



## INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

### REPORT 2019/066

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Audit of the erstwhile Department of Field Support rapid response initiatives for civilian staffing of field operations

The Department supported field missions during critical phases of their life cycle; however, additional steps were needed to strengthen implementation of rapid response initiatives and monitor their effectiveness

1 August 2019

Assignment No. AP2018/615/04

# **Audit of the erstwhile Department of Field Support rapid response initiatives for civilian staffing of field operations**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the erstwhile Department of Field Support (DFS) response initiatives for civilian staffing of field operations. The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of the DFS initiatives to rapidly respond to field missions' civilian staffing requirements at critical phases of mandate implementation, namely, start-up/deployment, transition, downsizing, liquidation and crisis management. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2018 and included the following areas: (i) planning and coordination for rapid response; (ii) rapid response initiatives during start-ups and liquidations; and (iii) effectiveness of support provided by the Rapid Response Section (RRS) in DFS. Following the implementation of management reforms effective 1 January 2019, responsibility for these activities now reside in the Client Support and Special Situations Section (CSSSS) in the Department of Operational Support (DOS).

During the audit period, RRS deployed to field missions for several weeks to support recruitment, onboarding and the comparative review process and to be actively involved in addressing staff administrative matters during field mission transitions. RRS received adequate cooperation from entities at Headquarters to carry out its support activities. However, additional steps were needed to strengthen implementation of rapid response initiatives and monitor their effectiveness.

OIOS made six recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, DOS needed to:

- Develop department-wide standard operating procedures that specify the processes and delineate the roles and responsibilities for rapid response; and finalize and disseminate practice guidelines on human resources management relating to start-ups, liquidations and transitions for use by field missions;
- Develop criteria to evaluate the adequacy of support provided by CSSSS to field missions; and
- Define the audience of CSSSS after-action reports and circulate them accordingly.

In addition, the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC), in cooperation with DOS, needed to:

- Improve the timeliness of setting up master records of new missions in the enterprise-wide computer applications, Umoja and Inspira;
- Develop and implement procedures to collect and analyze information on the effectiveness of standing administrative measures to better support field operations; and
- Provide adequate information systems to monitor critical human resources management activities in close consultation with the Office of Information and Communications Technology.

DOS and DMSPC accepted the recommendations and have initiated action to implement them.

# CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
I. BACKGROUND	1-2
II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY	2
III. AUDIT RESULTS	2-9
A. Planning and coordination for rapid response	2-4
B. Rapid response initiatives during start-ups and liquidations	4-7
C. Effectiveness of support for rapid response	7-9
IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	9
 ANNEX I      Status of audit recommendations	
 APPENDIX I   Management response	

# Audit of the erstwhile Department of Field Support rapid response initiatives for civilian staffing of field operations

## I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the erstwhile Department of Field Support (DFS) rapid response initiatives for civilian staffing of field operations.

2. The Field Personnel Division (FPD) of DFS was mandated to support civilian staffing of field operations, including during critical phases of their life cycles, namely, start-up/deployment, transition, downsizing, liquidation and crisis management. DFS had noted increased demand for their services during such phases and instituted measures and initiatives to ensure that their services were provided rapidly, effectively and promptly. The initiatives included: (a) creation of the Rapid Response Section (RRS) under the Field Personnel Operations Service; and (b) use of flexible mechanisms such as: (i) employment modalities for rapid mission start-up; and (ii) Standing Administrative Measures for Crisis Response and Mission Start-up (SAMs).

3. The employment modalities included: (a) use of the United Nations roster to select pre-cleared candidates for immediate appointment; (b) use of temporary deployment appointments for 30 to 90 days or up to a maximum of 729 days; and (c) use of consultants and individual contractors. In addition, DFS employed the following SAMs enacted by the Chef de Cabinet in March 2016 to accelerate field missions' start-up: (i) issuance of one-year fixed term appointments limited to service in a given mission; (ii) lateral transfer of staff with appointments not limited to specific field missions; (iii) recruitment of single-sourced consultants and individual contractors; (iv) waiver of the mandatory one month break-in-service for retirees engaged as individual consultants; and (v) reduction of mandatory break-in-service for temporary appointees to one week.

4. RRS was established in 2016 to provide Headquarters expert support and surge capacity for start-ups, reconfigurations, downsizing of missions and crisis situations. During the audit period, RRS supported five mission start-ups and surges, three liquidation exercises and four mission downsizing exercises as summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1: Missions and phases that RRS supported during the audit period**

Phases/Missions		
Start-ups and surges	Liquidations	Downsizing
United Nations Mission in Colombia (UNMC)	United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI)	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)
United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (UNVMC)	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH)	United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)
United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH)	United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)
Office of the Special Envoy in Syria		African-Union United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)
Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General in Yemen		

5. Prior to 1 January 2019, there were nine authorized posts within RRS made up of one P5, one P4, one P3 and six General Service staff funded from the Peacekeeping Support Account.

6. Following the implementation of the Secretary-General's management reforms effective 1 January 2019, responsibility for these activities now reside in the Department of Operational Support (DOS). DOS provides operational, advisory and transactional support to the United Nations Secretariat and, where needed, exercises authorities that were not delegated to other entities. Within DOS, the Human Resources Services Division (HRSD) provides operational, advisory and staffing support services on delegated human resources authorities and processes to all Secretariat entities, while the Division of Special Activities and the Client Support and Special Situations Section (CSSSS) support special situation requirements, including start-up, surge, transition and liquidation for the United Nations Secretariat. The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) provides policy leadership in all management areas of the United Nations Secretariat.

7. Comments provided by DOS and DMSPC are incorporated in italics.

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

8. The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of DFS initiatives to rapidly respond to field missions' civilian staffing requirements at critical phases of mandate implementation.

9. This audit was included in the 2018 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the strategic and operational risks related to civilian staffing of field operations during critical phases of their life cycles.

10. OIOS conducted this audit from August 2018 to February 2019. The audit covered the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2018. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered higher and medium risk areas, including: (i) planning and coordination for rapid response; (ii) initiatives for rapid response during start-ups and liquidations; and (iii) effectiveness of support provided by RRS.

11. The audit methodology included: (i) review of relevant policies, guidelines and other instructions and documents; (ii) discussions and interviews with management and relevant staff members; and (iii) testing of controls to assess the proper design and functioning of rapid responses initiatives. Recruitment activities in two start-up missions, MINUJUSTH and UNVMC, were reviewed in detail.

12. The audit examined the DFS arrangements in place before the start of the management reforms on 1 January 2019. The audit conclusions and recommendations took into consideration the changes in the structures and reporting hierarchy from DFS to DOS.

13. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

## **III. AUDIT RESULTS**

### **A. Planning and coordination for rapid response**

#### Improved communication and coordination with other entities is required to implement rapid response

14. In performing its role, RRS needed to work in coordination with regional desks and other entities within FPD such as the Field Personnel Specialist Support Section and the Quality Assurance and Information Management Section, to implement various human resources management strategies and plans for recruitment or downsizing at field missions.

15. Interviews with RRS personnel and reviews of case files and after-action reports noted that RRS received adequate cooperation from entities at Headquarters and at field missions to carry out its activities. For instance, for start-ups, there were regular planning meetings with the Integrated Operational Teams of the then Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and regional desks on the civilian staffing needs of field missions during start-up, liquidation or transition phases.

16. Nevertheless, the after-action reports showed delays in establishing new field missions' master records of budget and civilian personnel structure (posts) in the enterprise-wide computer applications, Umoja and Inspira. This resulted in delays in initiating recruitment actions for missions in the start-up phase.

17. Under the current organizational structure, DMSPC is responsible for creating Master Organizational Unit records in Umoja, which, in turn, enables the Inspira team to create the Business Unit record and for recruitment activities to start. While coordination between DMSPC and DOS was good, the time taken to complete these activities needed to improve.

**(1) DMSPC should, in cooperation with DOS, implement strategies and lessons learned to improve the timeliness of setting up of master records of new missions in the enterprise-wide computer applications, Umoja and Inspira.**

*DMSPC accepted recommendation 1 and stated that of the four essential components required for master data to be usable, configuring Umoja took the longest but will improve with the completion of Umoja Extension 2 deployments. Notwithstanding the complexity and dependencies involved in the end-to-end process, DMSPC and DOS will continue to work together to improve timeliness and incorporate lessons-learned from establishing previous missions. DOS stated that recent experience with a new mission suggested that a more responsive approach is in place. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of evidence of the effectiveness of measures implemented to improve the timeliness of setting up master records of new missions in the enterprise-wide computer applications.*

There was a need to develop standard operating procedures and guidelines for rapid response activities

18. Following the establishment of RRS, roadmaps were developed in June 2016 showing respective responsibilities of RRS, Field Personnel Operations Service, the FPD Director, regional desks and field missions during start-ups, expansion, downsizing, liquidation and crisis management. The FPD Director introduced the new Section in a fax issued to all missions in July 2016, which described the Section's mandate and how to request its services. This fax also communicated that FPD will make available online a range of preparedness resources as well as standard protocols, templates and criteria for availing of the services of RRS and division of labour with other human resources sections. However, FPD had not developed standard operating procedures (SOPs) to guide RRS' processes, including working arrangements with regional sections within FPD and other entities.

19. The Chief, RRS, explained that the Section was following existing procedures including: (i) administrative instructions on staff selection (ST/AI/2010/3 and amendment 1 and ST/AI/2016/1 and amendment 1); and (ii) SOPs for staff selection in peacekeeping operations and special political missions, issued jointly by DPKO and DFS in May 2012. These instructions and procedures, however, focused on staff selection for appointment but not on retrenchment and separation of staff in various circumstances, or on the procedures of rapid response. Additionally, with the recent reorganization of the Departments following the reforms, these documents no longer provide accurate, comprehensive and detailed guidance.

20. There is also a need for DOS to develop SOPs that will specify the roles and responsibilities of each entity involved in rapid response initiatives, including relationships with entities outside the Division for Special Activities.

21. RRS started, in February 2018, to draft practice guidelines on the Organization’s human resources policies and procedures for use by field missions covering start-ups, liquidations and transitions. These efforts, however, had stalled pending management reforms.

**(2) DOS should: (i) develop department-wide standard operating procedures that specify the processes for rapid response and delineate the roles and responsibilities of all relevant entities; and (ii) finalize and disseminate practice guidelines on human resources management relating to start-ups, liquidations and transitions for use by field missions.**

*DOS accepted recommendation 2 and stated that the Division of Special Activities was currently engaged in developing department-wide SOPs for crises management and rapid response, noting the new structures and functional assignments that emerged from the management reorganization of 1 January 2019. DOS further stated that the Department has updated the human resources guidelines on downsizing, which were circulated in May 2019. Additionally, DOS promulgated a “Guide for Senior Leadership on Field Entity Closure” in January 2019, which includes guidance on human resources in field entity closure. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of the department-wide SOPs on crises management and rapid response. Part (ii) of the recommendation has been closed as implemented.*

## **B. Rapid response initiatives during start-ups and liquidations**

### RRS effectively supported field missions during critical phases of their operations

22. RRS was responsible for providing Headquarters expert support and surge capacity to missions during start-ups, reconfiguration, downsizing and crisis situations. OIOS assessed the support that RRS provided to two start-ups and two liquidations of missions, as follows:

#### **Mission start-ups:**

23. At UNVMC, which was established in July 2017, RRS deployed one of its staff to the mission from November 2017 to January 2018 to join the human resources team and provide support for recruitment and onboarding. At MINUJUSTH, which was established in October 2017, RRS managed the recruitment exercise of 353 civilian staff. RRS handed over the recruitment to the MINUJUSTH administration on 9 December 2017, after completing approximately 89 per cent of the recruitment (144 international staff and 170 national staff had been selected for appointment at that time).

#### **Mission liquidations:**

24. In 2016 and 2017, RRS provided the following support to UNOCI and MINUSTAH during their liquidation phases:

- In UNOCI, RRS deployed three staff members for a period of three months to support the comparative review process<sup>1</sup> and placement of staff affected by the mission’s closure; and

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<sup>1</sup> A process to rank staff to determine eligibility for reassignment or alternative placement upon mission drawdown, retrenchment or liquidation.

- In MINUSTAH, RRS deployed for seven weeks in 2017 and 2018, to support the comparative review process and to be actively involved in addressing staff administrative matters during the drawdown and eventual closure of the mission.

25. Based on the documentation of these interventions, OIOS concluded that RRS effectively supported missions during critical phases of their operations.

While recruitments were mainly from the roster their average completion time exceeded the targeted timelines

26. One of the required rapid response measures in the appointment of civilian staff in field missions is to recruit them from existing rosters. Recruitment from roster (RfR) was also the primary staffing mechanism in peace operations. In the 2016/17 and 2017/18 budget performance report for the Peacekeeping Support Account, one of the planned indicators of achievements for FPD was to reduce the lead time for RfR to 50 days. Prior to the reforms, when an RfR exercise did not identify a suitable candidate, a Position Specific Job Opening (PSJO) exercise was undertaken, after prior review and approval by FPD.

27. A review of the data in FAW<sup>2</sup> showed that RfR was the most used recruitment method during the audit period. In 2017 and 2018, 152 candidates were selected in MINUJUSTH and UNMVC from RfR, while 7 candidates were selected through PSJO in MINUJUSTH in 2017 and 22 candidates in UNMVC in 2018. Average time taken in MINUJUSTH and UNMVC for RfR was less than 50 days whereas the average time taken in MINUJUSTH for PSJO was 30 days, while UNMVC took 102 days.

28. The overall recruitment timelines for peace operations from 2016 through 2018 are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2: Recruitment methods used in 2016, 2017 and 2018**

Recruitment	Year	Average recruitment time (days)	Number of selected candidates	Percentage of RfR candidates to the total number of candidates selected
From roster	2016	62	928	83
	2017	54	773	86
	2018	56	460	83
PSJO	2016	208	190	17
	2017	242	125	14
	2018	220	93	17
Total number of candidates selected	2016		1,118	
	2017		898	
	2018		553	

HRSD used HR Insight<sup>3</sup> and FAW to actively monitor the timelines for recruitment and to take action, as necessary, to ensure that the 50 days benchmark for RfR was adhered to. Nevertheless, the recruitment time in peace operations exceeded the benchmark in 2016, 2017 and 2018 averaging 62, 54 and 56 days, respectively, as shown in Table 2.

<sup>2</sup> An FPD application that provided users with an on-demand range of reports and analytics tools for field missions.

<sup>3</sup> An organization-wide application for data analytics and report generation linked to the Inspira application for human resources management.

29. Table 2 also shows that it takes a significantly longer time to recruit staff through PSJOs. In 2016, 2017 and 2018, 14 to 17 per cent of the total candidates recruited were selected through PSJO, taking on average 208 to 242 days, compared with an average of 54 to 62 days through RfR for the same period. While OIOS was initially of the view that HRSD in DOS needed to develop a strategy to achieve the targeted time benchmark for RfR, DOS clarified that as of 1 January 2019, missions can choose their recruitment modality for fixed term appointments and are no longer required to obtain Headquarters' approval to post PSJOs. DOS, however, continues to encourage missions to use the RfRs modality, and it periodically refreshes rosters to support this faster method of recruitment. Missions, conversely, were not analyzing the reasons for unsuccessful RfRs. Proper documentation and analysis of unsuccessful RfRs will enable hiring managers to determine how to further improve rosters to meet their requirements.

30. Due to the reduced involvement of HRSD in administering the recruitment process, the accountability for which was delegated to heads of missions (and other Secretariat entities), OIOS does not make a recommendation on this matter at this time.

#### Use of SAMs for appointment of staff needed to be analyzed

31. According to the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/1, rules, policies and procedures that are intended for general applicability should be communicated only through Secretary-General's bulletins or administrative instructions. The Chef de Cabinet, in a memorandum dated 10 March 2016, circulated the SAMs to heads of departments for implementation. This memorandum required that the use of SAMs be reported to the former Department of Management, which should ultimately report on it to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

32. A subsequent note by the erstwhile Under-Secretary-General for Management, addressed to the Chef de Cabinet and dated 11 June 2018, analyzed provisions in the existing administrative framework on human resources management and concluded, while also considering the then reform initiatives of the Secretary-General, that no additional specific administrative instruments on SAMs in the area of human resources management needed to be issued. However, as the availability of SAMs for crisis response and mission start-up were for general applicability, the relevant information should have been communicated through an administrative issuance.

33. During the audit period, SAMs were used at two missions for recruitment and placement of staff, namely, UNMC (succeeded by UNVMC) and MINUJUSTH (a successor mission to MINUSTAH). RRS provided support to these missions for at least 30 days in each.

34. OIOS observed that:

- SAMs were in force at UNMC from March to September 2016, December 2016 through June 2017 and September 2017 through March 2018. The authorization skipped the October and November 2016 and July and August 2017 periods. However, no SAMs were used in UNMC during the gap periods. Accordingly, OIOS did not make a recommendation on the matter.
- Interviews with RRS, FPD and DMSPC noted that except for UNVMC, no specific reports were generated by either RRS or missions on the use of SAMs for human resources management, although programme managers were expected to collect and analyze information on their use.

35. The absence of an administrative issuance such as a Secretary-General's bulletin or administrative instruction through which SAMs were implemented Secretariat-wide may deter their consistent application in field operations. DMSPC informed OIOS in April 2019 that it was reviewing the SAMs in cooperation with DOS and that an administrative issuance will be developed, if deemed to be required. Meanwhile, the

lack of specific reports on their use limited an objective assessment of their effectiveness as a mechanism to facilitate rapid recruitment of staff.

**(3) DMSPC should, in cooperation with DOS, develop and implement procedures to collect and analyze information on the effectiveness of standing administrative measures to better support field operations.**

*DMSPC accepted recommendation 3 and stated that DMSPC and DOS were currently reviewing standing administrative measures and would issue updated procedures. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence of implementation of procedures to collect and analyze information on the effectiveness of SAMs.*

An Organization-wide policy on placement of staff affected by drawdowns and liquidations was being developed

36. The existing administrative instructions on human resources management do not address some of the issues that arise in circumstances of retrenchment, drawdowns and liquidation of missions. FPD had issued guidelines on best practices and lessons learned from retrenchment exercises in field missions (dated May 2016). These guidelines were based on previously issued materials, including: Reference Materials for Managing Organizational Change disseminated by the Office of Human Resources Management on 15 August 2013; FPD fax entitled “Guidelines for Transition: Communication, Consultation and Comparative Reviews” sent on 24 January 2014; and FPD fax entitled “Termination of Appointments” sent on 14 May 2015. However, these documents do not have the authority of a formal administrative instruction and may not be usable before the Dispute and Appeals Tribunals if administrative decisions are contested.

37. RRS teamed up with the Career Support Unit in the Career Development and Human Resources Capacity Building Section, DFS, to identify placement opportunities for eligible staff who were affected by drawdowns and liquidations. The Career Support Unit has placed about 640 staff since 2016. Under the previous delegation of authority guidelines, the Under-Secretary-General of DFS, in cooperation with the heads of “receiving” missions, placed staff facing separation due to liquidation or downsizing of their missions. It is uncertain how placement would be undertaken following the full delegation of authority for human resources management to heads of field missions. This makes the promulgation of an Organization-wide policy on downsizing, liquidation of missions and placement of affected staff even more urgent.

38. According to DMSPC, a draft administrative instruction on downsizing is currently under review with the Office of Legal Affairs. DOS additionally stated that the human resources guidelines on downsizing to reflect the latest lessons learned and the new delegation of authority post management reform were shared with entities in May 2019. Accordingly, OIOS makes no recommendation in this regard.

### **C. Effectiveness of support for rapid response**

RRS needed relevant criteria to evaluate its effectiveness in field missions

39. In the absence of expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement, RRS used the results of cases reviewed by the Management Evaluation Unit (MEU) and the inferred usefulness of its participation in comparative review exercises as its main indicators of effectiveness in supporting missions during drawdowns or liquidations.

40. According to the Chief, Quality Assurance Unit, DFS, interventions by RRS during mission liquidation or drawdown of staff resulted in:

- Reduced amount of time spent by the Unit to review and approve comparative review exercises carried out by missions to identify staff for reassignment or separation; and
- The Organization’s decisions being upheld in most of the MEU cases for the two missions that were liquidated with support from RRS. Data derived from FAW showed that the administrative decisions of the missions were upheld in 96 out of 105 cases (pending cases excluded).

41. It was difficult to determine whether the large number of upheld administrative decisions was specifically due to RRS support to the missions, and DFS management also confirmed its inability to isolate the specific reasons for the upholding of the Organization’s decisions in each review case. Nevertheless, it is not a sufficiently specific criterion to evaluate the effectiveness of RRS and its successor CSSSS in cases of staff reduction at missions. For example, it does not assess RRS’ performance when there are no MEU cases. RRS conducted a client satisfaction survey in June 2018 to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the support provided by the Section. The returns were positive: 6 out of 10 missions indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the RRS support (2 of these were included in the audit samples). However, this was a one-off exercise and the use of DFS’ rapid response initiatives and their delivery by RRS were not included in the annual client satisfaction surveys conducted by DFS.

**(4) DOS should develop relevant criteria to evaluate the adequacy of support provided by the Client Support and Special Situations Section to field missions.**

*DOS accepted recommendation 4 and stated that SOPs currently being developed to guide the work of the Division for Special Activities would include criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of its support in major undertakings. In addition, the use of an after-action review approach had already been adopted for cases of critical significance. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of the SOPs that include criteria for evaluating the adequacy of the support provided by CSSSS.*

Guidelines were needed to define the audience of after-action reports

42. OIOS noted that RRS documented the results of its interventions in “After-action” reports and in “End-of-Assignment” reports. In these reports, RRS identified attributes of successful interventions as well as challenges. Such documentation, together with mission-generated reports on drawdowns, changes of mandate or liquidation provide valuable information for future, similar operations elsewhere.

43. OIOS noted that in the cases of the liquidation of MINUSTAH and the establishment of MINUJUSTH, the RRS end-of-assignment reports did not identify the expected audience and make the reports available to them. This diminished the value of these reports as a tool to document and share lessons learned.

44. According to RRS, these reports were copied to the Director, FPD and other relevant heads of sections within DFS for action to be taken. OIOS is of the view that a wider circulation of these reports would provide a larger audience with valuable lessons learned.

**(5) DOS should define the audience of after-action reports of the Client Support and Special Situations Section and circulate them accordingly.**

*DOS accepted recommendation 5 and stated that the Division for Policy, Evaluation and Training in the Department of Peace Operations, which assisted the Division for Special Activities in preparing after-action reviews, utilized standing communications channels to distribute key learning*

*documents across its constituency. DOS was also looking at constructing a similar central knowledge hub for operational support matters for all Secretariat entities. DMSPC added that lessons learnt should be systematically shared with the Department for possible incorporation into policy revisions, as well as with the right audience to have real impact. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of evidence of implementation of a mechanism to distribute after-action reports to those who might benefit from them.*

Previously existing functionalities of information systems that were used to monitor rapid response initiatives needed to be preserved

45. DFS used HR Insight and FAW applications to facilitate monitoring of rapid response initiatives. HR Insight provided reports on both PSJOs and RfRs on attributes such as recruitment timelines, gender and geographical representation. FAW generated reports and dashboards on additional attributes that were not available in HR Insight, such as the status of temporary job openings, MEU cases and gender-distribution in recruitment. These reports assisted FPD management in monitoring the performance of human resources services and activities in field missions.

46. FAW was maintained by a group of in-house FPD staff in the Information Management Unit, which was disbanded in January 2019 and its members were reassigned to DOS. As a result, the future of FAW as a monitoring and reporting tool was not immediately clear. In addition, a monitoring framework for the new organizational structure and delegation of human resources management authorities needed to be introduced. OIOS was concerned that in the absence of timely reports and dashboard, such as the ones generated by FAW, monitoring of critical human resources management activities would be adversely affected.

47. According to DMSPC, while Inspira was expected to remain the core application to monitor human resources management activities, the Department had launched management dashboards that directly support, inter alia, the management and monitoring of delegation of human resources authority.

**(6) DMSPC should, in cooperation with DOS, provide adequate information systems to monitor critical human resources management activities.**

*DMSPC accepted recommendation 6 and stated that in collaboration with the Office of Information and Communications Technology and in cooperation with DOS, DMSPC would provide adequate information systems to monitor critical human resources management activities. DMSPC, however, advised that the planned implementation date of this recommendation was contingent upon the ability of DOS to articulate and provide the requisite information by 30 September 2019. Recommendation 6 remains open pending receipt of evidence of implementation of adequate information systems to monitor critical human resources management activities.*

**IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

48. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of DOS and DMSPC 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 the erstwhile Department of Field Support rapid response initiatives for civilian staffing of field operations

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>4</sup> / Important <sup>5</sup>	C/ O <sup>6</sup>	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date <sup>7</sup>
1	DMSPC should, in cooperation with DOS, implement strategies and lessons learned to improve the timeliness of setting up of master records of new missions in the enterprise-wide computer applications, Umoja and Inspira.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of the effectiveness of measures implemented to improve the timeliness of setting up master records of new missions in the enterprise-wide computer applications, Umoja and Inspira.	31 December 2019
2	DOS should: (i) develop department-wide standard operating procedures that specify the processes for rapid response and delineate the roles and responsibilities of all relevant entities; and (ii) finalize and disseminate practice guidelines on human resources management relating to start-ups, liquidations and transitions for use by field missions.	Important	O	Part (i): Receipt of the department-wide SOPs on crises management and rapid response.  Part (ii): Implemented.	31 March 2020
3	DMSPC should, in cooperation with DOS, develop and implement procedures to collect and analyze information on the effectiveness of standing administrative measures to better support field operations.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of implementation of updated procedures to collect and analyze information on the effectiveness of SAMs.	31 March 2020
4	DOS should develop relevant criteria to evaluate the adequacy of support provided by the Client Support and Special Situations Section to field missions.	Important	O	Receipt of the SOPs that include criteria for evaluating the adequacy of the support provided by CSSSS.	31 March 2020
5	DOS should define the audience of after-action reports of the Client Support and Special Situations Section and circulate them accordingly.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of implementation of a mechanism to distribute after-action reports to those who might benefit from them.	31 March 2020
6	DMSPC should, in cooperation with DOS, provide adequate information systems to monitor critical human resources management activities.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence of implementation of information systems to monitor critical human resources management activities.	31 March 2020

<sup>4</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>5</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>6</sup> C = closed, O = open

<sup>7</sup> Date provided by DOS and DMSPC in response to recommendations.

# **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  
Office of Internal Oversight Services

DATE: 16 July 2019

THROUGH: Olga de la Piedra, Director  
S/C DE: Office of the Under-Secretary-General  
Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance

FROM: Mario Baez, Chief, Accountability Service  
DE: Business Transformation and Accountability Division  
Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance

SUBJECT: **Draft report on an audit of the Department of Field Support rapid response initiatives for civilian staffing of field operations (Assignment No. AP2018/615/04)**  
OBJET:

1. We refer to your memorandum dated 10 June 2019 regarding the above-mentioned draft report and provide you with the consolidated comments from the Department of Operational Support (DOS) and the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) below and in the attached Appendix I.

**Paragraph 31 and recommendation 3**

2. With regards to the statement in paragraph 31 that “...*HRSD in DOS needed a strategy to achieve the targeted time benchmark for RfR*”, DOS wishes to clarify that, as of 1 January 2019, field missions can choose their preferred modality for fixed term appointments. Missions are no longer required to request the United Nations Headquarters approval to post a position-specific job opening. DOS, however, continues to encourage missions to first use the recruitment from roster (RfR) modality, based on the General Assembly mandated recruitment timeline target of 120 days (from the date of posting the job opening to the date of selection) as this is the fastest modality. The Human Resources Services Division (HRSD) of DOS keeps refreshing rosters periodically to ensure support to this faster recruitment modality.

3. The current RfR modality allows for selection by a hiring manager within the 50-day deadline. There is no procedural or system barrier to do so as managers are free to select from the rostered candidates without further reference to any other entity, including the Central Review Bodies. It is simply up to managers to make their selections in a timely manner. As the choice of the recruitment modality and the selection authority have been fully and directly delegated to the entities, HRSD has no role in the process. Heads of entities are individually responsible for meeting the timelines established by the General Assembly for the filling of posts (which is now in

fact 120-day average for all recruitment actions undertaken by an entity regardless of modality they choose to use). This target is included in the compacts signed by the heads of entities.

4. Based on the above comments, DOS requests that paragraph 31 and recommendation number 3 be deleted from the report.

#### **Recommendation 4**

**~~DOS~~ DMSPC, in cooperation with DOS, should develop and implement procedures to collect and analyze information on the effectiveness of standing administrative measures to better support field operations.**

5. The Administration requests that the recommendation be reworded to read as shown above. A Working Group has been established by DMSPC with DOS representatives. DMSPC is in the lead with the development of the revised Standing Administrative Measures, as well as monitoring/compliance functions.

#### **Recommendation 7**

**~~DOS~~ DMSPC and OICT should, in cooperation with ~~DMSPC~~-DOS, provide adequate information systems to monitor critical human resources management activities.**

6. The Administration requests that the recommendation be reworded to read as shown above. While rapid response is predicated on having adequate information systems to monitor critical human resources activities, the establishment and maintenance of monitoring systems falls under the purview of DMSPC and OICT. DOS does not have the mandate or resources for developing and implementing monitoring systems for the Global Secretariat.

7. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide comments on the draft report.

## Management Response

## Audit of Department of Field Support rapid response initiatives for civilian staffing of field operations

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical <sup>1</sup> / Important <sup>2</sup>	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	DMSPC should, in cooperation with DOS, implement strategies and lessons learned to improve the timeliness of setting up of master records of new missions in the enterprise-wide computer applications, Umoja and Inspira.	Important	Yes	Senior Finance Officer, Finance Division, Master Data Management, OPPFB, DMSPC	31 December 2019	<p>The establishment of new master records in Umoja requires four essential components to be completed for the master data to be usable.</p> <p>These components are the identification of required master data, creation of master data, configuration, and provisioning of users with new roles or workflows. All four components must be completed sequentially before users can start processing transactions such as the creation of positions that enable the start of recruitment activities.</p> <p>Following the decision of the Security Council to approve the creation of a new mission, decisions are required by various parties in DMSPC and DOS to identify the specific master data applicable to the mission, such as the cost centers, fund centers, storage locations, purchasing groups, organizational units and house</p>

<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.

Management Response

Audit of Department of Field Support rapid response initiatives for civilian staffing of field operations

						<p>banks. While Management believes the coordination between the parties involved in these decisions is good, the time required to make these decisions should improve as staff gain more experience with this process.</p> <p>Of the four components, it is the second component i.e. the creation of master data that takes the least amount of time. The Master Data Teams are dedicated to the creation of master data and have efficient process in place to create master data quickly in the Umoja development, quality assurance, regression and production environments after receiving the necessary approvals. Management believes the creation of master data is performed efficiently and does not require a significant improvement in processing time.</p> <p>The third component, the configuration, is the component that takes the most time to complete. Examples of configuration elements include the update of derivation rules and tables, creation of security roles, the update of workflow tables for new funds, cost centers, fund centers, business area, plants, purchasing</p>
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**APPENDIX I**

**Management Response**

**Audit of Department of Field Support rapid response initiatives for civilian staffing of field operations**

						<p>groups, creation of new house banks, etc. Good governance requires that changes to the configuration are performed and tested in the Umoja development, quality assurance and regression environments prior to being performed in the production system. This requires coordination between the Umoja team and multiple parties within DMSPC (Programme Planning and Budget Division or Field Operations Finance Division) and DOS (Umoja Coordination Unit, Procurement, Field Personal Operation Service, etc.).</p> <p>The fourth component, user provisioning and extension of workflows, follows the regular process for user provisioning, and generally happens after the recruitment of staff or the identification of existing staff that will support the new mission. Management believes this process is efficient and does not require a significant reduction in processing time.</p> <p>Finally, notwithstanding the complexity and dependencies involved in the end-to-end process to set-up master records for new</p>
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APPENDIX I

Management Response

Audit of Department of Field Support rapid response initiatives for civilian staffing of field operations

						missions, DMSPC and DOS will continue to work together to improve timeliness and will incorporate lessons learned from the establishment of prior missions.
2	DOS should: (i) develop department-wide standard operating procedures that specify the processes for rapid response and delineate the roles and responsibilities of all relevant entities; (ii) finalize and disseminate practice guidelines on human resources management relating to start-ups, liquidations and transitions for use by field missions.	Important	Yes	Director, Division of Special Activities, DOS	Part (i) - 31 March 2020  Part (ii) has been implemented	Comments by DOS are reflected in the report.  DOS has updated the human resources guidelines on downsizing to reflect the latest lessons learned and the new delegation of authority post management reform. The guidelines were shared with all entities in May 2019. The Department also promulgated a "Guide for Senior Leadership on Field Entity Closure" in January 2019, which includes guidance on human resources in field entity closure. The guidelines were shared with OIOS.
3	DOS should require the Human Resources Services Division to develop a strategy to achieve the targeted time benchmark of 50 days to recruit from existing rosters.	Important	No	N/A	N/A	Comments by DOS are reflected in the attached cover memorandum.
4	<del>DOS</del> DMSPC, in cooperation with DOS, should develop and implement procedures to collect and analyze information on the effectiveness of standing administrative measures to better support field operations.	Important	Yes	Administrative Officer, Office of the Under-Secretary-General, DMSPC	31 March 2020	DMSPC and DOS are currently reviewing standing administrative measures and will issue updated procedures.

## Management Response

## Audit of Department of Field Support rapid response initiatives for civilian staffing of field operations

5	DOS should develop relevant criteria to evaluate the adequacy of support provided by the Client Support and Special Situations Section to field missions.	Important	Yes	Director, Division of Special Activities, DOS	31 March 2020	Comments by DOS are reflected in the report.
6	DOS should define the audience of after-action reports of the Client Support and Special Situations Section and circulate them accordingly.	Important	Yes	Director, Division of Special Activities, DOS	31 March 2020	Comments by DOS are reflected in the report.
7	<del>DOS</del> -DMSPC and OICT should, in cooperation with <del>DMSPC</del> -DOS, provide adequate information systems to monitor critical human resources management activities.	Important	Yes	(i)Chief, Analytics and Project Management Service, Business Transformation and Accountability Division, DMSPC  (ii)Chief, Strategic Workforce Planning, Global Strategy Policy Division, Office of Human Resources, DMSPC	30 June 2020	DMSPC and OICT, in cooperation with DOS, will provide adequate information systems to monitor critical human resources management activities.  The implementation date of 30 June 2020 assumes DOS supplies details of the reports to be provided by the monitoring systems by 30 September 2019 to DMSPC and OICT. The implementation date could be subject to change depending on the complexity of the requirements.