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Circular No. 05/06 (Rev.)  
Circulaire n°

Date: 2/3/2005

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*This circular cancels and replaces the previous one (05/06) on the same subject, dated 10/02/2005.*

## **Spouse and other Family Members Employment Policy**

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of the present circular is to clarify the criteria and guidelines applicable to the recruitment of family members in general and of spouses in particular.

### **Practices at the ILO and in other international organizations**

2. HRS has surveyed the policies and practices of other 23 UN agencies, including the ILO, and international organizations on the issue of employment of family members, including spouses, and has carefully followed the deliberations of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (now Chief Executive Board) and of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) on the particular issue of spouse employment.

3. As regards the employment of family members other than the spouse, almost all international organizations have included in their staff regulations or rules a provision stipulating that: "Except where another person equally well qualified cannot be recruited, appointment shall not be granted to the father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister of a staff member".

4. The official policy of the Centre therefore remains that, as regards the employment of family members other than the spouse, appointment shall not be granted to the father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister of a staff member, except where another person equally well qualified cannot be recruited. Any exception shall be subject to the approval of the Director of the Centre, after consultation of the Selection Committee.

5. As regards the employment of spouses, the ILO policy which was introduced with effect 1 January 1986<sup>1</sup> is that the Director General may authorize the recruitment of spouses where the following two conditions are fulfilled:

- the recruitment is in the interest of the Organization either because it is not possible in any other way to recruit someone possessing the required qualifications, or because the official's spouse is clearly the most qualified candidate for the job in question;
- neither spouse is placed in a position in which one supervises or is supervised by the other, nor in a position in which one could enhance the career prospects of the other.

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<sup>1</sup> ILO circular n. 353, series 6, of 14.03.1986

6. The Centre wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the important Work/Family Agenda adopted by ACC (now CEB) (ACC/1995/PER/R.3 and R.15) and at the same time, to align its policies with the ones in force at the ILO Geneva.

### **Applicability**

7. The Centre's spouse employment policy intends to be non-gender specific and applicable to the spouses of all staff members regardless of the type of contract they hold.

### **Conditions and procedures**

8. In order to ensure that favouritism or other potential conflict of interest problems do not arise from the implementation of this policy, the spouse of a staff member may apply and be considered as a candidate for a fixed-term or a project-based appointment in the Centre provided certain reasonable conditions are met in order to forestall and prevent abuse. These conditions are:

- consideration of candidature does not guarantee employment, i.e. the spouse shall not be given preference by virtue of the relationship to the staff member and the methods and scope of search for suitable candidates shall under no circumstances be so limited as to give that person an advantage over other candidates;
- appointment is based solely on an applicant's qualifications against the requirements of the post, as for all other applicants; a spouse may be recruited when it is established that he/she is the most qualified for the job in question;
- a spouse will not be assigned to serve in a post that is in the same line of authority, programme, or unit to the post occupied by the staff member to whom he or she is related;
- neither spouse will be placed in a position in which one could enhance the career prospects of the other;
- a spouse must disqualify herself/himself from participating in the process of selection, assignment, reassignment or transfer of the related staff member; or in reaching or reviewing an administrative decision affecting the status or entitlements of the staff member to whom they are married;

9. The principles set out above for filling fixed-term positions shall apply *mutatis mutandis* when recruiting spouses for short-term assignments or external collaboration contract. Furthermore:

- When being asked for candidates for short-term assignment, the Human Resources Services will have the utmost care to provide the best fitted candidate based solely on the capacity of the person without any distinction between spouses and non-spouses. Additionally all short-term appointments of spouses shall be approved by the Director of the Centre;
- contracts of external collaborators may be granted to spouses of staff members to carry out specific well-defined tasks for which they are duly qualified, provided such staff members do not serve in the programme/unit responsible for issuing the contract . Furthermore, Centre's officials shall not be required to work on the same assignment

entrusted to a spouse, nor be responsible for controlling that the work performed complies with the established quality requirements. Such contracts shall be reviewed and approved, by the Director.

10. The marriage of one staff member to another shall not affect the contractual status of either spouse, but their entitlements and other benefits shall be modified as provided in the Staff Regulations. The same modifications shall apply in the case of a staff member whose spouse is a staff member of another organization participating in the United Nations common system. However, spouses will not be assigned to serve in posts that are in the same line of authority to the post occupied by the other staff member to whom he or she is married; neither spouse will be placed in a position in which one could enhance the career prospects of the other; and, finally, a spouse shall disqualify herself/himself from participating in the process of selection, assignment, reassignment or transfer of the other spouse; or in reaching or reviewing an administrative decision affecting the status or entitlements of the other staff member to whom they have got married.

11. The implementation of the present provisions will be monitored by HRS.

J.C. Villemonteix