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INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION AUDIT REPORT UNHCR recruitment process for national staft in the Democratic Republic of the Gongo Inadequate monitoring of recruitment actions resulted in unnecessary delays of more than one year in lllling key posts 16 June 2O09 { Assignment No. ARIIOOS/{ 0/04 Unies United Nations rurtions @ INTEROFFICE EMORANDUM M oFFtcE oF TNTERNALvERsrcHT sERvtcES o I M E M O R A N O U MN T E R I E U R B U R E A UD E s s E R V t c E s o E c o N T R O L E T N T E R N E I N T E R N A L U D I T D I V I S I O N D I V I S I O ND E L ‘ A U O I TI N T E R N E A o Mr. Ant6nio Guterres, High Commissioner A United Nations High Commissionerfor Refugees omE l6 June2009 nennrr\*ce IAD: os-P d-i6 | oe Internal AuditDivision. O1OS for suarrcr Assignment AR2008/ll0/04- Audit of the UIIHCR recruitmentprocess nationalstaff No. osrerin the DemocraticRepublicof the Congo L audit. I am pleasedto presentthe report on the above-mentioned 2. Based on your comments, we are pleased to inform you that we will close recommendation I in the OIOS recommendations databaseas indicated in Annex l. n contained in the report, we request order for us to close the remaining recommendations that you provide us with the additional information as discussedin the text of the report and also summarized Annex L in 3. Please note that OIOS will report on the progress made to implement its particularly recommendation which has beendesignated high risk, as recommendations, 2 in its annual report to the Ceneral Assembly and semi-annualreport to the SecretaryGeneral. Mr. L. CraigJohnstone, UNHCR DeputyHigh Commissioner, Ms.

Judy Cheng-Hopkins, Assistant High Commissioner, LNHCR Ms. Karen Farkas, Controller and Director, DFAM, UNHCR Ms. Maha Odeima, Audit Coordinator, UNHCR Mr. SwatantraGoolsarran, Executive Secretary, UN Board of Auditors Mr. JesusLara Alonso, Officer-in-Charge, Joint InspectionUnit Secretariat Mr. Moses Bamuwamye, Chief, Oversight SupportUnit, Departmentof Management Mr. Byung-Kun Min, ProgrammeOfficer, OIOS Mr. ChristopherF. Bagot, Chie! GenevaAudit Service, OIOS Fom ALrDI 3 {2 January 2009) INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION FUNGTToN The Oflice shall, in accordance with the relettant provisions ofthe Financial Regulationsand Rules of the United Nations examine, review and appraise the use offinancial resources of lhe United Nations in order to guarantee the impletnentation of programmes and legislcttive mondales, ascertain compliance of programme managers with thefinancial ond atlminislrative regulalions and rules, as of well as with the approvedrecommendalions external oversight audils, reviewsand sumeysto bodies, undertakemandgement improve lhe slructure of the Organization and its responsiveness to lhe requirements oJprogrammes and legislative mandates, and monitor the effectiveness the syslemsof internal control of of the Organizotion” (GeneralAssemblyResolution48/218 B). CoNTAcr ACTINC DIRECToR: INFoRMATtoN e-mail:[email protected]org Fax: Fatoumata Ndiaye: Tel:+1. 212, 963. 564E, +1. 212. 963. 3388, CIIIEF, GENEvA AUDITSERvIcE: Fax: Christopher Bagot: F. Tel:+41. 22. 917. 2731, +41. 22. 917. 0011, e-mail:[email protected]ch OIOS) corrducted audit of an The Office of InlernalOversightServices (UNHCR) recruitment the United Nations High Commissionerfor Refugees process nationalstaff in the Dcrnocratic tbr Republicof the Congo (DRC). The overall objectiveof the audit rvasto determinewhetheran effectivesystemof internalcontrol was in placefor the recruitment nationalstaff in the UNHCR of The to operationin the DRC, within the authoritydelcgated thc Representative. audit rvas conductcdin accordance lvith the IntcrnationalStandardsl’or the Professional Practice lnternalAuditing. of Ovcrall, the audit fourrd that the internalcontrol systemneededto be improvedto ensurcthat reoruitment nationalstafTis canied oLrtin a timely of raised mannerand in compliance with rules.

UNI ICR agreedwith the concerns by OIOS and had initiated actionin all the areasidentified: o as There lvere delays in filling vacancies a result of inadequate postscould not be performance targetsand monitoringcontrols. Several Officer postsin such filled fbr one year, includingNationalProfiessional to In key areasas protection and supplychain rnanagement. response the audit, the UNHCR Representation Kinshasa has establisheda in comprehensive list of vacant posts with specific target dates lor the variousactionsthat are required. This list will serveas a monitoringand accollntability tool in an ongoingel’fbrt to reducethe time taken to fill vacantposIS. ‘ l’he . of establishrnent criteria for the selectionof staff nceded and rveightedin order of inrprovement. Criteria should be determined lvherethe irnportance takesplace.

OIOS notedcases beforethe intcnview second- or third-ranked candidatc was nolninated whilc no olear explanationwas given itr the minutes of the intcrvierv panel or the (APPC). As a result, Appointments. Postings and Promotions Committee the transparency and objectivity of the processwere diminished. In on plansto developa gttideline response the ar. ldit, Represcntation to the be considcred the recruitmcnt process, rvlrichwill includethe criteriato and the lveighting ofthese criteria. In addition. a duringan oral intervierv Unit to review all in leam has been established the Iluman Resourccs to recommendations madebeforethey are subrnitted the APPC. did not have the UNHCR black list of The Representation received colleges and universitiesto ensurethat sclectedcandidates ‘[‘ he certificatesfrom properly accrcdited universitiesand colleges. Representation since requestedthe UNHCR Division of Human has ResourcesManagement to share the black list of colleges and universities rvith the office and, once received, plans to use it fbr all of the degrees thosc nervly recruitedstaff in 2009 and also to veri11’ recruited 2008. in TABLE OF GONTENTS Ghapter Paragraphs I. INTRODUCTION II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY l-5 6 7-8 IV. AUDIT FINDINGSAND RECOMMENDATIONS process A. E{ficiencyandeffectiveness ofthe recruitment process B.

Faimess hansparency the recruitment and of V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ANNEX I – Status auditrecommendations of 9-14 | < t < 26 I. INTRODUGTION (OIOS) conducted audit of an l. The Office of lntemal OversightServices the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recruitment processfor national staff in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The audit was conducted in accordancewith the Intemational Standards for the Professional Practice lnternalAuditine. of 2. The recruitment of national staff, i. e. , General Service category (GS) staff and National ProfessionalOfficers (NPO), falls under the authority of the Representative, fully delegated from UNHCR Headquarters.

The Human of Resources Unit in Kinshasadealswith the recruitment nationalstaff in the DRC, and each staff member of the Unit is responsible for monitoring the recruitmentof a portfolio of recruitmentcasesin the different field offices across the country. An Appointments, Postingsand Promotions Committee (APPC) is centralized in Kinshasa and covers three sub-offices (Goma, Bukavu and Lubumbashi) and eight field offices (Buburu, Bunia, Kisangani, Moba, Pweto, for Kalemie, Uvira and Baraka). The APPC is responsible nominatingstaff to posts and will either endorse recommendationsby the recruitment panels or select a candidate of its choice upon review of the interview reports and supportlng documents.

The requirements for national staff are determined in the Country 3. of OperationPlan. Upon the approvalof the plan and the classification postsat Headquartersand based on job descriptions, positions are advertised intemally and externally. Human Resources Unit personnel pre-screen and invite candidatesfor a written test and an interview. The test and intervi€w results are modulefor local then submitted the APPC. Sincethe recruitment management to staffofthe Management RenewalProject(MSRP) hasnot yet beenrolled System out in the DRC, recruitment manually. actionsare processed 4. Nationalstaffworking in the DRC comprised 226 GS staff and 7 NPOs.

The numberofrecruitmentactionsin 2007-2008 coveredbv the auditwas I17. 5. Commentsmade bv UNHCR are shown in ilalrcs. II. AUDIT OBJEGTIVES whetheran effective The overallobjectiveofthe audit was to determine 6. systemof internal control was in place for the recruitmentof national staff in the LTNHCR operation in the DRC, within the authority delegated to the Representative. the: Specifically, the audit assessed (a) Efficiency and effectiveness ofthe recruitmentprocess; and, (b) process with UNHCR Staff Rules of Compliance the recruitment and Resulations. III. AUDIT SCOPEAND METHODOLOGY 7. The audit coveredrecruitmentactionsfor national staffat UNHCR in the DRC for the period 2007-2008.

The field portion of the review included visits to Sub-Office Lubumbashiand the Representation Kinshasa. The audit fieldwork in was conductedin December2008. and The audit methodologycomprised:(a) review of policies, procedures 8. (b) analysisof relevant ManagementSystemRenewal administrativeguidelines; Project (MSRP) data; (c) interviews with responsiblepersonnel;(d) assessment as ofthe effectiveness conhols, and (e) verification of processes, appropriate. of IV. AUDIT FINDII{GS AND REGOMMENDATIOI{S A. Efficiency and effectiveness of the recruitment process lnadeouate monitoring and accountability mechanisms impact timeliness of recrultment 9.

The UNHCR operation in the DRC had experiencedsignificant delays in recruiting staIl, which could have beenavoided if there had beena strongerfocus on monitoring and holding staff accountable for an efficient and effective recruitment process. [n many instancesthe Representationin Kinshasa, while making efforts to monitor the recruitmentactions, was dependenton input frorn field offices who often conductedthe interviews. The main delays identified by OIOS pertainedto recruitmentcasesin field oflices, as highlighted below: . Three posts createdtoward the end of 2007 had not been filled for morethan l2 monlhs. (i) An AssociateProtectionOfficer post at National Offrcer A OJOA) level in Sub Office Lubumbashi; (iD A Driver post at GS-2 level in Moba; and (iiD A Driver postat GS-2 level in Pweto. Another eleven posts created on I January 2008 had remained vacant for almost one year: (iv) A Field Officer post at NOA level in Kisangani; (v) , An Assistant Security Officer post at NOA level in Kinshasa; (vi) A Senior ProtectionClerk GS-5 post in Goma; (vii) GS-6 post in Bukavu; A Field Assistant (viii) An Administration Clerk GS-4 postin Kalemie; (ix) A Telecom OperatorGS-4 post in Uvira; and (x)-(xiv) Five Driver postsat GS-2 level in various field offices. . Furthermore, an important post of Associate Supply Officer for Sub-Office Lubumbashi had been vacant for over six months leaving significant procurementto two newly recruitedclerks who were yet to be trained. The Sub-Office was also responsiblefor procurementactivities for the Field Offices in Moba and Kalemie. 10.

The Representationexplained that for the NOA Associate Protection Officer post in Lubumbashi, an internal candidatewho was recommendedcould not be selectedas she did not meet the academicrequirementof having a degree in law. Consequently, the post had to be re-advertised. The driver posts had remainedvacant due to delays in taking the practical tests in the field. This was due to the fact that the staffmembers who were to supervisethe test had to attend to urgent matters in Kinshasa. The NOA Field Officer post in Kisangani, on the other hand, was divided into two Field Assistant posts and the office was still awaiting post creation to be finalized in Geneva.

The Senior Protection Clerk post in Goma was expectedto be re-advertised the Field Office in Goma could as not trace the application forms of the candidatesand, hence, no interviews could take place. I l. The explanationsprovided reinforce the OIOS point that better planning and management oversight are required to improve the efficiency of the recruitment process. Management should devise corrective measuresto ensure the posts are filled within an agreed-upon timeframe. The table ofadvertised and vacant poststhat is currently usedto track vacanciesshould be subject to regular management scrutiny. In particular, the planned Entry on Duty (EOD) date should be used as a monitoring benchmarkand both the managementand the APPC should be duly informed when thete is a risk of the EOD target not being met.

Accountability of the field offices participating in the recruitmentprocessto meetestablished out deadlines shouldbe clearlyspelled and shouldinclude, inter to interviewpanel recommendations the alia, specific timelinesfor submitting APPC. I Recommendations and 2 in The UNHCR Representation Kinshasashould: (l) Taking into account the adverse impact of the protracted vacancies on operations, set performance targets for the recruitment of national staff; and (2) Strengthen the monitoring controls over recruitment activities to reduce the tim€ taken to fill vacant posls. Offices participating in the recruitm€nt process should be held accountable for meeting established deadlines for various stagesof the recruitment process. 12.

The UNHCR Representation in Kinshasa accepted recommendalion l and stated thot a comprehensivelisl of vacant posts has been establishedwith specirtc turget dates for the various aclions that are required. Based on the action taken by UNHCR and the documentation provided to recommendation has beenclosed. I OIOS, 13. The UNHCR Representalion in Kinshasa accepted recommendation2 ond indicated that the mdtrix of vacont posts will serve as the monitoring tool, and offices will be held accountableaccording to the deadlinesgiven. The matrix will be frequently reviewed ancl updated. Recommendation2 remains open pending information that posts are being filled within agreed-upontimeframes and that the recruitmentprocessis reviewed regularly by management. Need to ensuretimely action is taken when the probationperiod ends (GS14. f OIOS observed caseof the recruitment the TelecomAssistant a as and emerged the 6) in 2005 in Goma, who went throughthe interviewprocess him for the post on conditionof best candidate with the panel recommending undergoing a probationary period of six months to assesshis performance. The staff member was only nominatedto the post by the APPC, nearly two years later in June 2007. OIOS notes that the expiry of the six-month probationperiod should have triggered action by management. In addition, the supervisor of the staff member in question should have been properly informed of the panel’s recommendation and respected the probationary period of six months, or alternatively consulted management on the way forward. Improved and field officesis required communication between BranchOffice Kinshasa the to ensurethat vacant posts are filled on a timely basis.

Managementtook note of the OIOS observationand thereforeno action is proposed. B. Fairness and transparency of the recruitment process of Inadequatecriteria and vague scoring system reducetransparency recruitment decisions Management Manual 15. ln accordance with UNHCR’s Staff Administration (SAMM), the criteria to be consideredduring the oral interview should be determined using the job descriptionas a guide. The same criteria should be weighted in order of importance and used consistently. It is essentialthat the weightingbe completed beforethe interviewstake place. The weightingshould be reasonableand take into considerationall important factors needed for the particular post at the given dury station.

The scoring system should be objective scorefor written and and transparent and the candidatewith the highestaggregate oral tests should be recommended the APPC. to 16. During the audit, a number of critical exceptionswere noted where the criteriafor selecting candidate a post was not clear and did not meet the for a minimum requirements transparency and objectivity, as describedin the of following paragraphs. 17. OIOS came acrossa casewhere the highest score in the written test was and three 9. 5 out of 28, i. e. , a mere 34 per cent passmark rate. This candidate just 7. 5 out of 28 (or 26 per cent), wereall invitedfor others, lowestobtaining the the oral interview. The minimum pass mark score must always be determined before the actual interviews.

This ensuresthat UNHCR not only gets the best candidatesbut also does not compromise on quality while ensuring the transparency the recruitment process. OIOS is pleasedto note that subsequent of to to the audit, the minimum passmark hasbeenestablished be 50 per centof the OIOS is of the total marksand has beenappliedsinceMarch 2009. Nevertheless, opinion that the above mentionedpost should have beenre-advertised. score15/20was with the higheraggregate 18. [n anothercase, candidate the not ranked first by the panel. Instead, the candidatewho came second with a endorsedby the APPC lower score l3l20 was recommended, and subsequently without being questioned. Both candidateshad UNHCR experience. The circumstances the decision for werenot clear. 19.

In anothercase, a candidate selected a GS post in a sub-officehad for three weeks earlier been rejected for an identical post in a field office on the groundsthat he had ‘ never been trained in the use of MSRP sofNrare’. This criterion appearsto have been ignored by the APPC when he was nominatedfor the sub-office post, a much larger office, where knowledgeof MSRP should have beendeemed During the interviewfor the samevacancyin evenmore important. MSRP had undergone the sub-office, one of the other shortlistedcandidates training but was not selected. Notably, the APPC did not selectthis first-ranked candidatewho had a combinedscore of 14. 16 from the written test and oral with a scoreof 13. 33 candidate interview.

Instead, picked the second-placed it without providing an adequate explanationon the criteria for selection. 20. The Representation Kinshasa in soughtclarificationfrom the sub-oflice following the OIOS observation. The supporting documents they received contradicted the panel summary even more, whereby the selected candidate could not be actuallycame in third placervith a scoreof 13. 0. The discrepancy explained. OIOS is further concerned by the fact that the same candidate who was selectedfor the sub-office post had earlier been interviewedfor anotherpost in anotherfield office, although he had not even applied for the post. OIOS noted that the interview panel had made the correct decision not to considerthe candidatefor that post.

Recomm€ndations to 4 3 The UNHCR Representation Kinshasashould: in (3) In order to €nsure that the selectionof candidatesis transparent and objective: (a) determine the criteria to be considered during the oral interview using the job description as a guide; (b) weight the criteria, in order of importance, while taking into consideration all important fac(ors needed for the particular job at the given duty station, and use this weighting consistentlythroughout the recruitment processl and (4) Ensure that (a) the candidate with the high€st aggregat€ score of written and oral tests is recommended to the Appointments, Postings and Promotions Committee (APPC), using a comparative table to support the recommendation and showing how each panelist scored the inlerviewed candidates on the various criteria. If a candidate other than the one with the highest score is selected for whatever r€ason, ahis should be properly justified in both the table and the report of the panel; (b) the APPC scrutinizes each caseit receivescarefully. If the APPC decides to s€lect a different candidate other than the recommended candidate or other than the highest-scoring candidate, this must be properly justified and explained in the APPC minut€s. 21.

The UNHCR Representotionin Kinshasa accepted recommendation 3 and stated that during the inteniew process WHCR Kinshasa usesthe inteniew forms provided by Geneva and used by all oJficesfor submission to the APPC. The variow assessmenls however not weighted but are graded in lerms oJ are levels. A guideline will be estoblishedon the recruitment process which will he applied by each office to include the criteria to be considered during an oral interview and the weighting of these criteria. Recommendation3 remains open pending receipt of the guideline on the recruitment process, including the criteria criteria. to be considered duringan oral interviewand the weightingof these 22.

The UNHCR Representationin Kinshosa accepted recommendalion 4 and stated that, except for cases highlighted by the auditors, all recommendalionsto the APPC are made in accordance with the established procedures. To ensure that these procedures are followed a team has been established in the Human Resources Unit in Kinshqsa to review all recommendationsmade before lhey are submitled to the APPC. The audit recommendations were shared with membersof the APPC during their first and second meelings in 2009 and are being applied by the Committee. Recommendation4 remains open pending receipt of the Terms of Referenceof the team establishedin the Human ResourcesUnit in Kinshasa to review all recommendations made before they are submittedto the APPC and a copy ofthe minutesof the APPC meetingsheld so far in 2009.

Incomplete backgroundchecks for NPOs could lead to selectionof unqualified candidates 23. The growing demand for college degrees, the globalization of the educationmarket, and the Intemet are combining to createa risk of proliferation of the so called " diploma mills” educationalinstitutionswithout proper accreditation. This makesthe conduct of personalbackgroundchecks even more important especially for staff occupying National Professional Officer posts. OIOS review indicated that basic intemal controls in the area of background in checks were in place. The Representation Kinshasaattachescopies of original certificates to the file of newly appointed staff membersonly when such copies have beenagreedto the originals.

It also obtainsthree references. (DHRM) at 24. The UNHCR Division of Human Resources Management Headquartersissuesregularly a black list of universities and colleges to be used did for backgroundchecks. OIOS found that the Representation not have this list and, as a result, it could not be ensuredthat selectedstaff in the NPO category obtaineda degreefrom accrediteduniversitiesand colleges. Recommendation 5 (5) The UNHCR Repres€ntation in Kinshasa should ensure that background checks for Nalional Professional Officers systematicelly involve checking that staff taken on board received certificates from properly accredited universities and colleges. 25.

The UNHCR Representation in Kinshasa accepted recommendation 5 and stated that it had requested DHRM to share the black list of colleges and universities with the offtce. This list will be usedfor all newly recruited stafr in 5 2009 and also lo verifu thoserecruited in 2008. Recommendation remainsopen pending the outcome ofthe review by the Representation ofthe newly recruited NPOs and those recruited in 2008 asainst the list of blacklisted colleses and universities. V. ACKHOWLEDGEMENT and 26. to We wish to express our appreciation the Management staff of to extended the auditors LNHCR in the DRC for the assistance cooperation and during assignment. this X z z . o . o Eg E E z z lEatr t- a z z E E U o O ‘ r F a, a F a J a sb HE 2 a. l p E5 z are t4):! "= z t- €9v : e. E i; i r. E q. = 2 E E E! .: t O l FU z 9