HR policy in UNFPA

Introduction:

Following General Assembly decision 58/555, the Secretary-General delegated authority concerning human resources (HR) matters to the Executive Director of UNFPA (U.N. Doc. ST/SGB/2004/10 of 28 May 2004, effective 1 June 2004). This authority heretofore was with the Administrator of UNDP.

Regulatory framework:

The delegation of authority referred to above, which was made explicitly subject to the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules, did not change the UNFPA framework regarding HR policy previously in force. Therefore, subject to the principles governing the administrative law of international organizations, this HR policy framework includes HR related rules, administrative policy and administrative practice in the following order:

1. Charter of the United Nations;
2. United Nations Staff Regulations;
3. United Nations Staff Rules;
4. **HR policies issued**\(^1\) or past practice established by UNFPA;
5. HR policies issued or past practice established by UNDP, *mutatis mutandis*, in cases where a HR matter is not regulated by a policy issued or past practice established by UNFPA and UNFPA has decided to apply the UNDP policy or practice;
6. HR policies issued or past practice established by the UN Secretariat, *mutatis mutandis*, in cases where a HR matter is not regulated by a policy issued or past practice established by either UNFPA or UNDP and UNFPA has decided to apply the UN Secretariat policy or practice.

Practical issues:

1. UNFPA increasingly issues its own HR policy, either on the basis of inter-agency collaboration in policy development (for example the development of “framework policies”) or, where necessary, by developing its own HR policies. The question may arise, what policy or practice applies to a given HR-related issue. The case is simple where UNFPA has issued its own policy or has established (unwritten) practice regarding the HR issue in question: In such case, the UNFPA policy or practice applies.

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\(^1\) UNFPA human resources policies are included in the UNFPA PPM. Some older UNFPA human resources policies may be contained in UNFPA Circulars or Guidelines.
2. However, the question may arise what policy or practice applies if UNFPA has not issued its own policy on a HR matter or developed a practice in the past regarding how to address or resolve the matter. The user should then refer to the above hierarchy: If there is no UNFPA policy and UNFPA has not established any past practice on the issue, UNDP HR policy or practice should be referred to in order to fill this gap. If, in turn, the UNDP HR policy regime fails to address the issue, the relevant policy or practice of the UN Secretariat should apply.

3. This system has no impact on unrelated and established HR policy application mechanisms. For example, a UNFPA staff member who is on Inter-Organization Exchange\(^2\) subject to the regulations of the receiving Organization cannot invoke UNFPA, UNDP or Secretariat policy within the context of this hierarchy. Rather, on the basis of the terms of the Inter-Organization Exchange, he/she must refer to the policy framework of the receiving Organization.

4. The Secretary General has reserved the right to make selected Secretary-General’s Bulletins (SGB) applicable to separately administered Funds and Programmes, such as UNFPA. Such SGB must expressly indicate that they are applicable to separately administered organs and programmes of the United Nations\(^3\). If an SGB so indicates, it is applicable to UNFPA staff without further action by UNFPA.

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\(^2\) See the Inter-Agency Mobility Accord of November 2005.

\(^3\) See UN Doc. ST/SGB/1997/1 of 27 May 1997, section 3.4.