



## **INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION**

### **REPORT 2018/124**

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**Audit of human resources  
management in the United Nations  
Support Office in Somalia and the  
United Nations Assistance Mission in  
Somalia**

**The Mission needed to reduce delays in  
processing recruitments and improve gender  
parity and geographical distribution**

**11 December 2018  
Assignment No. AP2017/638/03**

# **Audit of human resources management in the United Nations Support Office in Somalia and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of human resources management in the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM). The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of controls over human resources management in UNSOS and UNSOM. The audit covered the period from July 2015 to June 2018 and included: vacancies and post management; recruitment of international staff; and performance management and development.

Through monitoring key vacancies, UNSOS reduced the overall vacancy rates of UNSOS and UNSOM to 12 and 7 per cent below the respective targets of 31 and 19 per cent. However, controls to ensure timely recruitment, gender parity and geographical representation needed improvement.

OIOS made five recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, UNSOS needed to:

- Limit the use of temporary job openings to temporary functions and properly justify extensions beyond 364 days;
- Reduce the time taken for recruitments by frequently following up with hiring managers on assessments of candidates;
- Ensure that candidates are assessed in accordance with established procedures;
- Monitor progress and achievement of its gender parity plan and develop and implement a geographical representation goal and plan for UNSOS and UNSOM; and
- Enforce timely completion of staff performance evaluations that are based on agreed upon work plans and in compliance with established guidelines, and ensure that supervisors attend necessary performance management training.

UNSOS accepted the recommendations and has initiated action to implement them.

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# **Audit of human resources management in the United Nations Support Office in Somalia and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia**

## **I. BACKGROUND**

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the human resources management in the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM).
2. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General in UNSOM and the Head of UNSOS, assisted by the Human Resources Section (HRS) in UNSOS, are responsible for the human resources management including recruitment of international staff, post management, and performance management and staff development. Management of human resources in UNSOS and UNSOM is governed by Staff Regulations and Rules and various administrative instructions, circulars and standard operating procedures issued by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support (DPKO/DFS).
3. Authorized staffing levels for UNSOS and UNSOM were 553 and 294 respectively. For the period from July 2015 to June 2018, UNSOS recruited 245 international staff (169 for UNSOS and 76 for UNSOM). These included 158 recruitments from roster, 7 position-specific/standard job openings (PSJOs) and 80 temporary job opening (TJOs) recruitments. HRS is headed by a Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) at the P-5 level supported by 13 international and 7 General Service staff.
4. Comments provided by UNSOS are incorporated in italics.

## **II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

5. The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of controls over human resources management in UNSOS and UNSOM.
6. This audit was included in the 2018 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the risk that potential weaknesses in human resources management could adversely affect the ability of UNSOS and UNSOM to achieve their mandates.
7. OIOS conducted this audit from February to September 2018. The audit covered the period from July 2015 to June 2018. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas in the management of human resources, which included: vacancies and post management, recruitment of international staff, and performance management and development.
8. The audit methodology included: interviews of key personnel, reviews of relevant documentation, analytical reviews of data, and testing of randomly selected sample 58 of 245 international staff recruitments, and 106 of 1,048 performance evaluations.
9. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

### III. AUDIT RESULTS

#### A. Vacancies and post management

Although vacancy rates had reduced, extension of temporary appointments needed justification and documentation

10. The General Assembly, during the annual budgeting process, established expected vacancy rates of UNSOM and UNSOS as shown in Tables 1 and 2. Instructions on the staff selection system provide that UNSOS may fill vacancies by using TJO recruitments for functions that are of a temporary nature up to 364 days, which could be exceptionally extended up to 729 days with appropriate justifications.

11. UNSOM made significant improvements in reducing its vacancy rates which were below established targets, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Planned and actual international staff vacancy rates in UNSOM (per cent)**

Calendar year	Target %	Actual average %
(a) 2016	25	15
(b) 2017	22	16
(c) 2018 at 31 July 2018	19	7

Source: Secretary-General's reports on budgets for UNSOM

12. UNSOS vacancy rates for the fiscal years 2015/16 and 2016/17 were 12 and 30 per cent, which were above the target rates, but UNSOS reduced the rate to 12 per cent in the fiscal year 2017/18 compared to the target of 31 per cent.

**Table 2: Planned and actual international staff vacancy rates in UNSOS (per cent)**

Fiscal year	Target %	Actual average %
(a) 2015/16	10	12
(b) 2016/17	25	30
(c) 2017/18	31	12

Source: Secretary-General's reports on budgets for UNSOS

13. However, the reduced vacancy rates were largely attributed to temporary filling of vacant posts through TJOs. From July 2015 to June 2018, UNSOM filled 41 of 76 recruitments by TJOs and UNSOS filled 39 of 169 recruitments by TJOs. This represented 33 per cent (80 of 245) of all recruitments during the audit period. UNSOS stated that due to unique operational environment faced with security challenges and limited ability to attract candidates, requiring flexibility, it used TJOs. UNSOS, also used TJOs to meet operational needs as it takes time to fill vacancies and cover the absence of staff on assignment.

14. Additionally, there were at least 29 posts filled by TJOs (12 in UNSOS and 17 in UNSOM) where the incumbent occupied the posts for over 12 months, indicating that they were not being used for temporary functions. There was no documented justification for extending these TJOs beyond the 364 days. Lack of documented justification for extension of TJOs was due to an oversight. This could lead to a perception of lack of transparency in TJO recruitments.

**(1) UNSOS should limit the use of temporary job openings to temporary functions and properly document justifications when extending temporary appointments beyond 364 days.**

*UNSOS accepted recommendation 1 and stated that TJOs are used to address evolving challenges facing UNSOS and UNSOM. Management will ensure that appropriate justifications are provided for any temporary appointments extended beyond the 364 days limit. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of evidence that efforts are being made to reduce the number of TJOs, and appropriate justification is provided for exceptional extensions of temporary appointments beyond 364 days.*

## **B. Recruitment of international staff**

### There were delays in the recruitment of international staff

15. Instructions on the staff selection system recommend 107 days and 60 days of recruitment timelines (from creation of job requests to selection) for PSJO and roster recruitments, respectively.

16. UNSOS identified and tracked 114 of the 245 international staff recruitments for UNSOS and UNSOM by using a recruitment plan and a tool called Human Resources Insight. Despite the plan and monitoring tools, there were delays in recruitments. For the 114 (46 per cent) recruitments, UNSOS took an average of 369 days for 7 PSJOs and 139 days for 107 recruitments from roster. These delays were encountered, as UNSOS management was not always diligently monitoring the recruitment process by following up with hiring managers to ensure they expediated the completion of assessments of candidates. Delays in recruitment activities could impede the ability of UNSOS and UNSOM to implement mandated activities.

**(2) UNSOS should take steps to reduce the time taken for recruitments by frequently following up with hiring managers who have been assigned to assess candidates.**

*UNSOS accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it conducts regular follow-ups through a tracking table. In addition, monthly progress reports will be prepared and shared with hiring managers to ensure timely assessments of candidates. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence of the steps taken to frequently follow-up with hiring managers and improved timeliness in recruitments.*

### Need to strengthen the assessment of job applicants

17. The administrative instruction on the staff selection system requires HRS to conduct initial assessment of candidates to verify whether they meet the evaluation criteria of job openings. An assessment panel composed of at least three members is required to assess, evaluate and determine the suitability of candidates for PSJOs and submit a list of suitable candidates to the Senior Review Board for clearance.

18. A review of 58 recruitment actions showed that assessment panels made of at least three members were established to evaluate candidates for PSJOs and HRS conducted initial assessment of candidates prior to evaluation by panel members. However, the following weaknesses were noted:

- (a) Two candidates were eliminated during the initial screening of applicants in two separate recruitment processes for not having relevant experience: one was eliminated because of lack of experience in the region, and the other, a rostered candidate, was screened out because of lack of

experience in the United Nations. However, these requirements were not included in the vacancy announcement. Also, for a recruitment from roster job opening, a candidate who was not on the roster was included in the list of candidates that were initially screened. The candidate in question was subsequently selected for the job;

(b) On a request from a hiring manager, HRS added a candidate who had not passed the initial screening for a TJO. UNSOS explained that the exceptional addition was aimed at improving gender parity. However, the list of candidates who had passed the initial screening included eight female candidates. The candidate in question was selected for the job: and

(c) A comparative analysis report was not prepared to support a selection under one PSJO recruitment, and adequate justification was not provided for four other candidate selections which did not conform to the results and recommendations of the related comparative analysis reports. For example, best rated candidates as per the evaluations were not selected and no justification was given.

19. Due to inadequate oversight over recruitment activities, the two entities did not require compliance with established procedures. This diminished the transparency of the recruitment process and increased the risk that UNSOS and UNSOM may recruit staff without the requisite knowledge and skills to perform their duties.

**(3) UNSOS should take steps to ensure that candidates are assessed in accordance with established procedures.**

*UNSOS accepted recommendation 3 and stated that management will advise hiring managers that recommendations should not be made for a PSJO in the system until the comparative analysis reports have been reviewed and approved. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence to support that assessment of candidates is conducted in accordance with the established procedures.*

There was a need to adequately consider gender parity and geographical representation

20. Instructions on the staff selection system require hiring managers to consider gender and geographical representation in their recommendation of suitable candidates.

21. For fiscal year 2017/18, the representation of women in UNSOS and UNSOM averaged 28 per cent and 30 per cent respectively, which was below the Organization-wide targets. OIOS review of the 58 recruitment actions showed that UNSOS did not demonstrate sufficient consideration for gender representation in its recruitment activities. For instance: (a) in 18 recruitment cases females were assessed as meeting the competencies, but none of them were selected; and (b) in two cases, only male candidates were assessed and evaluated, although there female candidates had passed the initial screening test. In addition, the candidates' assessment report for another job opening indicated that the best candidate was a female; however, a male candidate was selected for the job.

22. In December 2017, UNSOS established a plan to implement the United Nations system-wide gender parity strategy, including setting targets and holding senior management and hiring managers accountable for gender parity through work plans and performance evaluations. However, as at July 2018, UNSOS had not included relevant gender parity goals in the work plans of senior management and hiring managers.

23. With regards to geographical representation, as at June 2017, 88 of 262 (34 per cent) UNSOS international staff represented five countries, and 38 of 145 (26 per cent) UNSOM international staff represented four countries as at December 2017. Further, 15 of 58 recruitment cases reviewed indicated that UNSOS selected candidates from the six most represented countries although there were other qualified candidates from less represented countries.

24. UNSOS explained that the slow progress in improving gender parity and geographical representation was due to a number of factors including limited roster choices, some occupational groups being male dominated, the requirement to prioritize staff from closing missions and the hardship environment in UNSOS and UNSOM. However, in OIOS' view, UNSOS progress and achievement of its gender parity and geographical representation could be improved through additional monitoring. Also, UNSOS did not have a geographical representation goal and plan. As a result, there was a lost opportunity to close the gender parity and geographical distribution gaps in UNSOS and UNSOM.

**(4) UNSOS should monitor progress and achievement of its gender parity plan and develop and implement a geographical representation goal and plan for UNSOS and UNSOM.**

*UNSOS accepted recommendation 4 and stated that management has taken steps to monitor gender parity through the implementation of the gender parity action plan that is updated monthly. UNSOS has also introduced in the selection memo, the distribution of gender within the section, as a measure of timely management information to facilitate decision making. Management will monitor these indicators to improve gender parity and geographical representation. UNSOS however noted that achievement of these targets will be within the context of the vacancy factor of the entities and the vacant positions available. UNSOS also projected a requirement for a Gender Affairs Officer in the Office of Director for in the fiscal year 2019/20 to address gender issues. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of a geographical representational goal and plan and improved gender parity and geographical representation.*

## **C. Performance management and development**

### Need to improve performance management and development of staff

25. Instructions on the performance management and development system require UNSOS to designate a first and second reporting officer for each staff. The first reporting officer is required to work with staff to develop performance goals, related evaluation criteria and personal development plans. UNSOS reporting officers are also required to conduct midpoint and final performance evaluations within three months after the end of the performance cycle. UNSOS is also required to provide training to reporting officers on performance management and development.

26. While UNSOS and UNSOM completed 93 and 91 per cent of the performance evaluations for performance cycles ended March 2016 and 2017, OIOS noted that, 58 of the 1,048 (6 per cent) performance evaluations conducted during performance cycles ended March 2016 and 2017 for UNSOS and UNSOM had one supervisor designated to perform both first and second reporting officer roles. A review of 106 of the 1,048 (10 per cent) performance evaluations indicated that: performance goals for 57 staff were developed late (1 to 12 months after their due date); 17 evaluations did not include development goals; and performance goals for 18 staff were not linked to their section workplans.

27. Mid-point performance evaluations of 57 staff and final evaluations of 13 staff of the 106 reviewed were conducted on average 6.5 and 4.1 months after the end of performance cycle. In addition, 45 end-of-year evaluations did not adequately assess performance goals. These included two cases rated as “exceeding



expectation” and “satisfactorily meets expectations” without performance goals or specific performance achievements in relation to the goals. In the remaining 43 cases, the end-of year evaluations did not take into consideration performance goals set.

28. Further, there was no evidence that performance evaluations were prepared for 10 of the 106 cases reviewed. In addition, 99 of 198 (50 per cent) UNSOS and UNSOM reporting officers had not completed the performance management and development training.

29. The above resulted because UNSOS did not fully enforce implementation of established performance management and development procedures. As a result, UNSOS and UNSOM did not optimize the performance and development of its staff.

**(5) UNSOS should take steps to enforce timely completion of staff performance evaluations that are based on agreed upon work plans and in compliance with established guidelines, and ensure that supervisors attend necessary performance management training.**

*UNSOS accepted recommendation 5 and stated that it has consistently emphasized the need for timely completion of performance evaluations in Inspira. Management will promote the implementation of mandatory performance management training for all supervisors and continue to conduct quarterly outreach programmes on performance management and development. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence of the steps taken to ensure timely completion of staff performance evaluations based on relevant work plans and in compliance with established guidelines, and statistics indicating that all supervisors/reporting officers have undertaken the required training on performance management.*

#### **IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

30. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of UNSOS and UNSOM 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 human resources management in the United Nations Support Office in Somalia and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	C/ O <sup>3</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>4</sup>
1	UNSOS should limit the use of temporary job openings to temporary functions and properly document justifications when extending temporary appointments beyond 364 days.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that efforts are being made to reduce the number of TJOs, and appropriate justification is provided for exceptional extensions of temporary appointments beyond 364 days.	30 March 2019
2	UNSOS should take steps to reduce the time taken for recruitments by frequently following up with hiring managers who have been assigned to assess candidates.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of the steps taken to frequently follow-up with hiring managers and improved timeliness in recruitments.	30 June 2019
3	UNSOS should take steps to ensure that candidates are assessed in accordance with established procedures.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence to support that assessment of candidates is conducted in accordance with the established procedures.	30 June 2019
4	UNSOS should monitor progress and achievement of its gender parity plan and develop and implement a geographical representation goal and plan for UNSOS and UNSOM.	Important	O	Receipt of a geographical representational goal and plan and improved gender parity and geographical representation.	30 June 2019
5	UNSOS should take steps to enforce timely completion of staff performance evaluations that are based on agreed upon work plans and in compliance with established guidelines, and ensure that supervisors attend necessary performance management training.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of the steps taken to ensure timely completion of staff performance evaluations based on relevant work plans and in compliance with established guidelines, and statistics indicating that all supervisors/reporting officers have undertaken the required training on performance management.	30 June 2019

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> C = closed, O = open

<sup>4</sup> Date provided by UNSOS in response to recommendations.

# **APPENDIX I**

## **Management Response**



## Interoffice Memorandum

**To:** Mr. Daeyoung Park, Chief  
Peacekeeping Audit Service  
Internal Audit Division, OIOS

**Ref:**

**From:** Amadu Kamara, Director  
UNSO

**Date:** 27 November 2018

**Subject:** **UNSO Response to the Draft report on an audit of human resources management in the UNSO and UNSOM (AP2017/638/03)**

1. Further to your memorandum of 13 November 2018, Reference OIOS-2018-638-14, please find attached UNSO response to the above-mentioned subject.
2. We thank you for your continued support to the work of UNSOM and UNSO.

Best regards,

cc: Ms. Cynthia Avena-Castillo, Professional Practices Section, Internal Audit Division, OIOS  
Mr. Abdinasir Issa, Acting Chief Resident Auditor, UNSO, Internal Audit Division, OIOS  
Ms. Hedwig Maex, Chief of Staff, UNSOM  
Mr. Harjit Dhindsa, Chief, Operations and Resources Management, UNSO  
Ms. Victoria di Domenico, Field Coordination Officer, Office of the Chief of Staff, UNSOM  
Mr. Amareswara Rao, Chief Human Resources Officer, UNSO  
Mr. Dolapo Kuteyi, Senior Administrative Officer, UNSO  
Ms. Rosalie Piezas, Chief, Risk Management and Audit Response, UNSO

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## AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of human resources management in the United Nations Support Office in Somalia and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UNSOS should limit the use of temporary job openings to temporary functions and properly document justifications when extending temporary appointments beyond 364 days.	Important	Yes	Chief Human Resources Officer / Director	30 March 2019	Management accepts the recommendation. As explained to the auditors, temporary job openings are used to address the evolving challenges faced by UNSOM and UNSOS.  Management will also ensure that appropriate Justification is provided for any temporary appointments extended beyond 364 days.
2	UNSOS should take steps to reduce the time taken for recruitments by frequently following up with hiring managers who have been assigned to assess candidates.	Important	Yes	Chief Human Resources Officer	30 June 2019	Management seeks to advise the auditors that regular follow up is conducted and monitored through the tracking table. Monthly progress reports will also be prepared and shared with hiring managers to ensure timely assessments of candidates.
3	UNSOS should take steps to ensure that candidates are assessed in accordance with established procedures.	Important	Yes	Chief Human Resources Officer	30 June 2019	Management seeks to advise the auditors that candidates are assessed in accordance with the established procedures. It should also be noted that there is no Secretariat-wide established timeline for temporary job openings. Management will advise hiring managers that recommendations should not be made for position-specific job openings in the system until the comparative analysis reports have been reviewed and approved, which will address the timeline for position-specific job openings.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

## AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

## Audit of human resources management in the United Nations Support Office in Somalia and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia

4	UNSOS should monitor progress and achievement of its gender parity plan and develop and implement a geographical representation goal and plan for UNSOS and UNSOM.	Important	Yes	Chief Human Resources Officer	30 June 2019	<p>Management has taken steps to monitor gender parity through the implementation of the gender parity action plan that is updated monthly. In addition; UNSOS has also introduced in the Selection Memo, the distribution of gender within the section, as a measure of timely provision of management information to facilitate decision making.</p> <p>Management will monitor and improve gender parity and geographical representation for these indicators. However, it should be acknowledged that achievements of these targets are possible only within the framework and context of the vacancy factor of the mission and the vacant positions available.</p> <p>UNSOS has projected a requirement for a Gender Affairs Unit in the Office of the Director for the fiscal year 2019/20 to address the gender issues and align the gender parity.</p>
5	UNSOS should take steps to enforce timely completion of staff performance evaluations that are based on agreed upon work plans and in compliance with established guidelines, and ensure that supervisors attend necessary performance management training.	Important	Partially	Chief Human Resources Officer/ Chief, Integrated Mission Training Centre	30 June 2019	Management has, consistently emphasized the need for timely completion of performance evaluations in Inspira. Management will promote the implementation of mandatory performance management training for all supervisors and continue to conduct quarterly outreach programmes on performance management and development.