

GUIDANCE NOTE ON TRANSITIONAL MEASURES FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS APPROACH

Background:

1. In accordance with the General Assembly Resolution 63/248, the Special Operations Approach (SOA) will be phased out effective 1 July 2016 and in its place a new system of remuneration will be paid to staff serving in non-family duty stations. Under the new system the overall remuneration package will be calculated on the basis of the actual place of duty and use of the APA and payment of Special Operational Living Allowance will be discontinued.
2. The new system of remuneration will include an additional amount under the existing Hardship Allowance in recognition that such service represents an increased level of financial and psychological hardship in terms of:
 - a. Involuntary separation from families
 - b. Additional costs related to serving in non-family duty stations.
3. For staff paid at the dependency rate, the additional amount is 100 per cent of the applicable dependency rate of the hardship allowance for category E duty stations - for a total of 200% Hardship Allowance.
4. For staff paid at the single rate, the additional amount is 50 per cent of the applicable single rate of the hardship allowance in category E duty stations - for a total of 150% of the Hardship Allowance.

Effective Date of the new system of remuneration.

5. The new system of remuneration came into effect on 1 July 2011. This means that all newly appointed staff i.e. all externally recruited individuals that joined UNDP and were assigned to a non-family duty station effective 1 July 2011, will receive the new additional hardship allowance.

Transitional measures

6. **Phase 1** (1 July 2011 – 30 June 2012): Staff members who are currently serving in a non – family duty station, staff members that are reassigned to a non-family duty station and newly recruited staff that are assigned to a non-family duty station continue to be paid in accordance with the SOA for the duration of their assignment to that non-family duty station up to 30 June 2012. This means that in the first year of the transition, there is no change to the remuneration package for staff that were on board prior to 30 June 2011.

7. **Phase 2** (1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013): Staff members who continue their assignment at the same non-family duty station and staff members who are re-assigned to a non-family duty station will continue to be paid in accordance with the SOA, however the [SOLA rates](#) will be based on a new harmonized SOLA rate to be established by the ICSC, in consultation with the organizations.
8. We do not anticipate any significant changes to the current methodology for the [SOLA rates](#) except that they may be adjusted differently and the amounts will be unified for each duty station.
9. **Phase 3** (1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014): Staff members will continue to be paid in accordance with the SOA. However, there will be a comparison between a staff member's remuneration under SOA and the amount the staff member would receive under the new system of remuneration. Where there is a difference between the remuneration under the SOA and what would be payable under the new system, an adjustment of 25% will be applied to the SOLA rate.
10. **Phase 4** (1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015): The transitional measures will continue with the same comparison between the remuneration under the SOA and the new system and where there is a difference an adjustment of 50% will be applied to the SOLA rate.
11. **Phase 5** (1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016): The above mentioned transitional measures will continue and where there is a still a difference an adjustment of 75% will be applied to the SOLA rate.
12. **Full harmonization:** Effective 1 July 2016, all staff will be paid in accordance with the new remuneration system. This means that SOA will be totally discontinued and APAs will no longer apply.
13. In accordance with the ICSC proposal adopted by the General Assembly, during the transition period (1 July 2011-30 June 2016), UNDP may at any time, and at its discretion, decide to assign its current staff under the new remuneration system.

Implementation of the transitional measures

14. Staff members who have been reassigned from a family duty station to a non-family duty station after 1 July 2011 and have an entry on duty date (EOD) that falls before 1 July 2011, are given the option to choose between the new scheme (i.e. the additional hardship allowance - AHA- or the transitional arrangements under the Special Operations

Approach -SOA), provided they are expected to remain in their current duty station for at least six months after switching to AHA.¹

15. Staff members who have been reassigned from a non- family duty station to another non-family duty station after 1 July 2011 and have an EOD date that is before 1 July 2011, are given the option to choose between the new schemes (AHA or the transitional arrangements under the SOA), provided they are expected to remain in the current duty station for at least six additional months after switching to AHA.
16. Staff members currently serving in a non-family duty station and will have served in that duty station a minimum continuous period of one year (twelve months) before 1 June 2012, and are expected to serve for a minimum additional period of six months, are given the option to move from SOA to the new scheme (AHA). This minimum period will avoid any undue administrative costs and recoveries. For those cases of transfer or secondment from another UN organization in the same non-family duty station, the service period is cumulative as per the conditions mentioned above.
17. The above option is a one-time opportunity. Eligible staff members that are currently in receipt of the SOA and who miss the cut-off date mentioned below will be given the opportunity to switch to the new scheme at their next assignment to a non-family duty station.
18. National Officer and General Service staff members appointed to the IP category and assigned to non-family duty stations are considered existing staff and the same conditions described above apply.
19. For those cases of staff members who have been transferred from another UN SOA organization, or have returned from secondment to another UN SOA Organization to a non-family duty station after 1 July 2011, the same conditions of reassigned UNDP staff members will apply. Staff members that have been transferred or have returned from secondment from another UN non-SOA organization after 1 July 2011, will fall under the same conditions applicable to newly appointed staff members.
20. Staff members who opt for the new scheme (i.e. AHA) and are transferred to another UN organization will be subject to the applicable transitional measures of the receiving organization.
21. Only the expressly identified staff members by OHR in accordance with the policy and these transitional measures are eligible to optionally select to move between the AHA or the transitional arrangements under SOA (i.e. staff members who have not been

¹ If a staff member eligible and opts for AHA and the assignment is shortened by the organization to less than the required six months, there will be no recovery.

reassigned after 1 July 2011, and who, by the cut-off date of 1 June 2012, have not served for at least twelve months at the same non-family duty station are ineligible.)

22. Eligible staff members who do not explicitly express a decision on the above options by the established deadline will automatically be applied the transitional measures adopted by the GA.
23. Once a staff member is granted a change from SOA to the new AHA scheme, in order to minimize disruption to their lives, they will be given the option to leave their family in the APA for the remainder of the assignment subject to meeting host government visa requirements or move them to their home country or elsewhere.
24. If a staff member chooses the new scheme and opts to leave his/her family in their current location (i.e. former APA), the organization will make every attempt to continue assisting with the visa only for purposes of facilitating children's attendance in school and/or continuance of a spouse's employment, etc². However, the pay package for the staff member (Post Adjustment and Rental Subsidy) will be based on the new AHA scheme and the travel entitlement (Home Leave) will remain unchanged for the duration of the assignment).
25. This assistance will only last as long as the Duty Station remains non-family and for the remainder of the staff member's current assignment. In cases of reassignment to another non-family duty station, the organization will continue to assist only if the APA is the same for the new non-family duty station.
26. If the staff member chooses the new scheme and moves his/her family to the home country, the organization will pay the cost of travel as a lump sum (under established travel policy, i.e. most direct and economical route) and the DSA portion of the Assignment Grant for eligible family members.
27. If the staff member chooses the new scheme and moves his/her family to an elsewhere location, the travel and DSA portion of the Assignment Grant costs will be capped to the home country. For these particular cases (family moved to an elsewhere location), the organization will not be able to facilitate visa, customs clearance, etc, and this will be the responsibility of the staff member solely.
28. Staff members who opt to move their family to their home country or elsewhere location will not have the option to revert back to the previous location.

² For staff who were exceptionally allowed to have New York as their APA, the organization cannot extend this facility to dependents who remain in the USA beyond the original two year limit established by the USA immigration authorities.

29. Staff members who opt to switch to AHA will be considered installed in the actual place of duty in terms of ongoing elements of salary and allowances based on place of duty, including AHA (e.g. Post Adjustment, Rental Subsidy and Hardship).
30. Staff members currently serving in non-family duty stations, and who opt to change from SOA to AHA are not entitled to the Relocation Grant or full installation from APA to the non-family duty station. The APA is an administrative arrangement and a full relocation grant would not be appropriate. In such circumstances and when an installation in the APA had occurred, the staff member will be entitled to the unaccompanied shipment amount. When no installation took place, and in all other aspects, the same conditions will apply as when a duty station changes from family to non-family as specified in the SOA policy.

Deadline for switch from the SOA to AHA

31. The effective date of implementation of changes from SOA to AHA for payment purposes will be **1 July 2012**. However, payroll changes will be processed within four months of that date, i.e. the last change will be done in October's payroll.
32. Eligible staff members must submit their request for a change from SOA to the new scheme by no later than 30 June 2012. Staff members therefore have a reasonable timeframe to decide if they would like to move to the new scheme or remain under the transitional measures mentioned above. This time frame with a cut-off date will allow a more structured system and avoid ad-hoc arrangements. There will be no retroactivity applied to the switch from the SOA to the new scheme prior to 1 July 2012.
33. Staff members who opt to move from SOA to AHA will remain under the new scheme and will not have the option to revert back to SOA even upon subsequent reassignments to another non-family duty station.
34. Submission of request for change to the new scheme (SOA to AHA) should be sent by 1 June 2012 the latest to BES by email bes.registry@undp.org. Eligible staff members must sign a request/attestation form, available at https://intranet.undp.org/global/documents/_layouts/DocIdRedir.aspx?ID=UNDPGBL-601-11
35. In order to support staff members on their decision to move from SOA to AHA, SAS has developed a tool for comparing both schemes, available at https://intranet.undp.org/global/documents/_layouts/DocIdRedir.aspx?ID=UNDPGBL-601-12
36. Given the nature of the various transition scenarios, special cases will be reviewed by OHR/BAS in consultation with BES and Policy Unit, in order to ensure consistency within the purpose and spirit of the new scheme and transition process. OHR retains the

authority to make final determinations. Comparative example of changes between two schemes:

P-4 Staff member, plus spouse and 2 children, serving in Kabul. APA – Istanbul.

Old system (SOA):

Calculation based on SOA	Per annum in USD
Base Floor	\$79,158
Post Adjustment – Istanbul	\$37,204
Children allowance	\$5,372
Hazard Pay	\$24,000
Mobility Allowance	\$8,000
SOLA	\$38,880
Total Package	\$192,614.

P4 Staff member, plus spouse and 2 children, serving in Kabul. No APA

New system (AHA):

Calculation based on AHA	Per annum in USD
Base floor	\$79,158
Post Adjustment - Kabul	\$42,033
Children allowance	\$5,372
Hazard Pay	\$24,000
Mobility allowance	\$8,000
Hardship allowance	\$20,410
Additional Hardship Allowance	\$20,410.00
Total Package	\$199,383

P-4 Staff member, single, serving in Kabul, Afghanistan, APA Istanbul

Old System (SOA):

Calculation based on SOA	Per annum in USD
Base Floor	\$73,539
Post Adjustment – Istanbul	\$34,563
Hazard Pay	\$24,000
Mobility Allowance	\$6,010
SOLA	\$38,880
Total Package	\$176,992

**P-4 Staff member, single, serving in Kabul, Afghanistan - no APA
New System (AHA):**

Calculation based on AHA	Per annum in USD
Base floor	\$73,539
Post Adjustment - Kabul	\$39,049
Hazard Pay	\$24,000
Mobility allowance	\$6,010
Hardship allowance	\$15,310
NEW Additional Hardship Allowance	\$7,656
Total Package	\$165,564