Return to the duty station and/or workplace in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

Human Resources Policy Guidance for all duty stations other than New York Headquarters where alternate working arrangements were implemented

Version 1 – 23 September 2020

1. General provisions

1.1 The purpose of this guidance is to provide a general set of measures to be implemented prior to and during the return of UN personnel[1] to the duty station and/or to the workplace, as applicable. It is intended for Secretariat entities that had closed premises, put in place restrictions to limit physical access to the premises or had taken measures to reduce UN personnel footprint at the duty station, implementing alternate working arrangements.

1.2 The physical return of UN personnel to the duty station and/or to the workplace should be based on a cautious, phased, flexible and people-centered approach.

1.3 The primary consideration is to ensure all necessary measures are in place to support the safety and health of all UN personnel (and of their families) for carrying out the functions and responsibilities entrusted to them. Transparency and active communication with staff regarding planning and the evolving situation is paramount.

1.4 Conditions, workplace setting and dynamic of the pandemic vary from duty station to duty station. When developing their local plan for a gradual return of UN personnel to the duty station and/or to the workplace, heads of entities must take into account the WHO and local host country authorities' guidance and regulations where applicable, as well as local operational needs. Where a local UN Occupational Safety and Health Committee (OSH) is in place it should lead the development of a reintegration plan, alternately this represents an opportunity to establish such an OSH committee to advise on workplace health and safety issues. This committee may also consult with

qualifying service toward rest and recuperation that remains governed by the conditions established in section 3 of ST/AI/2018/10 on rest and recuperation.

2.2 UN Personnel working outside of the duty station under AWA should be communicated in writing the expected return date and be provided a reasonable advance notice (at least 21 days) before they are expected to return in order to be able to make necessary arrangements to physically report to the workplace taking into consideration travel restrictions and quarantine requirements, as applicable. A phased return of personnel to the duty station may be implemented based on the lifting of travel restrictions affecting certain countries/areas. This requirement does not apply to duty stations where scenario 1 b) of the Human Resources Network's Standing Committee on Field Duty Stations guidance note for R and R duty stations with COVID-19 travel restrictions dated 1 June 2020 is implemented since rotation is carried out on a pre-established scheduled.

2.3 When a decision is made to discontinue AWA outside the duty station as of a specific date, staff members who would like to exceptionally delay their return due to compelling personal circumstances may request their manager to telecommute from outside the duty station for an appropriate duration not exceeding six months on Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA) in accordance with the provisions of ST/SGB/2019/3 and ST/IC/2019/15. In exceptional circumstances, an extension of the authorization to telecommute from outside the duty station may be considered for an additional period not exceeding three months. Any such arrangement should be considered on a case-by-case basis and subject to exigencies of service. Failure to return to the duty station by the expected date may result in their absence being treated as unauthorized. Subject to exigencies of service, staff members may also be granted annual leave or special leave without pay.

2.4 For additional information on FWA and AWA, please consult:

Alternate working arrangements (AWA) and Flexible working arrangements (FWA) in the context of COVID-19 pandemic - Human Resources Policy Guidance for infSupueasrg0 61612 791./F1 125s 0 1 465.46

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3.2 UN personnel whose presence in the duty station is not necessary or authorized may continue to work remotely from outside the duty station under AWA and should be informed in due course when it is appropriate for them to return (the timeline will depend on the evolution of the situation). Entitlements will continue to be paid in relation to the official duty station for the whole duration of AWA, except for danger pay that is not payable for the period that personnel work remotely from outside their official duty and the accrual of qualifying service toward rest and recuperation that remains governed by the conditions established in section 3 of ST/AI/2018/10 on rest and recuperation.

3.3 In duty stations where the R and R framework was suspended and scenario 1. a) or 1.b)

Timeline	[end date]	[date of transition from the prior phase]	[date of transition from the prior phase]

managers could also consider, where possible, adjusting the individuals' work schedule so that they can travel outside peak hours as long as doing so does not impact the operational needs of the Organization and completion of mandated activities;

Special consideration should also be given to UN personnel who share their household with someone at increased risk for COVID-19 complications due to age or a severe

4.3.8 To assist managers in identifying the personnel who may continue to work remotely during initial return phases, two tools have been developed:

1. A self-assessment questionnaire to be completed by personnel (Annex 1)

2. A 'traffic-light' matrix to be completed by managers (Annex 2)

4.3.9 Each head of entity may decide whether to use these tools, based on the local return to the workplace plan for their respective duty station. This is optional and may not be suited for all duty stations and/or category of personnel (i.e. internationally recruited staff members serving in non-family duty stations, or duty station where the R and R framework was suspended and scenario 1.b) of the Human Resources Network's Standing Committee on Field Duty Stations guidance note for R and R duty stations with COVID-19 travel restrictions dated 1 June 2020 was implemented.

4.4 Continuation of AWA at the duty station

4.4.1 In duty stations that are implementing a progressive return to the workplace, AWA are to remain in effect within the duty stations until the daily occupancy limits at the workplace are lifted.

4.4.2 As part of AWA, rotation and shifts may be introduced to limit the number of UN personnel on-site at any given time and allow physical distancing. No additional compensation should apply.

4.4.3 UN personnel who are required to return to the workplace one or more days per week during the phased return, should also continue to work on AWA on the days on which their presence on-site is not required. AWA days should be recorded in Umoja as "Telecommuting COVID-19" at the end of each week.

4.4.4 Other UN personnel whose physical on-site presence is not required may continue to work remotely, normally from their residence at the duty station, on a full-time basis under AWA and will be informed in due course when it is appropriate for them to return (the timeline will depend on how the situation evolves).

4.4.5 Personnel whose functions cannot be performed outside the premises and who are required to continue to work remotely due to occupancy limits, should continue to perform alternative assignments as instructed by their managers under AWA.

4.5 Duties and obligations of UN personnel upon returning to the premises

4.5.1 UN personnel are expected to continue to show respect, care and understanding for each other at all times.

4.5.2 On return to the workplace, staff should expect a different work environment due to the implementation of COVID-19 related protective measures. For instance, staff may be directed to wear masks on entry into the building and in common areas, exercise appropriate physical distancing and the sitting arrangement might be reconfigured. At some duty stations, there may

Annex 1 - Self-assessment questionnaire

This questionnaire is to be filled out by UN personnel and send to their managers if requested. It is meant to be used exclusively for the purposes of filling the 'traffic light matrix' mentioned below and may not be shared further without the consent of the personnel.

I) PERSONAL information

1. Are you over the age of 60?

   Yes No

2. Were you advised by a doctor or a health care provider of any health conditions that would place you at increased risk (e.g. chronic illness, immune suppression, heart/lung disease) should you contract COVID-19? Please answer only in yes or no

   Yes No

II) SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC variables:

3. Is your residence at your duty station in an area that is still in lockdown/containment?

   Yes No

4. Do you reside with someone (e.g. child or elderly parent) that require support and cannot stay with other people while you go to the office/return to your duty station?

   Yes No

5. Do you reside with people considered more vulnerable[9] in front of COVID-19?

   Yes No

6. Do you commute to/from work using public transportation?

   Yes No

[9] Any one older than 60,