year contracts. In the light of present realities this formulation is more helpful to the council that the proposal from the Assembly that the first contract be for four years because it allows the council the possibility to hire programme executives for less than four years where the needs of qualifying candidates precludes a four year term. This section of the current regulations includes everything called for by the Assembly. An area that needs further discussion is the role of WCC staffing in nurturing/fostering relationships with the member churches. The related issue of changing staffing practices is the responsibility of the General Secretary but one upon which the advice of the Executive Committee would be welcomed.

III. Performance Appraisals of Staff

Introduction:

The WCC has had for many years a system of appraisal of staff performance. In this next period this process will be improved and made more effective. As we have moved into a new structure and ways of working, the performance appraisal system will be closely linked with the monitoring and evaluation system for the programme work and will be based on the new role descriptions for all staff. This will be coordinated by the Office of Human Resources.

Monitoring project work as part of the appraisal:

The cycle for the monitoring of programme work will include the monitoring of the performance of the project team as a whole, to ensure good team spirit and morale of the staff. The appraisal of the team's work will be based on the indicators that have been developed for the projects. The group appraisals will be based on the project work or management team that each staff member contributes to. The success of the project or problems encountered in the team has a bearing on individual staff performance.

Individual appraisals:

At the end of each calendar year – between October and December, all programme, administrative, specialized and house staff will go through a performance appraisal under the leadership of the Programme Directors and Managers on a face to face basis. Performance appraisals of the Programme Directors and Managers will be done by the respective Associate General Secretaries. The appraisals of staff in the General Secretariat will be done under the leadership of the General Secretary. The individual staff performance appraisal will be based on performance indicators, which are part of new role descriptions of all staff.

While most programme staff contributes to the work of two teams – the appraisal will be based on their primary home team (where the larger part of their time is credited.) The appraisal system will include the provision for their contribution to a second project to be recognized and appraised by the directors concerned.

The individual performance appraisals will be done on three levels with the help of specially prepared templates:

1. By the staff person who will be given the opportunity to do an appraisal of their own performance based on the indicators on their role description. This text they will give to the supervisor.
2. By the supervisor – this will be an assessment made by the supervisor of the staff's performance.
3. A jointly agreed appraisal – that will be written by the supervisor after the discussion with the staff person concerned.
4. The appraisal will record any issues that are not mutually agreed on and such a record will be agreed upon by consensus.

All stages of the yearly individual appraisals will be documented and signed by all parties and a copy of this will be kept in the files of the staff concerned in the Human Resources office. The development of effective and helpful methodologies to do the appraisals will also help to identify training needs and staff development.