



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2016/127

Audit of management of human resources in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Overall results relating to effective workforce planning and management of human resources were initially assessed as partially satisfactory. Implementation of nine important recommendations remains in progress

FINAL OVERALL RATING: PARTIALLY SATISFACTORY

31 October 2016
Assignment No. AN2015/590/01

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
I. BACKGROUND	1-2
II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE	2
III. AUDIT RESULTS	2-11
A. Strategic human resources planning	3-8
B. Human resources management	8-11
IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	11
ANNEX I Status of audit recommendations	
APPENDIX I Management response	

AUDIT REPORT

Audit of management of human resources in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of effective workforce planning and management of human resources in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

2. In accordance with its mandate, OIOS provides assurance and advice on the adequacy and effectiveness of the United Nations internal control system, the primary objectives of which are to ensure: (a) efficient and effective operations; (b) accurate financial and operational reporting; (c) safeguarding of assets; and (d) compliance with mandates, regulations and rules.

3. OCHA is mandated by General Assembly resolution 46/182 to assist the Secretary-General in providing emergency humanitarian response to natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies. OCHA operates from its Headquarters in New York and Geneva, and has operations in 39 countries around the world (Africa: 20; Asia: 11; Middle East: 4; Europe: 1; Americas: 3). The 2014-2015 biennium budget of OCHA included funding for 2,200 posts: 70 from the regular budget and 2,130 from extrabudgetary resources.

4. Workforce planning and human resources management in OCHA have multi-dimensional requirements and challenges. Humanitarian funding over the last 15 years has increased from \$2 billion in 2000 to \$24.5 billion in 2014¹ for emergency assistance to more than 125 million people around the world. Assisted persons are often located in high security environments with severe access limitations by humanitarian actors. Moreover, 95 per cent of OCHA annual budget of \$330 million is generated from voluntary contributions, which are inherently unpredictable.

5. To supplement appointments through regular recruitment, temporary job openings and surge staffing, OCHA uses five roster mechanisms, including surge, to deploy staff. The Administrative Services Branch (ASB) in OCHA is responsible for supporting the OCHA Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) to recruit and administer fit-for-purpose staff and in compliance with the Organization's Staff Regulations and Rules. ASB is located in New York and Geneva with 104 posts in the biennium 2014-2015: 7 from regular budget (3 professional and 4 general service staff) and 97 from extrabudgetary funding (41 professional and 56 general service staff). ASB is headed by an Executive Officer at the D-1 level. Within ASB, the Human Resources Section performs human resources management functions. The Section is headed at the P-5 level with the support of 35 staff in Geneva and 3 staff in New York.

6. In addition, the Staffing Support Unit in the Coordination Response Division (CRD), which has 1,700 posts or 80 per cent of OCHA staffing, assists the CRD Director in recruitment matters. The Unit has four professional and three general service staff. Each OCHA Country Office also initiates human resources management actions based on the substantive programme managers' decisions, and liaises with the local office of United Nations Agency A, which performs human resources management functions related to national staff.

¹ High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing Report dated January 2016 to the Secretary-General

7. Comments provided by OCHA are incorporated in italics.

II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

8. The audit was conducted to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of OCHA governance, risk management and control processes in providing reasonable assurance regarding **effective workforce planning and management of its human resources in OCHA**.

9. This audit was included in the 2015 work plan of OIOS due to the operational risk relating to workforce planning and human resources management in OCHA.

10. The key controls tested for the audit were: (a) strategic human resources planning; and (b) human resources management. For the purpose of this audit, OIOS defined these key controls as follows:

(a) **Strategic human resources planning** - controls that provide reasonable assurance that: (i) OCHA has a suitable workforce planning and human resources management strategy to deploy the right people at the right time to support its mandate; and (ii) critical posts are identified for rapid recruitment by using all available mechanisms, including special measures under General Assembly resolution 46/182.

(b) **Human resources management** - controls that provide reasonable assurance that OCHA has: (i) established human resources management processes to manage vacancies, deploy staff and adequately maintain an up to date roster of suitable candidates in compliance with United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules; and (ii) an organizational structure that appropriately supports efficient and effective human resources management functions and processes at headquarters and in the field.

11. The key controls were assessed for the control objectives shown in Table 1. One control objective (shown in Table 1 as “Not assessed”) was not relevant to the scope defined for this audit.

12. OIOS conducted this audit from November 2015 to March 2016. The audit covered the period from 1 January 2012 to 31 January 2016.

13. OIOS conducted an activity-level risk assessment to identify and assess specific risk exposures, and to confirm the relevance of the selected key controls in mitigating associated risks. Through interviews, analytical reviews and tests of controls, OIOS assessed the existence and adequacy of internal controls and conducted necessary tests to determine their effectiveness.

III. AUDIT RESULTS

14. The OCHA governance, risk management and control processes examined were initially assessed as **partially satisfactory**² in providing reasonable assurance regarding **effective workforce planning and management of human resources in OCHA**. OIOS made nine recommendations to address issues identified in the audit.

² A rating of “**partially satisfactory**” means that important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies exist in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

15. OCHA established adequate guidelines to identify its human resources requirements in the start-up/increasing phase of an emergency. It however needed to develop a workforce planning and human resources management strategy to support the Office to deliver its mandate effectively. OCHA also needed to implement special measures granted under General Assembly resolution 46/182 to meet its human resources requirements. OCHA used grants to appoint senior officials outside the Secretary-General’s delegated authority. It also used projects to recruit other staff, which was not in compliance with guidance issued by the Controller. OCHA current roster mechanisms were well established but not optimally used.

16. With respect to the key control of human resources management, OCHA needed to: segregate administrative and substantive duties to support human resources management; clarify roles and responsibilities for human resources management functions performed by different units within the Office; improve human resources management processes to support staff efficiently and maintain global staffing tables and incumbency reports to track vacancies and their recruitment status.

17. OCHA did not accept one important recommendation, which has been escalated to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG) for review and to determine necessary action.

18. The initial overall rating was based on the assessment of key controls presented in Table 1. The final overall rating is **partially satisfactory** as implementation of nine important recommendations remains in progress.

Table 1: Assessment of key controls

Business objective	Key controls	Control objectives			
		Efficient and effective operations	Accurate financial and operational reporting	Safeguarding of assets	Compliance with mandates, regulations and rules
Effective workforce planning and management of human resources in OCHA	(a) Strategic human resources planning	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Not assessed	Partially satisfactory
	(b) Human resources management	Partially satisfactory	Partially satisfactory	Not assessed	Partially satisfactory
FINAL OVERALL RATING: PARTIALLY SATISFACTORY					

A. Strategic human resources planning

OCHA developed a policy to identify its human resources requirements in emergencies

19. General Assembly resolution 46/182 provided OCHA with the responsibility to coordinate an effective emergency humanitarian response to natural disasters and conflicts. OCHA, therefore, was expected to develop an adequate humanitarian response policy to ensure it maintained a quality, “fit-for-purpose” workforce to efficiently and effectively achieve its mandate.

20. In July 2015, OCHA approved a Policy Instruction on Emergency Response, which complemented other corporate policies and provided a visionary concept and planned approach to humanitarian emergency response. The Policy Instruction is applicable in the start-up/increasing phase of an emergency with clear description of timelines for action from the initial alert to up to six months for all

levels of an emergency. The Policy included pre-approved cost plan modules for: (i) large-scale capital level; (ii) medium scale capital level; and (iii) large, medium and small sub-offices, identifying key positions under each module. The Policy required ASB to: (i) expedite administrative processes related to recruitment actions for short-term and fixed-term staff, including facilitation of visas, travel documentation, and medical clearance; (ii) engage with the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) and the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), as necessary, to activate relevant emergency procedures; and (iii) provide technical support to the administrative team deployed as part of the first-line surge. OIOS concluded that OCHA had established an adequate policy to identify its human resources requirements in the start-up/increasing phase of an emergency.

OCHA needed a workforce planning and human resources management strategy

21. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs agreed in the senior manager's compact signed with the Secretary-General to exercise his delegated human resources management authority efficiently and effectively. The OCHA Strategic and Management Plans identified the need for a "fit-for-purpose" workforce to carry out its mandated activities.

22. OCHA had promulgated corporate policies for rapid deployment of critical positions, but there were still gaps in appointing and retaining a "fit-for-purpose" workforce. For instance, OCHA deployed personnel through hiring project personnel and allocating grants to United Nations agencies to appoint senior level staff. However, these practices were not in keeping with the human resources management principles of the Secretariat.

23. Additionally, OCHA developed and used rosters to fill positions. The rosters served as an important emergency staff deployment tool; however, they alone were inadequate to effectively attract, deploy, develop, and retain highly motivated staff critical to the delivery of the OCHA mandate. Also, there was a need to clarify roles and responsibilities for administering human resources management processes between New York, Geneva, and field offices to ensure efficiency and accountability, as well as develop and maintain an adequate human resources management infrastructure through policy and system development.

24. The above-mentioned gaps in its human resources procedures was because OCHA had yet to develop a workforce planning and human resources management strategy that supported its overall mandate. OCHA had also not requested special measures available under General Assembly resolution 46/182 to enable it to meet its human resources requirements. The Secretariat recently finalized the Standing Administrative Measures for Crisis Response and Mission Start-up in consultation with OCHA, which includes expedited staff deployment provisions that could be useful to OCHA. However, without developing a workforce planning and human resources management strategy and implementing special measures to ensure rapid deployment and management of staff, there continued to be a risk that OCHA may be unable to meet operational requirements during the height of an emergency.

(1) OCHA should develop a workforce planning and human resources management strategy, that includes a strategy to implement special measures under General Assembly resolution 46/182, to effectively deliver the full range of its mandate.

OCHA accepted recommendation 1 and stated that workforce planning and human resources management strategy would be developed in line with its mandate. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of OCHA workforce planning and human resources management strategy.

OCHA used grants to appoint senior officials outside the Secretary-General’s delegated authority

25. According to the Secretary-General’s bulletin on the delegation of authority in the administration of Staff Regulations and Rules (ST/SGB/2015/1), the Secretary-General exclusively retained the authority to:

- a. Assign a staff member to any of the activities or offices of the United Nations at the Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) level under Staff Regulation 1.2 (c); and
- b. Grant a temporary appointment to staff at the ASG level and to exceptionally renew such appointments for up to one additional year under Staff Rule 4.12 (a) and (b).

26. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs in his/her role as the Secretary-General’s ERC was responsible for designating humanitarian coordinators to ensure that the United Nations’ response to disasters and/or conflicts was well organized. According to the terms of reference for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), humanitarian coordinators were representatives of the ERC. Therefore, in appointing humanitarian coordinators at the ASG level, the ERC was expected to ensure that such appointments complied with applicable United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules.

27. During 2012-2015, OCHA made 10 senior level staff appointments for humanitarian coordinators and deputy humanitarian coordinators at the ASG level in five emergencies. OCHA budgeted resources under grants in its cost plans and allocated them to three United Nations funds and programmes and one specialized agency, which made these appointments for OCHA. Table 2 shows appointments under grants arrangements.

Table 2: Appointments under grant arrangements during 2012-2015

	Function	Level	Country/Crisis
1	Regional Humanitarian Coordinator	ASG	Syria
2	Regional Humanitarian Coordinator	ASG	Yemen
3	Regional Humanitarian Coordinator	ASG	Sahel
4	Regional Humanitarian Coordinator	ASG	Syria
5	Regional Humanitarian Coordinator	ASG	Syria
6	Regional Humanitarian Coordinator	ASG	Iraq
7	Regional Humanitarian Coordinator	ASG	Sahel
8	Regional Humanitarian Coordinator	ASG	Sahel
9	Senior Humanitarian Coordinator	ASG	Central African Republic
10	Senior Humanitarian Coordinator	ASG	Central African Republic

Source: OCHA

28. The candidates appointed were both internal and external to the United Nations system. The internal candidates were appointed through inter-organizational reimbursable loan arrangements with the parent United Nations agency. OCHA ASB in Geneva formalized the arrangements. However, OCHA did not request the Secretary-General to appoint the ASGs invoking his exclusive delegation of authority.

29. OCHA stated that it did not have authorized ASG posts in its staffing table to recruit humanitarian coordinators at this level. It further stated that as an inter-agency function, the humanitarian

coordinators were appointed by, worked on behalf of, and in the name of the IASC, which included all key United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations working in the humanitarian field. Although the decision to designate humanitarian coordinators was done in consultation with IASC, OIOS noted, however that IASC did not have authority to appoint a United Nations staff member at any level. There were also no provisions or instructions in the IASC guidance outlining the administrative process to appoint humanitarian coordinators at the ASG level. More importantly, the humanitarian coordinators needed an appropriate authority to effectively carry out their responsibilities through an appointment by the Secretary-General.

(2) OCHA should, in collaboration with the OHRM and EOSG, put in place procedures to ensure that OCHA complies with the provisions of the Secretary-General's bulletin related to his exclusive authority in appointing staff at the Assistant Secretarial-General level.

OCHA did not accept recommendation 2 and stated that the humanitarian coordinator function falls under the IASC and is not a United Nations appointment; humanitarian coordinators are not staff of OCHA. The procedures to appoint humanitarian coordinators were endorsed by the IASC in 1994, and included in the 1994 report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (A/49/177/Add.1 – E/1994/80/Add.1, 1 November 1994). General Assembly resolution 49/139 took note of the IASC recommendations. The Secretary-General subsequently reaffirmed the procedures for the appointment/designation of humanitarian coordinators as recommended by the IASC in his 1995 report to ECOSOC (A/50/203 – E/1995/79). The General Assembly took note of the Secretary-General's report (A/RES/50/57). Paragraph 38 of the 1994 report (A/49/177/Add.1 – E/1994/80/Add.1) states that the ERC on behalf of the Secretary-General, will consult with the IASC in appointing humanitarian coordinators. OIOS reiterates its recommendation, as while the ERC has authority to appoint humanitarian coordinators, he is doing so on behalf of the Secretary-General who has reserved exclusively the authority to appoint staff at the ASG level. Authority to appoint staff at these levels was not delegated to the ERC, who had also not sought special measures in this regard.

OIOS has escalated this recommendation to EOSG for review and to determine appropriate action. Recommendation 2 remains open pending the outcome of the review of EOSG and implementation of any necessary action.

Need to report on staff recruited through United Nations Agency B

30. The umbrella memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Secretariat and United Nations Agency B, dated 3 August 2014, stipulated the requirements under which Secretariat departments and offices could utilize United Nations Agency B as a service provider for project implementation and programme support services. The Supplementary Guidance to the MOU prohibited outsourcing mandated activities for which the Secretariat function in question had already been staffed and required OCHA to seek prior approval of the ASG for human resources management and the Controller to recruit staff members through United Nations Agency B on its behalf. United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules required OCHA to recruit staff members within the established recruitment procedures.

31. During 2013-2015, OCHA entered into financial agreements with United Nations Agency B to establish seven “service support” projects in New York and field duty stations. The value of these agreements totaled \$9.8 million as of May 2015.

32. A review of four of the projects totaling \$7.9 million (80 per cent) showed that the activities covered research, information management, and information technology tasks. According to the contracts, 33 personnel were hired to perform functions related to: (i) information technology (24

personnel); (ii) communications (4 personnel) to support the Communications Service Branch within the Division for Corporate Programmes (CPD); (iii) humanitarian affairs (4 personnel) for the OCHA Jordan field office; and (iv) research (2 personnel). However, there was no evidence that OCHA sought prior approval of the ASG for human resources management and the Controller for using United Nations Agency B to recruit staff through the projects.

33. OCHA stated that it used United Nations Agency B projects to procure highly specialized skills, such as information technology specialists, at prevailing market rates to meet its operational requirements. Nevertheless, OCHA needed prior approval to undertake recruitment actions through United Nations Agency B.

(3) OCHA should report to the Assistant Secretary-General for human resources management and the Controller recruitment cases where it authorized a service provider to recruit staff members under service and operational support projects.

OCHA accepted recommendation 3 without comments. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence that OCHA has reported to the ASG for human resources management and the Controller recruitment cases undertaken through United Nations Agency B.

Current roster mechanisms were not fully effective to ensure rapid deployment of staff

34. OCHA was expected to develop appropriate human resources management policies, strategies, procedures, processes, operational structures, and resources to ensure it maintained a quality, “fit-for-purpose” workforce to efficiently and effectively achieve its mandate.

35. OCHA established five roster mechanisms to deploy emergency staff, namely: (a) the Emergency Response Roster; (b) the Associate Surge Pool; (c) the Standby Partnership Programme; (d) the Roaming Emergency Surge Officers/Roaming Operational Support Officers; and (e) the Protection Standby Capacity/Gender Standby Capacity Roster.

36. The Emergency Services Branch (ESB) was responsible for developing and maintaining these rosters, and had made positive efforts in building them. However, there was no evidence that ESB was managing them in coordination with ASB and CRD, and there was no formal procedure such as a panel representing functional units of OCHA to evaluate candidates placed on each roster. While ESB regularly presented status reports on roster mechanisms to OCHA management, challenges experienced in developing and fully utilizing each roster to deploy the necessary emergency staff were not adequately reflected in these reports. For example, when roster candidates were not selected, no justification was provided or reference made to the adequacy of personnel already placed on the roster, even though it required the re-start of the selection process, delaying the deployment of emergency staff.

37. Roster management was therefore not fully effective and the rosters were not systematically used to hire staff. A review of the process noted that this was because candidates on rosters did not always have the necessary subject expertise, experience and skills, and the number of candidates on rosters as well as their grade was insufficient given the increasing number of emergencies. Another challenge was the new requirement from CRD to deploy rostered candidates for three months to Level 3 emergencies, which resulted in a reduction of the pool of candidates (particularly at senior levels) applying for roster membership.

38. Consequently, each roster mechanism was not optimally used in the deployment of emergency staff, increasing the risk that OCHA may not be adequately prepared to rapidly deploy a sufficient number of qualified staff to respond efficiently and effectively to an emergency.

(4) OCHA should require the Emergency Services Branch, in coordination with the Administrative Services Branch and the Coordination and Response Division, to address the challenges identified in the roster mechanisms and to review their effectiveness as rapid staff deployment tools.

OCHA accepted recommendation 4 without comments. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of evidence that ESB, in coordination with ASB and CRD, has addressed the challenges identified in the roster mechanisms to enhance their effectiveness.

(5) OCHA should establish a panel representing its substantive functional units and the Administrative Services Branch to evaluate candidates for each roster and to recommend rostered candidates for deployment.

OCHA accepted recommendation 5 and stated that the recommendation had already been implemented as it relates to the Emergency Response Roster and to some extent to the Associate Surge Pool and the Standby Partnership Programme. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence that OCHA has established a panel representing all substantive functional units and ASB to evaluate and recommend roster candidates.

B. Human resources management

There was a need to segregate human resources management administrative duties from substantive functions

39. According to the OCHA Internal Control Framework, roles and responsibilities for all stages of the human resources transactional processes and related transactions were required to be controlled by appropriate checks and balances to mitigate potential conflicts of interest. In accordance with the Secretary-General's bulletin on the Organization of the Secretariat of the United Nations (ST/SGB/2015/3) an executive office/administrative unit assisted the head of the department/office, programme managers and staff in carrying out human resources management delegated by the Under-Secretary-General for management. OCHA, therefore, was expected to implement adequate segregation of duties between officials or business units with delegated human resources authority.

40. Within CPD, ASB was responsible for managing human resources in OCHA. The OCHA Executive Officer headed ASB and was required to, amongst other duties: (i) direct and oversee the provision of administrative services within OCHA at Headquarters and in the field; (ii) provide advice and guidance to senior management on complex human resources policy issues; (iii) lead and support the development of human resources policies within OCHA; and (iv) liaise with OHRM and UNOG to resolve OCHA personnel matters.

41. However, ASB lacked operational independence in performing its human resources management functions due to its positioning within CPD. This is because CPD also assumed substantive responsibility for three subprogrammes: (i) Policy Development and Studies Branch under subprogramme 1; (ii) Funding Coordination Section and the secretariat of the Central Emergency Response Fund under subprogramme 2; and (iii) Information Services Branch under subprogramme 5. Within this organizational structure, the Executive Officer had personal delegation of authority to issue allotments, accept contributions, and sign financial agreements and was accountable to the Controller for all actions taken with this authority. However, as head of the ASB, the Executive Officer reported administratively to the Director of CPD, who supervised and evaluated his performance in the discharge of these functions.

This organizational arrangement did not allow for adequate segregation of duties between the OCHA programme and programme support functions. As a result, the control environment and leadership on human resources management in OCHA was weakened.

(6) OCHA should appropriately position the Administrative Services Branch in its organizational structure with a direct reporting line to the Under-/Assistant Secretary-General to enable the Branch to effectively perform corporate level human resources management functions with fiduciary responsibility to the Department of Management as stipulated under the Secretary-General's bulletin on the Organization of the Secretariat of the United Nations (ST/SGB/2015/3).

OCHA accepted recommendation 6 without comments. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of evidence that OCHA has appropriately positioned ASB to perform its corporate level human resources management functions effectively.

Roles and responsibilities for human resources management functions needed clarification

42. OCHA management was responsible for establishing a proper organizational structure that adequately supported OCHA personnel needs for achieving its mandate and ensuring compliance with the Organization's Staff Regulations and Staff Rules.

43. Human resources management functions were undertaken by different entities. ASB in New York and Geneva administered headquarters posts and international posts in the field, while OCHA contracted United Nations Agency A as service provider to deliver administrative services to national staff serving in the field. These services included staff/human resources administration (e.g., recruitment, contract issuance) and recurrent personnel management services such as payroll and recruitment of consultants. Administrative support staff in each OCHA Country Office liaised with local offices of United Nations Agency A regarding these services. A Staffing Support Unit also supported the CRD Director on staff recruitment matters.

44. However, OCHA had not documented roles and division of responsibilities of the various internal participants in the process. While the Executive Officer in ASB New York was accountable for the overall administration of OCHA staff, it was only the Human Resources Management Section in Geneva that had the required delegation of authority for human resources management functions. Therefore, the Executive Officer had limited control over the exercise of that authority by the Section. CRD maintained its own staffing table and so did other substantive functions. As a result, there was a lack of clarity over the ownership, responsibility and accountability for each part of the management of the human resources process.

(7) OCHA should clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff performing human resources management functions in the Administrative Services Branch in New York and Geneva and those staff performing similar functions at the substantive divisions to ensure they complement each other and avoid any duplication of efforts.

OCHA accepted recommendation 7 and stated that a proposal to address the recommendation was currently under discussion. Recommendation 7 remains open pending receipt of evidence that OCHA has clarified the roles and responsibilities of staff performing human resources management functions in ASB and those staff performing similar functions at the substantive divisions.

Improved human resources management processes were needed to support staff efficiently

45. ASB in OCHA was required to effectively facilitate recruitment and deployment, and administer staff in accordance with the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules.

46. The audit results showed that prior to implementation of Umoja, ASB did not adequately design internal management tools to monitor and report on human resources management processes. ASB did not have a centralized system to track all requests received and time taken to complete these requests. ASB had also not established key performance indicators to measure and report the performance of ASB in carrying out its responsibilities against the established timelines and benchmarks.

47. As a result, OCHA was unable to track bottlenecks in the human resources management processes, or substantiate reported delays and other inefficiencies with data and documentary evidence and identify areas for improvement at ASB, CRD, field offices or Human Resources Services in UNOG.

(8) OCHA Administrative Services Branch (ASB) should establish key performance indicators for human resources management processing timelines for each stakeholder in the process to measure the performance for which ASB is responsible, to improve efficiency and transparency in the administration of staff.

OCHA accepted recommendation 8 and stated that ASB would ensure that the timing guidelines provided by OHRM are made available to all hiring managers. Recommendation 8 remains open pending receipt of evidence that the ASB has established key performance indicators for human resources management processing timelines for each stakeholder in the process.

Need to prepare consolidated staffing tables and incumbency reports

48. The OCHA Management Plan for 2014-2017 identified recruitment and staff selection, and post incumbency and vacancy management among the key human resources management processes to ensure a flexible and responsive OCHA workforce. Umoja has been adopted as the official management information system in the Secretariat to manage posts, recruitments, incumbencies and vacancies.

49. ASB managed OCHA human resources processes in the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) prior to June 2015 and in Umoja since its implementation. A review of data in both IMIS and Umoja showed duplications in post incumbencies. There was also no consolidated data for OCHA as a whole within Umoja on post incumbencies and vacancies for the 2,200 budgeted posts in the 2014-2015 programme budget to globally track recruitment timelines, staff movements, incumbencies and vacancies.

50. This was because national posts were budgeted for in cost plans which were maintained in the OCHA Financial Administrative Service Information Technology system. United Nations Agency A maintained information on incumbencies and vacancies on these posts on its systems as it locally administered them based on financial authorizations issued by ASB. There was also no requirement for heads of offices or human resources management counterparts in OCHA field offices to report to ASB on their post incumbencies and vacancies. Although CRD received this data on a monthly basis, it maintained them in an internal Excel spreadsheet for its own management purposes and did not share them regularly with ASB.

51. Official records on posts were therefore fragmented making it difficult to monitor information on recruitment timelines, staff movements, incumbencies and vacancies globally.

(9) OCHA should take action to ensure that the Administrative Services Branch prepares

global staffing tables and incumbency reports based on posts approved in the cost plans for New York, Geneva and field locations and track vacancies and their recruitment status.

OCHA accepted recommendation 9 and stated that Umoja provides these reports. Recommendation 9 remains open pending receipt of evidence that OCHA has taken action to ensure that ASB prepares or obtains global staffing tables and incumbency reports on OCHA posts to effectively manage them.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

52. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the Management and staff of OCHA for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

(Signed) Eleanor T. Burns
Director, Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of management of human resources in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Critical ³ / Important ⁴	C/ O ⁵	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁶
1	OCHA should develop a workforce planning and human resources management strategy, that includes a strategy to implement special measures under General Assembly resolution 46/182, to effectively deliver the full range of its mandate.	Important	O	Receipt of OCHA workforce planning and human resources management strategy.	30 September 2017
2	OCHA should, in collaboration with OHRM and EOSG, put in place procedures to ensure that OCHA complies with the provisions of the Secretary-General's bulletin related to his exclusive authority in appointing staff at the Assistant Secretary-General level.	Important	O	Receipt of the outcome of the review of EOSG and implementation of any necessary action.	10 August 2016
3	OCHA should report to the Assistant Secretary-General for human resources management and the Controller recruitment cases where it authorized a service provider to recruit staff members under service and operational support projects.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that OCHA has reported to the ASG for human resources management and the Controller recruitment cases undertaken through United Nations Agency B.	31 December 2016
4	OCHA should require the Emergency Services Branch, in coordination with the Administrative Services Branch and the Coordination and Response Division, to address the challenges identified in the roster mechanisms and to review their effectiveness as rapid staff deployment tools.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that ESB, in coordination with ASB and CRD, has addressed the challenges identified in the roster mechanisms to enhance their effectiveness.	30 June 2017
5	OCHA should establish a panel representing its substantive functional units and the Administrative Services Branch to evaluate candidates for each roster and to recommend rostered candidates for	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that OCHA has established a panel representing substantive functional units and ASB to evaluate and recommend candidates for roster and deployment.	30 June 2017

³ Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

⁴ Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

⁵ C = closed, O = open

⁶ Date provided by OCHA in response to recommendations.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of management of human resources in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Recom. no.	Recommendation	Critical ³ / Important ⁴	C/ O ⁵	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁶
	deployment.				
6	OCHA should appropriately position the Administrative Services Branch in its organizational structure with a direct reporting line to the Under-/Assistant Secretary-General to enable the Branch to effectively perform corporate level human resources management functions with fiduciary responsibility to the Department of Management as stipulated under ST/SGB/2015/3 on the Organization of the Secretariat of the United Nations.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that OCHA has appropriately positioned ASB to enable the Branch to perform its corporate level human resources management functions effectively.	30 September 2017
7	OCHA should clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff performing human resources management functions in the Administrative Services Branch in New York and Geneva and those staff performing similar functions at the substantive divisions to ensure they complement each other and avoid any duplication of efforts.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that OCHA has clarified the roles and responsibilities of staff performing human resources management functions in ASB and at the substantive divisions.	30 June 2017
8	OCHA Administrative Services Branch (ASB) should establish key performance indicators for human resources management processing timelines for each stakeholder in the process chain to measure the performance for which ASB is responsible, to improve efficiency and transparency in the administration of staff.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that ASB has established key performance indicators for human resources management processing timelines to measure performance.	31 December 2016
9	OCHA should take action to ensure that the Administrative Services Branch prepares global staffing tables and incumbency reports based on posts approved in the cost plans for New York, Geneva and field locations and track vacancies and their recruitment status.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that OCHA maintains global staffing tables and incumbency status on OCHA posts.	31 December 2016

APPENDIX I

Management Response

United Nations  Nations Unies
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

TO: Ms. Muriette Lawrence-Hume, Chief,
A: New York Audit Service,
Internal Audit Division, OIOS

DATE: 10 August 2016

REFERENCE: IAD: 16-00343

THROUGH:
S/C DE:

FROM: Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for
DE: Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief
Coordinator

Stephen O'Brien

SUBJECT: Response to the draft report of the audit on human
OBJET: resources in OCHA (AN2015/590/01)

1. In reference to your memorandum dated 26 July 2016, I am enclosing OCHA's comments on the draft report of the audit on human resources in OCHA.
2. Many of the recommendations contained in this draft report are proposals that are already under review internally.
3. I accept all of the recommendations with the exception of recommendation 2. Neither OCHA nor the Executive Office of the Secretary-General has the authority to regularize employees that fall under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), as per resolution 46/182. More detail is given on this point in the management response matrix. It will be helpful for this recommendation to be redrafted to reflect actions within my purview.
4. Thank you.

cc: B. Jones

Management Response

Draft report on an audit of management of human resources in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	OCHA should develop a workforce planning and human resources management strategy, that includes a strategy to implement special measures under General Assembly resolution 46/182, to effectively deliver the full range of its mandate.	Important	Yes	All OCHA Directors	Q3 2017	This will be done in line with the mandate.
2	OCHA should, in collaboration with the Office of Human Resources Management and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, regularize all appointments at the Assistant Secretary-General and D-2 levels and put in place procedures to ensure that OCHA complies with the provisions of the Secretary-General's bulletin related to his exclusive authority in appointing staff at D-2 and above levels.	Important	No	N/A	N/A	The language of the revised Recommendation 2 does not change the substance of the recommendation. As with the previously submitted comments on the issue of designating/appointing of Humanitarian Coordinators, OCHA does not accept this recommendation. OCHA reiterates that the Humanitarian Coordinator function falls under the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC: General Assembly resolution A/RES/46/182 sets out the composition of the IASC). The IASC appointments are not UN appointments, and the Humanitarian Coordinators are not staff of OCHA. Many IASC members, UN and international organisations, including the International Organization for

¹ Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

² Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

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						<p>Migration, the World Health Organization, and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, are part of the UN Common System for the purposes of contracting staff and participation in the pension fund, but whose staff are not appointed under the authority of the Secretary-General or by the Secretary-General.</p> <p>The procedures with regard to the appointment of Humanitarian Coordinators were endorsed by the IASC in 1994, and included in the 1994 report of the Secretary-General to ECOSOC (A/49/177/Add.1 – E/1994/80/Add.1, 1 November 1994). The General Assembly took note of the IASC recommendations (A/RES/49/139). The Secretary-General subsequently reaffirmed the procedures for the appointment/designation of HCs as recommended by the IASC in his 1995 report to ECOSOC (A/50/203 – E/1995/79). The GA took note of the SG report (A/RES/50/57).</p> <p>Paragraph 38 of the Secretary-General's report (A/49/177/Add.1 – E/1994/80/Add.1) states that the Emergency Relief Coordinator, on behalf of the Secretary-General, will consult with the IASC in appointing Humanitarian Coordinators.</p>

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						<p>Paragraph 40(a) of the report states that the Emergency Relief Coordinator can designate the Resident Coordinator as the Humanitarian Coordinator, or, when the Resident Coordinator will not be able to carry out the function, Paragraph 40(d) states that the Emergency Relief Coordinator may appoint a Humanitarian Coordinator. As such, the Secretary General's report makes it clear that the Emergency Relief Coordinator has the delegation of authority to both "designate" and "appoint" the Humanitarian Coordinator.</p> <p>The Secretary-General's report does not mention administrative processes to appoint humanitarian coordinators at the ASG and D-2 levels. Paragraph 41 of the same report makes clear, however, that these procedures have been put in place to "ensure that there is no delay in the appointment of the Humanitarian Coordinator."</p> <p>To ensure that Humanitarian Coordinators continue to be designated/appointed in a timely manner and are not unduly delayed, OCHA rejects this recommendation.</p>
3	OCHA should report to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management and the Controller	Important	Yes	OCHA Executive Officer	Q4 2016	No comment

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	recruitment cases where it authorized a service provider to recruit staff members under service and operational support projects.					
4	OCHA should require the Emergency Services Branch, in coordination with the Administrative Services Branch and the Coordination and Response Division, to address the challenges identified in the roster mechanisms and to review their effectiveness as rapid staff deployment tools.	Important	Yes	Chief, Emergency Services Branch	Q2 2017	No comment
5	OCHA should establish a panel representing its substantive functional units and the Administrative Services Branch to evaluate candidates for each roster and to recommend the rostered candidates for deployment.	Important	Yes	Chief, Emergency Services Branch and Chief, Coordination and Response Division	Q2 2017	This is already done for the ERR and to a certain extent the ASP and SBPP. The recommendation would be more helpful if it included revision / establishing SOP for each of the roster to include candidate screening processes. ASB supports the administration of those who are deployed from a roster rather than the selection.
6	OCHA should appropriately position the Administrative Services Branch in its organizational structure with a direct reporting line to the Under-/Assistant Secretary-General to enable the Branch to effectively perform corporate level human resources management functions with fiduciary responsibility to the Department of Management as stipulated under ST/SGB/2015/3 on the Organization of the	Important	Yes	Under- Secretary- General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	Q3 2017	No comment

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	Secretariat of the United Nations.					
7	OCHA should clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff performing human resources management functions in the Administrative Services Branch in New York and Geneva and those staff performing similar functions at the substantive divisions to ensure they complement each other and avoid any duplication of efforts.	Important	Yes	OCHA Executive Officer	Q2 2017	A proposal for this is currently under discussion.
8	OCHA Administrative Services Branch (ASB) should establish key performance indicators for human resources management processing timelines for each stakeholder in the process chain to measure the performance for which ASB is responsible, to improve efficiency and transparency in the administration of staff.	Important	Yes	OCHA Executive Officer	Q4 2016	OHRM already provides timing guidelines for all stages of HR recruitment. ASB will ensure that these are made available to all hiring managers.
9	OCHA should take action to ensure that the Administrative Services Branch prepares global staffing tables and incumbency reports based on posts approved in the cost plans for New York, Geneva and field locations and track vacancies and their recruitment status.	Important	Yes	OCHA Executive Officer	Q4 2016	Umoja can produce these reports.