

# **Conditions of Service**

**for international UNV volunteers**

## Welcome

Welcome to this updated Handbook of Conditions of Service for international UNV volunteers which supersedes the previous one issued in May 1999.

The **purpose** of this Handbook is (a) to establish a set of general principles and specific guidelines that govern the conditions of service for international UNV volunteers and ensure that they are reasonable and fair and (b) to bring consistency in the administration of these conditions of service across countries. These principles and guidelines reflect the volunteer nature of UNV assignments and establish their relation to the framework and context of work of the United Nations system. The **goal sought** is to ensure an environment for UNV volunteers which **(i)** assists them in contributing towards achieving the goals and objectives of the UNV programme and, through it, towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including building local capacity in the countries of assignment; and **(ii)** provides a unique opportunity to develop their own professional and personal skills as well as to reinforce their commitment to volunteerism.

The goals and objectives of the UNV programme must be seen against the background of growing recognition that achieving the MDGs will require the ingenuity, solidarity and creativity of millions of ordinary people through voluntary action. Efforts on the part of national governments, supported by the international community, can only complement what ultimately will depend on the full involvement of people all over the world. Recognizing this fact is the first step towards harnessing this vast resource in a global effort to meet the MDG targets.

Volunteerism has deep roots in every civilized society and is expressed in different forms. It is providing services to others; it is participating in networks of mutual aid or self-help; and it is engagement in social activism around a cause. The different forms of volunteer expression are linked by some common characteristics: the act results in benefits for individuals, for the community, or for society; there is the element of free will in

choosing to volunteer; and the desire for financial gain is never a motivating factor.

Volunteerism brings enormous social benefits through its potential to strengthen ties of trust and solidarity and to empower disadvantaged population groups. In recent years, the economic benefits of voluntary action are also being increasingly appreciated and this is helping to build up the case for governments to promote and support volunteerism domestically.

While throughout history people have travelled abroad to work for causes without regard to financial gain, organized international volunteering through official channels is a phenomenon dating from the 1960s. Originally conceived as a channel for transferring knowledge from a donor to a recipient, the focus now is on working with local people to build capacity at all levels. There is every indication that international volunteers today are as valued and needed as ever.

The UNV programme brings in the spirit of volunteerism for development or V4D. The many thousands of UNV volunteers serving around the world are expected to reflect this spirit in their work and in their private lives while under contract. It should be a rewarding experience for UNV volunteers as much as for the people they come into contact with during their assignments. While contributing to improving the lives of others, UNV volunteers can expect to gain invaluable experience and technical skills which can serve them well when they re-enter the paid work force after their volunteer assignment is over. For many, it is an opportunity to develop further a range of personal skills. Above all, a UNV volunteer assignment is a unique opportunity to work, as a global citizen, in a multicultural setting alongside people from very different cultures and value systems within the framework of the ideals and aspirations of the United Nations.

Ad de Raad  
Executive Coordinator  
United Nations Volunteers programme

## UN Volunteers: our mission

*Volunteering brings benefits to both society at large and the individual volunteer. It makes important contributions, economically as well as socially. It contributes to more cohesive societies by building trust and reciprocity among citizens.*

*The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the United Nations organization that supports sustainable human development globally through the promotion of volunteerism, including the mobilization of UNV volunteers. It serves the causes of peace and development through enhancing opportunities for participation by all peoples. It is universal, inclusive and embraces volunteer action in all its diversity. It values free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity, which are the foundations of volunteerism.*



United Nations Volunteers programme is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

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## Overall guidelines and definitions

### *1. Internationally recruited UNV volunteer*

An internationally recruited<sup>1</sup> UNV volunteer is a professional recruited for her/his qualifications, specialized skills and readiness to serve with volunteer spirit and under volunteer terms without regard for financial benefit. She/he works to realize the broad objectives laid down by the UN Charter for the economic and social advancement of humanity. She/he serves in a country other than that of her/his own nationality. For a candidate to be deployed as an international UNV volunteer in a particular country, she/he should not possess the nationality<sup>2</sup> of the country of assignment. Individuals with dual nationality must clearly indicate their nationalities when they apply. The provisions of this Handbook govern the international UNV volunteer's services with the UNV programme.

### *2. Special programme initiatives*

Special programme initiatives are assignments defined as those in which UNV volunteers participate in special operations, including those of an emergency, short-term and/or highly flexible nature, such as UN peace-keeping, private sector partnerships, human rights and electoral processes. The assignments are particular in terms of their nature, mandate, operational modalities and duration. Therefore, the administrative measures and some of the conditions of service for UNV volunteers under these operations may differ from those stipulated in this Handbook and will be operation/mission-specific as decided by the UNV programme in consultation with the host agency (ref.

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<sup>1</sup> In some cases, an international UNV volunteer may be recruited locally, i.e. at the country of deployment. In such cases, the entitlements may vary as indicated specifically in the COS.

<sup>2</sup> In certain cases, international UN Volunteers serving under programmes like Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) and others may have the same nationality as that of the country of assignment. In these cases, a different set of conditions of service applies, and not the conditions in this Handbook.

14). In some circumstances, after an initial period of mission-specific conditions of service, the UNV volunteer's conditions of service become harmonized with those of longer-term UNV volunteers.

### *3. Primary Family Unit (PFU)*

The PFU members are defined as:

- spouse (one) and a maximum of two unmarried children who have not yet reached the age of 21, at the date of the commencement of the assignment; or
- maximum of three unmarried children who have not yet reached the age of 21, at the date of the commencement of the assignment.

Dependents who will reach 21 within the first 6 months from the expected date of arrival at the duty station will not be authorized to join the UNV volunteer. However, she/he will be still considered as part of the PFU and the family allowance will be reflected in the VLA until the date she/he reaches 21.

The above group is referred to as the Primary Family Unit (PFU) and must be listed, along with other dependent children, on the UNV volunteer's Personal History Statement form (PHS) when she/he applies. The UNV volunteer is required to submit the relevant marriage, birth and, where appropriate, adoption certificates to formally establish the dependency relationships. Step children may be recognized as part of the PFU based on a legal certificate of guardianship of the UNV volunteer or her/his spouse. The UNV volunteer must demonstrate that she/he has the legally established parental and financial responsibility for any children claimed as primary dependants. Such documentation is reviewed by the UNV programme headquarters at the time of recruitment. The UNV programme will not recognize any person as a dependant who does not meet the above requirements as part of the PFU.

If in the course of the assignment, a recognized primary dependent child reaches the age of 21, she/he will no longer be

considered as part of the PFU. It will be the responsibility of the UNV volunteer to inform the UNV programme that the dependent child has reached 21 years of age. Health insurance, security and medical evacuation entitlements will cease upon a dependant reaching the age of 21 years. Health insurance may be extended as an option, at the UNV Volunteer's expense. (See section 11.2.3, below.) The Volunteer Living Allowance (VLA) will be adjusted accordingly. However, the entitlement to repatriation travel remains unaffected. Also, if one child ceases to be recognized as part of the PFU e.g. turning 21, marriage or death, or if the spouse ceases to be recognized due to divorce or death, an additional child or a new spouse may be included.

#### *4. Other dependants*

There are two other groups of dependants whose status is as follows:

- a) Additional primary dependants who are not part of the PFU described above: These are children, under 21, who are not among the three dependents recognized within the PFU. These dependent children may be authorized to join the UNV volunteer at the duty station. The UNDP CO helps in making the arrangements for their travel to the duty station, but the UNV volunteer must bear all the costs related to travel and shipment of personal effects, and is also fully responsible for her/his additional primary dependants while they are at the duty station. Medical insurance for the additional primary dependents at the duty station is compulsory and at the expense of the UNV volunteer. In the absence of proof of satisfactory coverage under other insurance providers, the relevant premiums will be deducted from the monthly VLA.
- b) Non-primary dependants are other relatives of the UNV volunteer (such as parent, sibling, children over 21 and others), who travel to the duty station, but for whom the UNDP CO and the UNV programme have no responsibility or liability. The travel of these individuals and their stay at the duty station is an entirely private matter. No authorization by the organization is required as long as the duty station is a family duty station.

## *5. Common law relationships*

The recognition of dependency status of partners not formally married follows UNDP standard practice and is determined by the laws and recognized practices of the UNV volunteer's home country. The fundamental condition under which the organization recognizes a common law partner is that common law marriage must be recognized, under the national laws of the home country of the UN Volunteer, as a legal institution with the same basic prerequisites and consequences as a formally solemnized marriage. The UNV volunteer is required to provide:

- A legal document, e.g. notarized statement, attesting to the validity of her/his common law marriage
- Documentation from her/his country of nationality on the legality of common law marriage;
- Evidence of agreement to marry - an agreement between the parties to take each other as husband and wife and to fulfill the legal obligations of marriage.

The above requirements also apply in the case of marriage between spouses of the same sex.

The UNV programme headquarters is to be consulted as to whether a common law marriage may be recognized for the purpose of UNV benefits and conditions. In case of doubt, the UNV programme headquarters will consult with the appropriate legal office in UNDP.

## *6. International travel*

The UNV Volunteer and the PFU members will travel by economy class on the most direct and least costly (DLC) air routes, irrespective of the number of travel hours, while traveling on assignment, repatriation, home visit and official missions. When a cash option for travel is offered to the UNV volunteer by the UNV programme and is accepted by the UNV volunteer, she/he has to inform the UNDP CO of the itinerary and the airline company.

### *7. UNV volunteers funded by cooperating organizations*

In a number of cases, the UNV programme associates itself with another governmental or non-governmental organization (NGO) to sponsor the services of UNV volunteers. In such cases, the cooperating organization may fund all or a portion of the costs of the volunteer. Such UNV volunteers are deemed to be “fully funded” or “co-sponsored”, respectively, by the cooperating organization. The benefits and conditions of service of the UNV volunteers are those stipulated in this Handbook unless agreed otherwise by the UNV programme and the cooperating organization.

### *8. Locally recruited international UNV volunteers*

A locally recruited international UNV volunteer is one who, at the time of recruitment, is residing in the country of assignment and is not a national of that country. She/he is still considered to be an international UNV volunteer. However, the locally recruited status affects certain allowances and benefits, as described in this Handbook.

### *9. Duration of assignments and length of service*

Assignments are considered to be either short-term or long-term.

- Short-term assignment: an initial assignment of less than 12 months.
- Long-term assignment: an initial assignment of 12 months or more.

The UNV programme provides professionally experienced and personally committed men and women with an opportunity to serve for a limited period of time as volunteers in the pursuit of those ideals for which the UN stands. While volunteering is a life time experience, it is not a career. A UNV volunteer can serve for a maximum period of six years under the same position/terms of

reference, however the maximum cumulative period of service should not exceed eight years.

In calculating the maximum cumulative period of service, all periods of service as a UNV volunteer, with or without interruption and whatever the function, are taken into account e.g. national UNV volunteer, international UNV volunteer; international UNV volunteer under Community Exchange programme, and UNV Programme Officer (PO) assignments. (Note: A UNV PO can accumulate up to 10 years of service if she/he has served as a UNV volunteer before being assigned to a UNV PO post.)

### *10. Age limits to volunteering*

As a matter of principle, there should be no age limits to volunteering one's services to promote peace and development. However, in order to ensure the required level of professional and personal competency, the minimum age of a UNV volunteer has been set at 25 years of age, with the understanding that candidates must demonstrate the required level of education, relevant professional experience and the requisite character and strengths in order to be selected as UNV volunteers.

The UNV programme, in strongly encouraging volunteerism at all ages, is pleased to accept well-qualified older candidates. Such senior UNV volunteers enjoy the full range of conditions and protection (medical, security, etc.) available to all UNV volunteers. The life insurance coverage is maintained up to 70 years of age, at which point, as required by the insurance carrier, the coverage ceases.

### *11. UNDP Country Office (UNDP CO)*

The UNDP CO is headed by the UNDP Resident Representative (UNDP RR), who represents the UNV programme at the country level. The UNDP RR, supported by the UNV Country Office team, is responsible for the UNV volunteers in the country, including their safety and security, as well as administrative and logistical arrangements.

## *12. UNV Country Office Team (UNV COT)*

The UNV COT usually comprises of a UNV Programme Officer (PO), who is also a UNV volunteer, and a Country Operations Assistant (COA). The composition may vary depending on the number of UNV volunteers, the UNV programme's substantive involvement and the complexity of the operation in the country.

Under the supervision of the UNDP RR (or the head of the administering agency), the UNV COT is responsible for developing and managing the UNV programme and providing administrative support to the UNV volunteers. In countries where there is no UNV COT, one of the UNDP staff members, designated by the UNDP RR, acts as a UNV Focal Point (FP).

## *13. Administering agency*

There could be another agency (or agencies) that has agreed to administer some or all of the UNV volunteers in the country. In such a case, there will be a special agreement between UNV and the administering agency (or agencies). Under such an arrangement, the functional immunities of the UNV volunteers are covered under the standard agreements signed between the host government and the United Nations, such as Status of Forces Agreement, Status of Mission Agreement, etc.

In such cases, the administrative responsibilities referred to in this Handbook as belonging to the UNDP CO will be handled either by the UNDP CO or the administering agency at the country level. An agreement will be reached in advance and the UNV volunteer will be informed as to which agency has the administrative responsibility.

## *14. Host agency*

The host agency is the one that has requested the services of and hosts the UNV volunteer e.g. UNDP, UN specialized agency, bi-lateral/multilateral agency, NGO or government agency.

### *15. Family and Non-family duty stations*

Under the security system of the United Nations, the majority of duty stations are designated as “family duty stations”. These are duty stations where the conditions of safety and security are considered, by the Department of Safety and Security (DSS), suitable for family members to be present. A smaller number of locations, due to safety and security conditions, are designated as “non-family duty stations”, where the presence of family members is strictly forbidden.

### *16. Legal and operational frameworks*

Under the General Assembly mandate, the UNV programme is administratively part of the UNDP. Therefore, the UNV programme assistance is covered under the UNDP Standard Basic Assistance Agreement with governments. UNV volunteers, as part of the UN activities, are covered by the 1946 Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. In this regard, UNV volunteers are considered as officials and therefore enjoy privileges and immunities as are necessary for the exercise of their functions. Additionally, depending on the agencies to which they are assigned, they may be covered by the arrangements agreed between these agencies and the governments concerned.

As UNV volunteers are not UN staff members they are not subject to the UN staff rules or to the pay, benefits and other conditions contained in those staff rules. Their assignments are fully governed by this Handbook of conditions of service for international UNV volunteers including any amendments that may result in the revision of the COS from time to time, and by the terms of the Volunteer Assignment Compact issued in each case. (See section 1, below.)

For the importation of personal effects at the beginning of an assignment, the UNV volunteer should always ascertain from the UNDP CO in the country of assignment the relevant rules governing such importation, before she/he makes the necessary arrangements.

## **Code of conduct for UNV volunteers**

All UNV volunteers are required to abide by the Code of Conduct as set out below. This Code is consonant with the decision of every person who dedicates part of her or his life to work within the United Nations system under volunteer conditions.

1. UNV volunteers will ensure that they undertake their duties in the interest of the United Nations. They uphold and promote the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct.
2. In accordance with the ideals of volunteer service, UNV volunteers will be guided by the motivation to devote their knowledge and abilities without regard to financial benefit. They will ensure that their conduct is consistent with and reflects the values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations: respect for human rights, social justice, human dignity, and respect for equal rights of men and women.
3. UNV volunteers will show respect for all persons equally without distinction whatsoever of race, gender<sup>3</sup>, religion, colour, national or ethnic origin, language, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, political conviction, or any other distinguishing feature. In the spirit of respect for all persons, any form of discrimination or harassment, including request for sexual favours or gender harassment, as well as physical or verbal abuse at the workplace or in connection with work is strictly prohibited. In this regard, UNV volunteers will abide by the UN principles for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in a Humanitarian Crisis, which prohibit acts of sexual exploitation and abuse and call for a particular duty of care towards women and children. Detailed information on the subject is provided in appendix XVII "Standards of conduct concerning the prohibition of sexual exploitation and abuse" and should be considered as part of the present Code of Conduct.

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<sup>3</sup> UNV volunteers will consider gender as an integral factor in their activities.

4. Although UNV volunteers are not expected to relinquish national sentiments or political and religious convictions, they will not engage in any activity that may be inconsistent with the independence and impartiality required of persons affiliated with the United Nations. UNV volunteers will avoid any action and, in particular, any public statement, which may adversely reflect on their status as UNV volunteers.
5. During their assignments, UNV volunteers are encouraged to contribute to communication initiatives, including media activities that promote volunteerism for development and peace in line with the UNV mandate. However, when such communications are related to a host agency project, the UNV volunteers are expected to ensure that such communications are approved by their respective host agencies, prior to release and distribution.
6. UNV volunteers will respect local laws, moral codes, and traditions and be aware of and build on manifestations of volunteerism in the country of assignment and are expected to honour their private legal obligations.
7. During their assignment, UNV volunteers will neither seek nor accept instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the UN system, including representatives of Cooperating Organizations. UNV volunteers assigned to governments, institutions, departments or NGOs, however, will receive work-related instructions from them as appropriate.
8. UNV volunteers are expected to express the spirit of volunteerism both inside and outside the formal work setting. Activities outside the formal work setting must not represent a conflict of interest with their normal functions and responsibilities, nor detract in any way from their formal work assignments. UNDP Resident Representatives have the delegated authority to determine the appropriateness and approve the terms of the involvement of the UNV volunteer in extra-hours volunteer work taking into account the sensitivities of the country context. The approval of their Resident Representative should be given after consultation

with the government, the executing agency and the cooperating organization, as appropriate.

9. UNV volunteers are not authorized to accept or undertake paid work or engage in business activities during their assignments, nor may they accept non-remunerative functions such as holding office or serving as a member in governmental and non-governmental bodies in the country of assignment. The dependants of the UNV volunteers may accept employment in accordance with the regulations of the country of assignment, as long as such employment will not result in any functional influence or professional compromise on the part of the UNV volunteer. UNV volunteers and their dependants will not engage in any activity that is detrimental to the United Nations, to the performance of the UNV volunteer, or to highest ideals of volunteerism. In this respect, UNV volunteers will not, under any circumstances, accept any supplementary payment from a government or any other source, outside of agreements that the UNV programme has explicitly entered into with specific governments.
10. In addition to the code of conduct of the UNV volunteers, the UNV volunteers are also required to accept and sign any host agency specific code of conduct.

## **Chapter One**

### **Volunteer assignment compact, assignment travel, orientation and letter of commitment**

#### **1. Volunteer assignment compact**

Once a candidate is pre-selected for an assignment, the UNV programme headquarters will issue a detailed and comprehensive communication, titled the Volunteer Assignment Compact, hereafter referred to as the “compact”. The compact is intended to inform the UNV volunteer and the UNDP COs in the UNV volunteer’s country of recruitment and country of assignment of actions to be taken. The final selection of the candidate is subject to requirements such as positive interview, medical and government clearances etc.

(To be noted: An individual is considered to be a “UNV volunteer candidate” up until the entry on duty – the point in time that the person has been confirmed as a UNV volunteer. For the purpose of this Handbook, the term “UNV volunteer” is normally used, even to refer to those situations when the individual is still, formally speaking, a UNV volunteer candidate.)

##### ***1.1 Components of the compact***

The compact consists of two main components: one for the UNDP CO and UNV volunteer candidate in the country of recruitment; and one for the UNDP CO in the country of assignment.

### *1.1.1 For the UNDP CO in the country of recruitment<sup>4</sup>*

The UNV programme headquarters will:

- Provide information about the UNV volunteer position; offer summarized terms and conditions of service for the assignment; specify requirements, applicable entitlements and other information to be shared with the selected UNV volunteer candidate.
- Request the UNDP CO to conduct the mandatory interview with the UNV volunteer candidate, and to submit a report of its conclusions; assist the candidate to arrange the entry medical examination. (See section 11.1.1). A simple interview report format, available as part of the recruitment guidelines provided to UNDP COs, indicates the key areas to be explored during the interview.
- Authorize travel arrangements for the UNV volunteer, subject to her/his written acceptance of the code of conduct, conditions of service and entitlements specific to the assignment/country, satisfactory interview and medical clearance. The UNV volunteer gives her/his acceptance to these documents and conditions by signing the compact in the relevant section.
- Authorize travel arrangements for PFU members in the PFU, subject to approval by the RR in the country of assignment.
- Request the UNDP CO in the country of recruitment to inform the UNDP CO in the country of assignment and the UNV programme headquarters of travel details, including expected date of arrival.

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<sup>4</sup> The United Nations Volunteers programme headquarters will handle directly, or through the cooperating organizations, the pre-assignment arrangements for UNV volunteer candidates and PFU members originating from countries where there is no UNDP CO.

### ***1.1.2 For the UNDP CO in the country of assignment***

The UNV programme headquarters will:

- Request the UNDP CO to sign the Letter of Commitment (appendix III), on behalf of the Executive Coordinator of the UNV programme, when the UNV volunteer arrives, and to obtain the UNV volunteer's signature of acceptance of the terms, the Pledge of Commitment (appendix IV), and the "Designation, change or revocation of beneficiary" form (appendix V); issue UNV Identity Card; hand over medical kit; and make in-country payments.
- Request the UNDP CO to organize, together with the UNV COT, the required briefing and orientation.
- Authorize the payment of Settling-in Grant and Volunteer Living Allowance.
- Request the UNDP CO to authorize PFU members to travel, once the conditions are met i.e. as per 2.4.

## ***1.2 Implications of the compact for the UNV volunteer***

When the candidate has received the compact, along with the entitlements specific to the assignment/country, code of conduct and an indication of where to access the conditions of service, she/he is required to acknowledge receipt of this material and her/his agreement to the terms and conditions of the assignment, by signing the compact. This constitutes the formal commitment of the UNV volunteer before traveling to the country of assignment. The UNV volunteer will not be authorized to undertake travel until she/he has confirmed her/his agreement to the terms by signing the compact.

If the candidate declines to take up the assignment after signing the compact, she/he will be required to refund to the programme any amounts that have already been disbursed (such as pre-departure expenses, payment for shipment of personal effects, cost of travel to the duty station, etc.). If she/he does not refund the sums disbursed she/he will be excluded from future

opportunities to be a UNV volunteer (see also section 4.1 on mutual obligations) and appropriate legal steps will be taken to recover outstanding dues.

### **1.3 Fully funded and co-sponsored UNV volunteers**

In the case of a fully funded or co-sponsored UNV volunteer, the UNV programme headquarters will normally undertake the pre-assignment arrangements, as formally agreed with the cooperating agency.

## **2. Travel to the country of assignment**

### **2.1 Mutual obligations**

It is emphasized that the UNV programme and the UNV volunteer have assumed a mutual legal obligation as from the date when the UNV volunteer commences travel from the country of recruitment to take up the assignment. Prerequisites for doing this are three important conditions that the UNV volunteer must have met: the candidate has indicated her/his written acceptance of the assignment offered under the compact; she/he has been positively interviewed; and she/he has been medically cleared.

If the offer of an assignment is withdrawn at the request of the host agency for circumstances beyond its control at a stage when all the recruitment formalities have been completed and the UNV volunteer is ready to leave for the country of assignment, an amount of compensation will be due. The individual will be paid the Monthly Living Allowance (MLA) of the proposed country of assignment equivalent to the notice period for termination corresponding to the length of the assignment offered in the compact. (See sections 15.1.1 and 15.3.1.) Related costs will be charged to the host agency/project.

Travel to the country of assignment constitutes a de facto legal commitment on the part of both parties, even though the Letter of Commitment might not have been issued or signed.

This mutual obligation will not commence earlier than three days prior to arriving in the country of assignment. Under very rare circumstances where the travel may take more than three days, UNV Programme will review the situation on a case-by-case basis and advise accordingly.

While the individual is covered for medical and life insurance and security emergencies during travel, the payment of allowances and other benefits will begin from the date of arrival in the country of assignment (or in the country in which the UNDP CO responsible for the programme is situated, if different from the country of assignment). This date of arrival in the country of assignment is also the date of entry on duty (EOD), and is the date that is referred to in the formal Letter of Commitment.

## **2.2. Documentation**

### **2.2.1 Travel documents**

UNV volunteers (and any traveling PFU members) travel under their own respective national passports. The UNV volunteer cannot be issued with the United Nations Laissez-Passer as her/his assignment is not governed by the UN staff rules.

### **2.2.2 Visas and clearances**

#### **i. Assistance in the country of recruitment**

It is the responsibility of the UNV volunteer to obtain the necessary clearances including transit and entry visas from the respective embassies/consulates. The UNDP CO or cooperating organization in the country of recruitment will provide assistance. This is often in the form of a certificate or a letter (note verbale) to the appropriate authorities. Please refer to section 12.1.4 for details on security clearance.

#### **ii. Assistance in the country of assignment**

If there is no diplomatic or consular representation of the country of assignment in the place of recruitment, the UNDP

CO will coordinate the issuance of entry visas for the UNV volunteer and PFU members .

The UNV volunteer and PFU members should not leave the place of recruitment until they obtain the required transit and entry visas. If an entry visa cannot be obtained beforehand, the UNV volunteer and PFU members may only travel upon receipt of written confirmation from the UNDP CO in the country of assignment that an entry visa will be issued upon arrival in the country.

## ***2.3 Pre-departure expenses, assignment travel and shipment of personal effects***

### ***2.3.1 Assignment travel for an internationally recruited UNV volunteer***

#### **i. Pre-departure expenses**

The UNV volunteer receives a standard amount towards all pre-departure expenses (see addendum). This is a one-time payment made only to the UNV volunteer to help meet pre-departure expenses, including obtaining passport and visa(s), entry medical examination, vaccination(s), travel between the place of residence and the nearest airport and related lodging, food and costs for unavoidable in-country pre-departure transit stop-overs.

#### **ii. Arrangements for assignment travel**

The UNV programme, at its discretion, may choose to offer to the UNV volunteer either of the following options:

a) The UNV volunteer and each PFU member are provided with a most direct and least costly (DLC) economy class ticket for the route from the nearest airport in the place of recruitment to the city where the UNDP CO is located in the country of assignment (or as agreed with the UNDP CO or host agency). In addition, each of them receives UNDSA in advance for unavoidable overnight stop-overs and a lump sum for airport-related terminal expenses. When the UNV volunteer travels

with PFU members she/he receives hundred percent of the UNDSA rate and each accompanying member of the PFU receives fifty percent of the UNDSA, and the lump sum amount for terminal expenses per traveler (see addendum). When PFU members travel alone, the first member receives hundred percent of the UNDSA rate and other accompanying member/s receive fifty percent of the UNDSA rate.

Or alternatively

b) The UNV volunteer and each PFU member receives a cash amount that is the equivalent of a designated percentage (see addendum for the percentage) of a full economy class fare for the most direct and least costly (DLC) route from the nearest airport in the place of recruitment to the city where the UNDP CO is located in the country of assignment (or as agreed with the UNDP CO or host agency). The UNV volunteer will be responsible for organizing her/his own travel and that of the PFU members. There are no other payments such as UN Daily Subsistence Allowance (UNDSA) or per diem for food, lodging and sundry charges for unavoidable overnight stop-overs and airport expenses.

The travel to the place of assignment (duty station), once the UNV volunteer has arrived in the country of assignment, is considered a part of assignment travel.

At any point of time the UNV Programme has the discretion to revoke an option previously agreed upon.

### **iii. Shipment of personal effects**

The UNV volunteer and each PFU member receives a lump sum to meet costs related to the shipment of personal effects, including transport, customs clearance, storage, insurance, etc. (see addendum)

Regardless of whether or not the UNV volunteer organizes the travel for her/himself and PFU members, she/he is responsible for all aspects of any shipment she/he may wish to make with the lump sum provided. (Similar lump sum amounts are

payable at the end of the assignment in connection with repatriation travel. See section 16.1.2.)

### ***2.3.2 Fully funded and co-sponsored UNV volunteers***

The pre-departure expenses, travel arrangements, shipment of personal effects and any other entitlements of a fully funded or co-sponsored UNV volunteer will normally be in accordance with the procedures and regulations of the cooperating organization, unless agreed otherwise with the UNV programme. The UNV volunteer will be advised accordingly.

In the case of arrangements made directly by or with the cooperating organization, the UNV volunteer submits related claims directly to the cooperating organization.

### ***2.3.3 Locally recruited UNV volunteers***

Locally recruited international UNV volunteers are not entitled to the lump sum payments for pre-departure expenses, shipment of personal effects and the arrangements for international segment of assignment travel. For PFU members not residing in the country of assignment, travel entitlements are outlined below in section 2.4.3. In any case, the cost of the entry medical examination will be reimbursed.

If the duty station is different from the place of recruitment, travel to the duty station is considered a part of assignment travel and is organized by UNDP CO.

## ***2.4. Travel of dependants to the duty station***

### ***2.4.1 Criteria for PFU members to join the UNV volunteer at the duty station***

The UNDP RR in the country of assignment is delegated to approve the travel of the PFU members to join the UNV volunteer at the duty station, subject to the following conditions:

- i. DSS classifies the duty station as a “family duty station”;
- ii. UNDP CO confirms that the nature of the assignment, living conditions and other factors, such as availability of housing, schools and medical facilities, are suitable for dependants to reside at the duty station;
- iii. The duration of the contract is a minimum of 12 months;
- iv. The UNV volunteer confirms that permanent accommodation is secured (or confirms that she/he understands and accepts that the responsibility, financial and otherwise, for securing accommodation is totally her/his own) and that, having joined her/him, the dependants will spend at least six months at the duty station. If dependents stay for less than six months at the duty station, the cost for assignment travel (air ticket, shipment, terminals, UNDSA) has to be reimbursed by the UNV volunteer. The cost for repatriation will be the responsibility of the UNV volunteer.
- v. The UNV volunteer has submitted the relevant marriage, birth and adoption certificates to the UNV programme through the UNDP CO either in the country of assignment or in the country of recruitment.
- vi. Confirmation that visas and clearances (as applicable) have been arranged

N.B. The UNV Programme will not cover costs for dependents who will reach 21 years in less than six months from the expected date of arrival in the country of assignment.(ref “Overall guidelines and definitions – point 3).

#### *2.4.2 Travel of PFU members of UNV volunteers*

When the above conditions have been met, at the request of the UNV volunteer, the UNDP CO in the place of recruitment will proceed with travel arrangements for the PFU members according to the compact.

It is possible for PFU members (some or all) to travel to the duty station with the UNV volunteer during the assignment travel. Before doing so however, the UNV volunteer should ascertain that the prospects of finding suitable accommodation are good, and that she/he will not bear an undue financial burden by bringing the PFU members to the duty station before securing accommodation. This is particularly important because the programme assumes no financial responsibility and provides no daily subsistence allowance for temporary accommodation other than the Settling-in Grant (SIG), described below in section 6.2. To this effect, the UNV volunteer should obtain prior clearance from the UNDP RR in the country of assignment and discharge in writing the UNV Programme of associated risks and responsibilities.

#### *2.4.3 Travel of PFU members not residing in the country of recruitment*

If the PFU members do not reside in the country of recruitment of the UNV volunteer, the maximum travel costs must not exceed the cost of traveling to the country of assignment from her/his home country. In the case of a locally recruited UNV volunteers, the cost of PFU members traveling will be limited to the cost from the UNV volunteer's home country. The UNV volunteer will be responsible for any additional costs. The lump sum payment for shipment of personal effects will be provided.

#### *2.4.4 Travel of other dependants*

If a UNV volunteer wishes to bring additional primary dependants to the country of assignment, she/he will inform the UNDP CO in advance and indicate their relationship (substantiated by a copy of their birth certificates).

The UNDP RR will consider the request, taking into account the conditions described in section 2.4.1 and the availability and adequacy of accommodation before agreeing to it and advising the UNV volunteer accordingly. The UNDP CO has the delegated authority to approve such cases.

When the UNV volunteer receives the confirmation, she/he arranges the travel of the additional primary dependants to the duty station, at her/his own cost, liability and responsibility. They are not covered, for instance, by the family allowance, described in section 7.3. The UNV volunteer will also be responsible for these additional dependants' repatriation, medical and security evacuations, if required. The medical insurance coverage for these dependants is compulsory and at the expense of the UN Volunteer. For this purpose, the UNV Programme HQ should be informed of arrival of the dependants. (See section 11.2.3 on insurance coverage for family members.)

If the UNV volunteer wishes to bring non-primary dependants to the duty station (such as parent, sibling, children over 21), she/he may choose to do so as a private matter and at her/his cost and liability, as long as the duty station is designated as a "family duty station". The UNV programme and UNDP CO have no responsibility or liability. No authorization by the organization is required.

#### *2.4.5 Travel of PFU members of fully funded and co-sponsored UNV volunteers*

Provided that the conditions outlined in 2.4.1 are met, travel between the country of recruitment and the duty station (or as agreed with the UNDP CO or host agency) will be organized by the cooperating organization in accordance with its rules and regulations, unless agreed otherwise with the UNV programme.

### **3. Briefing, orientation, training and meetings**

#### ***3.1 Briefing and orientation***

##### ***3.1.1 Pre-assignment briefing***

It is common practice for the UNV volunteer to receive a pre-departure briefing from the UNV COT/ UNV focal point in the country of recruitment. This briefing is very useful in answering

practical questions and assisting the UNV volunteer to understand the most pertinent aspects of the conditions of service before she/he takes up service. Additional pre-departure briefing materials may be made available from the UNV programme headquarters.

The UNV volunteer will normally travel directly from the place of recruitment to the country of assignment. In some instances, the UNV programme or host agency may arrange for briefing at their headquarters or regional office, during the assignment travel. If a host agency requests such a briefing, the UNV programme headquarters will authorize travel and the host agency will meet additional costs (difference in international travel cost plus the additional UNDSA for diversion via the place of briefing).

A peer-to-peer briefing with another UNV volunteer in the country of recruitment or nearby country is useful to new UNV volunteers, and may be suggested and financed by the project.

### *3.1.2 In-country briefing and orientation programme*

When the UNV volunteer arrives in the country of assignment, the UNV COT, in cooperation with the host agency, relevant government agency and the UNDP CO, will organize an in-country briefing programme which will preferably contain the following elements:

#### **i. By UNDP CO/UNV COT**

- The global mission and commitment of the UNV programme, including the concept of volunteerism and the values of volunteering; its support to the international community in promoting peace and development; and its contribution to the mandate of the UN in the country;
- The country's socio-economic development situation, its political structure, and government's long- and medium-term development policies and programme;
- The country's culture, traditions and customs;
- The UN system in the country: UNDP and UN specialized agencies, mandate, structures and personnel and development assistance by the other international organizations, including

any other information provided by the UNV programme headquarters;

- The code of conduct and responsibilities of UN personnel, with special reference to UNV volunteers. The briefing should also include existing UN policies on sexual harassment and abuse and on HIV/AIDS in the workplace;
- The conditions of service for international UNV Volunteers, and entitlements specific to the assignment/country;
- Administrative procedures including bank accounts, currency and foreign exchange regulations, relevant local requirements, housing, health and other facilities;
- The security situation in the country/duty station, UN common system security plan, office and residential security measures and individual role and responsibility in personal safety and security;
- Each UNV volunteer must complete the security training “Basic security in the Field – Staff Safety, Health, and Welfare” available at the country office level.

## **ii. By the host agency**

- The global mandate of the agency in general and specifically in the country of assignment;
- Technical aspects of the specific field in which the UNV volunteer will work;
- The aims, objectives, status of implementation, structure and inputs of the project to which the UNV volunteer is assigned, with emphasis on her/his specific role and functions.

## **3.2 Training**

The UNV volunteer is encouraged to enhance her/his skills that will contribute to his/her assignment, such as training in local language, through the use of the training allotment available to each UNV volunteer (see addendum for amounts applicable). The authority to approve training requests in the local language and/or in any other area that is necessary to the execution of the

UNV volunteer's functions is delegated to the UNDP CO, who decides based on recommendation from the UNV volunteer's immediate supervisor. The reimbursement, which will be based on the presentation of original receipts, should not exceed the annual amount that has been established for this purpose

### ***3.3 Meetings and workshops***

Periodic meetings/ workshops of UNV volunteers may be initiated by the UNV COT and authorized by the UNDP CO to enable them to exchange experiences and build synergies. The cost is met through various funding mechanisms that are locally identified e.g. projects in which the UNV volunteers serve after consultation with respective project managers/agencies.

## **4. Letter of commitment, obligations, reporting requirements, extension of assignment**

### ***4.1 Letter of commitment***

The UNDP CO will issue and sign, on behalf of the Executive Coordinator of the UNV programme, the letter of commitment with the UNV volunteer immediately upon her/his arrival in the country of assignment. (See appendix III.). The signing, first by the UNDP CO, and then by the UNV volunteer, establishes mutual obligations between the UNV programme and the UNV volunteer. It binds the UNV volunteer to the code of conduct contained in this Handbook.

After signature, the **UNV COT** gives the original to the UNV volunteer; retains a copy for the UNDP CO records; and forwards a copy to the UNV programme headquarters.

### ***4.2 Pledge of commitment and "Designation, change or revocation of beneficiary" form***

At the same time, the UNV volunteer must also complete and sign the Pledge of Commitment and the "Designation, change or revocation of beneficiary" form (see appendices IV and V) and submit them to the UNV COT for onward transmission to the UNV programme headquarters.

Both of these documents establish serious undertakings on part of the UNV volunteer. With the Pledge of Commitment, she/he undertakes to abide by the high standards of conduct and service, and the ideals of the UN Charter. The "Designation, change or revocation of beneficiary" form is an important legal document that specifies the disposition of the various monies payable to the UNV volunteer's beneficiary(ies) in the case of her/his death. (See also section 11.5.3.) It is the responsibility of the UNV volunteer to update the "Designation, change or revocation of beneficiary" form whenever she/he deems it necessary. The UNV programme will not consider any claim from any party not indicated on the beneficiary form.

If a UNV volunteer dies during the assignment, a capital sum will be paid to the designated beneficiaries, as per the "Designation, change or revocation of beneficiary" form signed by the UNV volunteer and witnessed, in accordance with the conditions of service for international UNV volunteers. (See section 11.4.2 and appendix XII.) If the designated beneficiaries are minors, the capital sum will be paid in accordance with the national laws of the home country of the UNV volunteer/ beneficiary, governing the guardianship.

### ***4.3 Locally recruited UNV volunteer***

The effective entry on duty date of a locally recruited UNV volunteer will be the date she/he reports to duty (provided she/he has completed all requirements outlined in the compact).

### ***4.4 Reporting requirements for the UNV volunteer***

One important obligation of the UNV volunteer is to prepare and submit periodic reports to the UNV programme. These reports serve as an opportunity for the UNV volunteer, the supervisor and others to discuss and take stock of progress in meeting stated

objectives and identify any actions required. It also helps ensure a learning environment in which the contribution of UNV volunteers can be better known and understood and experiences shared with others inside and outside the country.

The periodic reports are to respect the following schedule which is linked to the length of the assignment:

#### Assignments

- of less than 5 months – only the final report is required;
- from 5 to 18 months – the initial and final report are required;
- of over 18 months – initial, annual and final reports are required.

The UNV COT has complete information on the reporting requirements. Reports are completed by the UNV volunteer, their respective supervisors, and are submitted online to the UNV COT and to UNV programme headquarters.

The settlement of the end of assignment entitlements of the UNV volunteer are contingent upon the submission of the end-of-assignment report. See also section 16.3 on submitting the end-of-assignment report.

#### **4.5 Extension of assignment**

The assignment as a UNV volunteer does not carry any expectancy of extension or of conversion to any other type of appointment. However, if the services of a UNV volunteer are required beyond the expiry date of a signed letter of commitment, in the same country and for the same or a different assignment, an extension of assignment may be authorized by the UNV programme headquarters. This is subject to the satisfactory performance of the UNV volunteer, a request from the host agency, confirmation of funds from the funding agency and agreement of all parties concerned. The terms of any extension (duration, expiry date, nature and location of assignment) will be set out in a new letter of commitment to be signed by the parties. A specific form is provided for this purpose. (See appendix IX.)

## **5. UNV identity card**

### ***5.1 Purpose of the UNV ID card***

A UNV ID card will be issued to all international UNV volunteers to help them secure the courtesies and facilities normally offered by the authorities in the country of assignment to other international UN personnel. It is not intended to replace or substitute the official national travel document (passport). The UNV ID card is provided in addition to any other local identification documents that may be issued by UNDP CO/host agency and/or the host government.

The UNDP CO in the country of assignment is authorized to sign and issue UNV ID cards which will be supplied by the UNV programme headquarters.

### ***5.2 Numbering and logging of the UNV ID card***

The UNV COT should ensure that the UNV ID card reflects the UNV volunteer's reference number as provided by the UNV programme headquarters. The UNV COT will maintain a log in order to track the number of UNV ID cards received and issued.

### ***5.3 Duration of the UNV ID card***

The UNV ID card is issued for the exact initial duration of the assignment. Its validity is extended as authorized by the UNV programme headquarters, in conjunction with any extension of assignment.

### ***5.4 Contents of the UNV ID card***

In addition to the UNV volunteer's name, agency and country of assignment, the UNV ID card contains the following text in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish: *"The bearer of this identity card is a United Nations Volunteer. It is*

*requested that courtesies and facilities be extended to him (her) in accordance with his (her) special status as a member of the United Nations Volunteers and to facilitate by all suitable means the task in which he (she) is engaged”.*

### **5.5 Inclusion of dependants in the UNV ID card**

The names of the PFU members who are authorized to join the UNV volunteer at the duty station may be added to the UNV ID card at the discretion of the UNDP CO.

### **5.6 Endorsement of the UNV ID card**

Arrangements will be made by the UNDP CO to have the UNV ID card endorsed by the host government, with a similar text in the official language of the country of assignment, if so required.

### **5.7 Return of the UNV ID card**

The UNV COT must ensure that the UNV volunteer returns the UNV ID card at the time final entitlements are paid. The UNV volunteer may retain the ID card if authorized by the UNDP CO under the following circumstances:

- i. If the UNV volunteer is being immediately re-assigned to a new duty station in the same country;
- ii. If it is considered helpful to facilitate the UNV volunteer's return travel to her/his place of recruitment/home country;
- iii. If the UNV volunteer wishes to keep the ID card as a token of her/his UNV volunteer service, the UNV COT may authorize it after voiding the card.

### **5.8 Loss of the UNV ID card**

If the UNV volunteer loses her/his card, she/he must report this in writing as soon as possible to the UNDP CO, providing an

explanation of the circumstances of the loss along with a copy of the report filed with the local police authorities. The UNDP CO has the authority to replace a lost UNV ID card.

## Chapter Two

### In-country entitlements and responsibilities

#### 6. Payment of in-country entitlements

##### 6.1 *In-country entitlements*

##### 6.1.1 *In-country entitlements - overall approach to allowances and benefits*

In keeping with the overall mandate of the UNV programme and the volunteer nature and spirit of the mission and the individuals who serve as UNV volunteers, a system of entitlements has been established by the Executive Coordinator, in consultation with UNDP and its Executive Board. The allowances and benefits provided to UNV volunteers are designed to support them to undertake their assignments in the spirit of volunteerism. The objective is to ensure that UNV volunteers live in a safe and sanitary environment and are able to meet their basic living expenses, without suffering personal hardships, within the spirit of modest, decent (non-ostentatious) living conditions. The allowances and benefits provided to the UNV volunteers are not intended to represent a salary for regular employment. The UNV volunteers are expected to adapt and manage their expenditure patterns within this overall system of allowances and benefits.

The package of entitlements is a global one, the elements of which are monitored and adjusted regularly to reflect cost-of-living considerations.

The UNV programme headquarters, under the direction of the Executive Coordinator, has the overall responsibility for managing this package of allowances and benefits. The day-to-day administration of the package is largely delegated to the UNDP COs, which receive specific authorizations from the UNV programme headquarters. If UNV volunteers have concerns or questions, they should seek the advice of the UNDP CO and the UNV COT, who will consult with the UNV programme headquarters as necessary.

### **6.1.2 *General structure of the package***

During the course of the assignment, the UNV volunteer receives the following entitlements:

- A one-time lump sum amount to help meet settling-in expenses (SIG);
- A monthly Volunteer Living Allowance (VLA), to cover living costs which include accommodation, transportation and an allowance for the PFU;
- Facilities for home visit, depending on duration of assignment and the nature of the duty station ;
- A set of arrangements for annual leave, uncertified/ certified sick leave and official holidays;
- Social security provisions, in the form of insurance for medical, dental and hospital care; and life and disability insurance;
- Assistance for emergencies related to safety/security and medical needs;
- In some locations, there are special supplements to recognize hazardous duty or the need for additional residential security measures or both.

Each of the above is described in the following sections of this Handbook.

## **6.2 *Settling-In Grant (SIG)***

### **6.2.1 *Purpose of the SIG***

UNV volunteers receive, upon arrival in their country of assignment, a lump sum to assist them in buying basic household items and meeting other one-time expenses that are typically incurred in moving and setting up a new residence. This grant is also to assist in meeting the additional costs of temporary accommodation and other living expenses in the early days after arrival which also covers up to seven calendar days that the UNV volunteer might have to stay at the capital city before being deployed to duty station for UNV/UNDP and security briefing.

### *6.2.2 Eligibility for the SIG*

UNV volunteers whose initial assignments are for a period of at least 12 months receive the entire SIG. There will be no additional amounts payable for subsequent extensions of the initial assignment, irrespective of the length of the overall assignment. The rationale for this one-time lump sum payment is to help the UNV volunteer to establish her/himself in the country of assignment upon arrival.

In the case of UNV volunteers whose initial assignments are less than 12 months, but a minimum of three months, the SIG will be paid on a pro-rated basis up to the maximum entitlement payable for 12 months, but not less than 1 month MLA. The rationale for this is to ensure equity in applying the entitlement of SIG.

No SIG is payable for assignments of duration less than three months.

Locally recruited UNV volunteers are eligible for the SIG as below:

Full SIG if the locally recruited volunteer has been residing at the duty station for a period less than 06 months;

50% SIG if the locally recruited volunteer has been residing at the duty station for a period more than 06 months, but less than 12 months;

No SIG if the locally recruited volunteer has been residing at the duty station for a period of 12 months or more.

### *6.2.3 Level and variation of the SIG*

The UNV programme headquarters establishes the amount of the SIG for each country, which is the same for all locations within the country (see addendum).

UNV volunteers who are unaccompanied by the PFU members at the duty station are paid the base rate of SIG .

An additional amount (see addendum) will be paid upon the joining of one or more of the PFU members at the duty station.

The UNV volunteer is required to refund the additional amount of SIG for PFU members departing from the duty station without completing a minimum stay of six months.

#### *6.2.4 Special situations*

The situation of a) both spouses being assigned as UNV volunteers or b) one spouse being a staff member of one of the UN system organizations is covered in section 19.

#### *6.2.5 Adjustments to the amount of the SIG*

##### **Resignation by the UNV volunteer**

If the UNV volunteer resigns within the first 12 months of her/his contract, she/he will be required to refund a pro-rated share of the SIG corresponding to the months not served (or have this amount deducted from any payments due to her/him). However, the amount equivalent of 1 MLA does not have to be reimbursed, regardless of the period served. If the UNV volunteer who resigns does not refund the pro-rated share of the SIG, she/he will be excluded from any further assignments with the UNV programme and action will be taken in consultation with the Legal Department of UNDP.

If the UNV volunteer resigns after 12 months of her/his contract, there is no requirement to refund a share of the SIG.

##### **Reassignment/transfer to another country during an assignment**

The UNV volunteer will not be required to refund part of the SIG and will receive the full SIG in the new country of assignment.

##### **Change of duty station within the country of assignment**

There will be no additional payment of SIG. The host agency/project will meet the cost of travel and transportation of personal effects.

### **New assignment in the same country following repatriation (break between contracts)**

The UNV volunteer receives the full SIG if she/he is recruited for another assignment in the same country having left the country for repatriation and if the break between the two contracts has lasted for a minimum period of 6 months.

If the UNV Volunteer has not left the country, or the break between two contracts is less than 6 months no SIG will be paid.

## **7. Volunteer living allowance (VLA)**

The UNV volunteer receives a Volunteer Living Allowance (VLA). This is a monthly payment intended to cover living costs, under modest but decent conditions in the country of assignment. The VLA reflects the core principles and spirit of volunteerism and is not a salary for regular employment.

The VLA consists of three components:

- the Monthly Living Allowance (MLA);
- the Accommodation Allowance (AA);
- the Family Allowance (FA).

### **7.1 Monthly Living Allowance (MLA)**

The MLA assists the UNV volunteer to meet her/his living costs at the duty station, excluding accommodation and utilities covered by the AA, and family-related expenses supported through the FA. Each UNV volunteer is expected to organize her/his monthly budget and expenditure habits to enable a modest lifestyle within the MLA in accordance with the volunteer spirit underlying her/his

motivation to serve as a UNV volunteer. There are no exceptions made for the specific needs of individual UNV volunteers.

### *7.1.1 Eligibility for the MLA*

The MLA is payable on a monthly basis to all UNV volunteers for the entire duration of the assignment. However, UNV volunteers who are on an assignment of less than three months will receive a Daily Volunteer Allowance (DVAL) in lieu of VLA, established on an ad hoc basis by the UNV programme headquarters.

### *7.1.2 One-rate system of the MLA*

The MLA is paid at one rate for all UNV volunteers in the country regardless of dependency status, and duration of assignment. It is also set at one rate for all the duty stations in the same country, even though there may be variations in prices and living costs from one location to another.

### *7.1.3 Rates and calculation of the MLA*

The UNV programme headquarters establishes a global base rate of MLA from comprehensive reviews undertaken as required (see addendum for the base rate). This MLA rate includes a portion of transportation allowance, is stated in US dollar terms, and is adjusted country by country by the United Nations/International Civil Service Commission (UN/ICSC) post adjustment multiplier (PAM), to reflect differences in the cost of living and purchasing power.

The post adjustment system of the United Nations established by the General Assembly and managed by the ICSC, is used as the indicator for making the cost-of-living adjustments. This is done by applying the PAMs to the global base rate of MLA.

### *7.1.4 Exceptional situations affecting the level of the MLA*

## **Sharp rise/drop in the PAM**

The MLA is not adjusted on a monthly basis, upwards or downwards, during the year, even though the PAM may fluctuate during the period. In the event of the PAM increase/ decrease, in one month or cumulatively, by 10 points or more since the last adjustment, an ad hoc adjustment will be made to the MLA for that country. In highly exceptional circumstances, a second ad hoc adjustment may be considered if the PAM for that country increases/decreases by another 10 points or more since the last ad hoc adjustment.

All changes in MLA, whether regular or exceptional, can only take place with the explicit authorization of the UNV programme headquarters.

## **7.2 Accommodation Allowance (AA)**

### **7.2.1 Purpose of the AA**

The UNV volunteer is provided with an AA to enable her/him to obtain modest but adequate housing and meet the associated costs of utilities (electricity, water, gas, heating, as appropriate).

### **7.2.2 Standards of accommodation**

Since living accommodation is normally the largest single item of expenditure in a UNV volunteer's monthly budget, and as there is generally a range of accommodations available at varying prices, it is useful to provide a general description of what is considered reasonable.

In broad terms, a UNV volunteer is expected to live in accommodation that is clean, safe, affordable and modest. Subject to the condition of meeting the security standards dictated by the UN designated official for security matters, it is the policy of the UNV programme to allow the UNV volunteer to decide where and in what dwelling to live. In certain cases however, accommodation may be considered unsafe and will not be allowed. The UNV volunteer may choose to live alone, or to

share with other UNV volunteers or others, or to rent a room with a family. A UNV volunteer with accompanying family members normally chooses family-appropriate accommodation of a modest nature. The accommodation is expected to be equipped with the sanitary facilities and utilities that are typical for the location, and should contribute to the health and well-being of the UNV volunteer. There should be access to washing and cooking facilities. Furnishings are expected to be adequate and modest. On the whole, it is expected that the accommodation would be viewed in the local context as neither substandard nor luxurious.

### *7.2.3 Eligibility for the AA*

The AA is paid monthly, together with the MLA and FA, to all UNV volunteers in the country except for those who are serving on a very short-term basis (less than three months) and are receiving a DVAL which covers their lodgings.

### *7.2.4 Rates of the AA*

One fixed rate of AA is paid for all locations in the country. The same fixed rate of the AA is paid irrespective of family size.

The UNV programme headquarters communicates the fixed rate of the AA to each UNDP CO. This rate is not subject to a regular annual adjustment. The rate may be reviewed from time to time by the UNV programme headquarters based on the recommendation of the UNDP CO. The UNV programme headquarters may undertake periodic surveys of available and affordable accommodations, with the assistance of the UNDP CO and the UNV COT. In the course of such surveys, UNV volunteers will be expected to cooperate, sharing information and evidence of the amount of rent paid and allowing a visit of the surveyor(s) to the accommodation, if requested.

### *7.2.5 The AA supplement*

It is expected that most UNV volunteers in the country will be able to locate suitable accommodation with the fixed rate of AA that is

provided. However, due to particular circumstances of the housing market or security in the country, there may be situations where the fixed rate of the AA is insufficient. Under these circumstances, the UNV volunteer may be eligible for an AA supplement. The UNV volunteer must request the supplement from the UNDP CO and be prepared to:

- Provide a copy of the up-to-date, signed lease showing the actual amount of rent;
- Certify that the accommodation and the rent are not being shared with another UNV volunteer or other persons (other than with members of the immediate family);
- Demonstrate that the accommodation is of a suitable standard for the UNV volunteer and, if relevant, her/his family, consistent with the standard described in section 7.2.2 above. In this connection, often, someone from the UNDP CO or the UNV COT will visit the accommodation to ensure that suitable standards are met.

The maximum rental supplement applicable for a particular duty station is calculated as a percentage of average adjusted MLA of the particular duty station and is fixed in US dollar terms. The UNV programme headquarters communicates the maximum amount to each UNDP CO along with the fixed rate of the AA, described in section 7.2.4 above. UNV volunteers may request adjustment of their AA supplement, if the rent is revised in a new lease agreement or if they change accommodation. Normally no more than one change in the amount of the supplement will be authorized per year. UNV volunteers are also obliged to inform the UNDP CO of changes in dwelling or in rent that will reduce or eliminate the supplement.

#### *7.2.6 Deduction for rent-free accommodation*

In certain situations, UNV volunteers are provided with rent-free accommodation at the duty station by the project, host agency, UNDP, government, etc. This might include tents or barracks. UNV volunteers are required to advise the UNDP CO and the UNV COT when this is the case for necessary adjustments. In

such a case, the UNV volunteer will not receive the AA established for the country of assignment; instead she/he will receive a designated percentage of the MLA (see addendum for percentage) applicable to cover costs for utilities i.e. electricity, water, gas and other expenditures related to accommodation that may be incurred.

### ***7.2.7 Locating suitable housing***

The UNDP CO often assists the UNV volunteer in identifying suitable housing in a safe area, and if required, in finalizing the lease. However, signing contracts with the landlord, and paying for the rent, utilities, etc. are the responsibility of the UNV volunteer.

### ***7.2.8 Advances for housing, medical or family (PFU) emergencies***

The UNDP CO has the authority to make advances for rent, rental deposits, medical bills and family emergencies for rent and rental deposits, and to recover these advances from the VLA of the UNV volunteer. The UNDP CO should review the request taking into account the remaining period of the contract. To avoid hardship to the UNV volunteer the advance must be deducted from the VLA in monthly installments not exceeding thirty percent of the VLA.

## ***7.3 Family Allowance (FA)***

### ***7.3.1 Purpose of the FA***

The purpose of the FA is to assist the UNV volunteer to meet the additional expenses associated with the PFU members. It is recognized that the expenditure pattern will be different within every family and the FA may not meet all the additional expenses. It is the responsibility of each UNV volunteer to manage her/his household with the amounts made available through the FA and the other two components of the VLA.

### **7.3.2 Structure and rates of the FA**

The FA is established on a global basis by the UNV programme headquarters. The same rate applies in every country, and at all duty stations in one country.

The FA is paid at two rates (for amounts, please see addendum) as follows:

- One-dependant rate – when PFU consists of one member other than the UNV volunteer;
- Two-dependant rate – when PFU consists of two or more members other than the UNV volunteer;

The FA rates are adjusted from time to time, based on reviews undertaken by the UNV programme headquarters.

### **7.3.3 Eligibility for the FA**

The applicable rate will be paid irrespective of whether the PFU member(s) join the UNV volunteer at the duty station.

When a dependent child reaches 21 years of age, she/he will no longer be considered a member of the PFU, which may result in a reduction in the FA. Similarly, the marriage or divorce of the UNV volunteer, or the birth or adoption of a child may result in an increase or decrease of the applicable FA. The UNV volunteer is responsible for immediately advising the UNV COT of such changes. The FA rate is revised starting from the date of change in the PFU status, however, never more than three months from the date of advising the COT retroactively.

## **7.4 Volunteer Living Allowance (VLA) payments**

#### *7.4.1 Timing of the VLA payments*

The first VLA payment will be made at the end of the month in which the UNV volunteer arrives at the duty station. This will cover the period from the date of arrival until the end of the month, and will be pro-rated on the basis of the calendar days in that month. Subsequent VLA payments will be made at the end of each month.

#### *7.4.2. Early payment of the VLA at the end of the assignment*

The VLA is payable up to the expiry date of the assignment (pro-rated in the last month, if necessary). However, the last working day of a UNV volunteer can be before the expiry date indicated in the letter of commitment so she/he can utilize accumulated annual leave. In this case, the UNV volunteer receives the payment of the remaining VLA before the end of contract provided she/he has submitted documentary evidence that all outstanding financial obligations have been met and she/he has submitted the final periodic report. (See section 16.3.) This documentary evidence must accompany the final checklist for approval by the UNDP CO. (See section 16.4 and appendix XIV.)

#### *7.4.3 Currency of payment*

The VLA payment to the UNV volunteer is made in US dollars or in exceptional cases, in the currency available to the UNDP CO. There is no provision for partial payment in different currencies. It is the UNV volunteer's own responsibility to cash or transfer the amounts in accordance with her/his needs and at her/his own expense. The UNDP and the UNV programme will not pay any bank charges or accept any liability/ responsibility for the transfer of funds to a UNV volunteer's home country or other location.

#### *7.4.4 Special situations*

The situation of a) both spouses being assigned as UNV volunteers or b) one spouse being a staff member of one of the UN system organizations is covered in section 19.

## **8. Travel allowance for home visit**

### ***8.1 Purpose of the home visit***

The UNV volunteer is provided with the home visit to enable her/him (and members of the PFU, when present at the duty station) to travel back home to rest and to renew personal, cultural and professional ties in the home country. Nevertheless, the UNV programme recognizes that the UNV volunteer is the one who can best decide how to take advantage of this benefit and therefore leaves to her/his discretion how (where and for what duration) to use this travel allowance.

### ***8.2. Use of annual leave for the home visit***

The UNV volunteer is required to use accrued annual leave during the home visit. (See also section 10.2 on annual leave.) However, official travel time established by the UN is not counted against annual leave during the home visit.

### ***8.3 Eligibility for the travel allowance for the home visit***

The eligibility for travel allowance for the home visit is linked to the length of the assignment and the nature of the duty stations.

All UNV volunteers deployed at family duty stations are eligible for home visit after 24 months of continuous UNV service and provided the contract is extended in one or series of extensions for a minimum period of 12 months, bringing the total assignment duration to a minimum period of 36 months. This is applicable regardless of the dependants being present at the duty station or not.

All UNV volunteers deployed at non-family duty stations are eligible for home visit after 12 months of continuous UNV service and provided the contract is extended in one or series of

extensions for a minimum period of 12 months, bringing the total assignment duration to a minimum period of 24 months.

The security evacuation to the UNV volunteer's home country will be treated as a home visit, when determining the UNV volunteer's eligibility for the (next) home visit.

#### ***8.4 Travel allowance for the home visit of the PFU members***

Provided the criteria indicated above are met, the following is taken into consideration for the PFU members:

- PFU members who have joined the UNV volunteer in the country of assignment at the organization's expense and stayed for at least six months, and those newly born at the duty station (if part of the PFU), may also accompany the UNV volunteer on the home visit at the organization's expense;
- Children who are part of the PFU who are approaching the age of 21 before or at the time of the home visit and who cannot remain at the duty station for at least six months from the return date following the home visit will not be entitled to home visit. Instead repatriation travel will be authorized.

#### ***8.5 Procedures for requesting and using the travel allowance for the home visit***

The UNV COT monitors the UNV volunteer's eligibility for the home visit and liaises with her/him. The UNV volunteer, after obtaining the agreement of the supervisor/host agency for the home visit, will present the request to the UNV COT. They will in turn forward it to the UNV programme headquarters for consideration and confirmation of the UNV volunteer's eligibility.

The UNV programme headquarters verifies that the UNV volunteer satisfies the criteria as described above, and then authorizes the travel allowance through the UNDP CO.

### ***8.6 Options for travel allowance for the home visit***

The UNV programme headquarters, at its discretion, may choose to offer one of two options for using the travel allowance. The first consists of the UNV programme issuing the appropriate tickets, and the second involves the UNV volunteer receiving cash in lieu of the tickets. The options are described in detail below.

- Issuance of direct least costly (DLC) economy class round-trip air tickets for the UNV volunteer and the members of the PFU at the duty station. There will be no payment of terminal expenses or UNDSA (per diem).

Or alternatively

- Payment, to the UNV volunteer and each member of the PFU at the duty station, of a cash amount that is equivalent to a designated percentage (see addendum for percentage) of a full economy fare (economic class) for the most direct and least costly route between the nearest airport to the duty station and the place of recruitment/home country and back. No UNDSA for stop-overs or terminal expenses will be paid and the UNV volunteer will be responsible for organizing the travel for herself/himself and her/his PFU members.

In either case, no extra baggage entitlement is granted for the home visit. No travel claim or proof of travel will be required from the UNV volunteer.

At any point of time the UNV Programme has the discretion to revoke an option previously agreed upon.

### ***8.7 Special situations***

#### **A security or medical related evacuation of the UNV volunteer to the home country**

If, during the course of an assignment, the UNV volunteer is evacuated to her/his home country for security or medical

reasons, the next travel allowance for the home visit will only be authorized once she/he has returned to the duty station, after the evacuation, for the required period of time as described in section 8.3.

### **Resignation during the extension period**

If a UNV volunteer resigns before completing the period of extension of the assignment which qualified her/him for the payment of travel allowance for the home visit, she/he will be required to refund the amount received (for him/herself and PFU members) in full (or the amount will be deducted from other payments due). In the case of the UNV volunteer having accepted the option of tickets, then she/he will be required to refund the cost of tickets and related amounts that s/he received for the home visit travel.

### **Tickets purchased by the UNV programme are not transferable**

Tickets purchased for the UNV volunteer by the UNV programme as part of the travel allowance for the home visit are not transferable to any other person.

### **Spouses**

The situation of a) both spouses being assigned as UNV volunteers or b) one spouse being a staff member of one of the UN system organizations is covered in section 19.

### ***8.8 Fully funded and co-sponsored UNV volunteers***

In the case of a UNV volunteer whose external costs are governed by the terms and conditions of a cooperating organization, the cost of travel to the home country, will be the responsibility of the cooperating organization, unless agreed otherwise with the UNV programme. No such travel, however, will be undertaken without prior authorization from the UNV programme headquarters.

## **9. Official travel**

### ***9.1 Authorization for official travel***

Official travel is travel, either within or outside the country of assignment, that is authorized and undertaken in connection with official work responsibilities. It may involve visiting project activities, attending meetings and conferences, undertaking necessary research or consultations, etc. The UNDP CO and host agency, as applicable, must authorize all official travel in advance.

### ***9.2 Official travel within the country of assignment***

The costs of official travel within the country of assignment will be in accordance with the standard UN procedures. All related costs should be charged to the host agency as project-related expenses, and are not considered part of the cost of fielding the UNV volunteer.

A UNV volunteer receives 100 percent UNDSA for the location to which she/he travels. This is to cover costs of accommodation, food and incidentals while on authorized official travel. It does not cover the actual travel costs, which should be provided by the host agency. A visit to a project site in the vicinity of the regular duty station does not, by itself, constitute eligibility for payment of UNDSA. Standard UN rules regarding UNDSA will govern such payments. A breast-feeding or single parent who brings along her/his infant under the age of two years on official mission is eligible for 10% of the travel tickets and DSA as a lump sum to help cover the travel costs.

### ***9.3 Official travel outside the country of assignment***

Travel of a UNV volunteer is normally limited to journeys within the country of assignment. However, travel connected with project activities to another country will be authorized by the host agency concerned in agreement with the UNDP CO. The air travel, irrespective of the number of hours of travel, will be based

on the economy and most direct and least costly (DLC) fare. The entitlements such as UNDSA and terminal expenses will be in accordance with standard UN procedures. Irrespective of the funding source of the assignment, the costs will be charged to the host agency and will not be considered part of the cost of fielding the UNV volunteer.

If the official travel is in connection with temporarily reassigning a UNV volunteer to duties on another mission or project in another country, and if the absence from the regular country of assignment exceeds three months, then consultations will take place between the UNV programme headquarters, the UNDP CO and the project to consider whether to adjust the conditions of service of the UNV volunteer.

#### ***9.4 Frequent official travel***

A UNV volunteer may be required to travel often and regularly within the country of assignment, in accordance with her/his terms of reference. In this case, the UNDP CO may decide to establish an ad hoc travel allowance instead of UNDSA, in consultation with the host agency. In such circumstances, this ad hoc travel allowance is borne by the host agency as part of the project costs. It is not considered part of the cost of fielding the UNV volunteer.

#### ***9.5 Submission and settlement of travel claims***

The UNV volunteer is required to submit a complete and accurate travel claim promptly, for each official journey. The travel claims will be processed according to the regulations of the UNDP CO and/or as agreed with the host agency. All payments due to the UNV volunteer are made locally.

## **10. Working hours, holidays and leave**

### ***10.1 Working hours and holidays***

#### ***10.1.1 Working hours and holidays***

A UNV volunteer is subject to the same official working hours as the project or host agency to which she/he is assigned. She/he will also be entitled to the official holidays as observed by these organizations. Where the UNV volunteer is called upon to work, within reasonable limits, beyond official working hours, there will be no additional payment made.

#### ***10.1.2 Compensatory time-off (CTO)***

If a UNV volunteer is obliged to work regularly beyond the official working hours, she/he may be granted CTO equal to the number of extra hours worked in accordance with the local practice of the host agency. However, no payment in lieu of CTO can be made. The purpose of CTO is to allow adequate rest to UNV volunteers. The UNDP CO will coordinate with other UN agencies in the country to reach a common policy on the use of CTO by the UNV volunteers.

### ***10.2 Annual leave***

#### ***10.2.1 Leave accrual***

UNV volunteers accrue annual leave at the rate of 2½ working days per completed month of service. A UNV volunteer on an initial assignment of less than three months will not accrue annual leave, as these assignments are special in nature. However, if the assignment is extended and the total length of the assignment reaches three months or longer, she/he will accrue annual leave at the rate of 2½ working days per month, retroactively from the beginning of the assignment.

The accrued leave must be taken during the course of the assignment. If, however, leave cannot be taken before the end of the assignment due to the exigencies of service, then UNV programme headquarters in consultation with the host agency and UNDP CO may exceptionally consider approving a cash payment to cover the period of unused annual leave. Such a payment will not exceed in any case a maximum of 30 working days, and will be limited to the MLA portion plus the FA component (excluding the AA). No contract extension will be made to cover accumulated leave days.

### *10.2.2 Amount of annual leave in the first and last months of an assignment*

In the **first** month of an assignment, annual leave is credited as follows:

#### **Assignment beginning**

- on first day of the month – credit 2½ days
- from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month – credit 2 days
- after the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month – credit 1 day

In the **last** month of an assignment, annual leave is credited as follows:

#### **Assignment ending**

- between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of the month – credit 1 day
- between the 17<sup>th</sup> and next to last day – credit 2 days
- on last day of the month – credit 2½ days

### *10.2.3 Maximum leave accrual*

If the assignment is extended, the UNDP CO will authorize the carry-over of accrued leave. However, at any point in time during the assignment, the UNV volunteer can only accumulate a maximum of 60 annual leave days.

#### ***10.2.4 Authorization for using annual leave***

A UNV volunteer is required to obtain specific authorization for using annual leave from the UNDP CO, through the UNV COT. The UNDP CO will approve the leave subject to the agreement of the UNV volunteer's supervisor (project manager/ national project authorities or host agency, as applicable). The principle is that the approval of a leave request from a UNV volunteer depends on the exigencies of service. The UNDP CO must also be informed of a contact address during the leave, whether it is taken inside or outside the country of assignment.

#### ***10.2.5 Advance annual leave***

In exceptional circumstances, advance annual leave may be granted up to a maximum of 10 working days. A request for such leave must be made in advance to the UNDP CO, which will consider the circumstances before authorizing the same. If the UNV volunteer does not report for duty at the end of the approved period, disciplinary measures including recovery of VLA, insurance premium and other allowances may be applied.

### ***10.3 Sick leave***

#### ***10.3.1 Notification of sickness***

A UNV volunteer is required to advise the UNDP CO/ UNV COT and the immediate supervisor of any absence due to illness, injury or public health requirements. When the absence is for more than three consecutive working days, a certificate from a qualified member of the local medical profession must be submitted indicating the expected date of return to duty. When, in the judgment of the UNV COT and the UNDP CO, the amount of sick leave/ the nature of illness of a UNV volunteer is a matter for serious concern, they may decide to consult with the UNV programme headquarters and the UN Joint Medical Service (UNJMS) in Geneva.

### *10.3.2 Uncertified sick leave*

Sick leave that is unsubstantiated by a certificate from a qualified member of the local medical profession is considered to be uncertified sick leave. The maximum amount of uncertified sick leave, based on assignment length, is as follows:

- i. 3 working days for assignments of duration from 3 months up to less than 12 months;
- ii. 7 working days for every 12 months assignment.

All absences that bring the total of uncertified sick leave beyond the above specified limits, and for which the UNV volunteer has not submitted a medical certificate, will be charged to annual leave.

### *10.3.3 Certified sick leave*

The maximum period of certified sick leave applicable, based on contract duration, is as follows:

- i. 15 working days for contracts of duration from 3 months to less than 12 months ;
- ii. 30 working days for contracts of duration from 12 to less than 24 months; and
- iii. 60 working days for contracts of 24 months.

All absences that bring the total amount of certified sick leave beyond the allowable maximum will be charged to annual leave (or deducted from the VLA or other entitlements if there is no annual leave balance). An absence for medical reasons of more than the maximum allowable (as indicated above) may be treated as prolonged incapacity to work and may lead to the termination of the contract. (See sections 11.2.8 and 15.3.1.) In exceptional cases, a request for extension of this period of sick leave may be submitted, with full justification, to the UNV programme headquarters for consideration by the UNJMS.

#### ***10.3.4 Location of UNV volunteer during sick leave***

During sick leave, the UNV volunteer should not leave the duty station without a recommendation from a qualified member of the local medical profession and the agreement of the host agency/UNDP CO and prior approval from the UNV programme headquarters.

#### ***10.4 Family leave***

UNV volunteers are permitted to take family leave to attend to urgent and unforeseen family matters that, in the opinion of the UNV volunteer, require their presence away from work. Family matters should be interpreted broadly and include, but are not limited to, matters such as: sickness of a family member, death of a relative or close friend, school-related obligations and activities of family members, and unavoidable obligations at home. A male UNV volunteer may also take family leave for the birth of his child. UNV volunteers are expected to advise and obtain the concurrence of the immediate supervisor. Family leave is chargeable against any unused days of uncertified sick leave (see section 10.3.2 above), within the maximum allowable. If the number of uncertified sick leave days has already been exhausted, then the family leave will be charged to annual leave.

#### ***10.5 Maternity leave***

Female UNV volunteers will be allowed 16 weeks of maternity leave during the assignment. Contracts will not be extended to enable the UNV volunteer to use the full period of maternity leave. Annual leave will continue to accrue during the period of maternity leave.

#### ***10.6 Special leave without pay (SLWOP)***

UNV volunteers are normally not granted periods of SLWOP. However, highly unusual and/or humanitarian reasons will be considered for the exceptional granting of SLWOP. Provided there is agreement by both the host agency and the UNDP CO,

the UNV programme headquarters may authorize SLWOP, on condition that the UNV volunteer has completed at least 12 months of continuous service and will serve for at least three months from the date of return from SLWOP. In no case will SLWOP be approved for the purpose of taking other work. During SLWOP the UNV volunteer will not be entitled to VLA, accrual of annual leave and of resettlement allowance, and other related allowances. However, the UNV volunteer is required to retain her/his medical, permanent disability and life insurance during the period, and to meet the full cost of the premiums of these insurances. The UNV volunteer must pay the premiums prior to departing on SLWOP. The UNDP CO will inform the UNV volunteer of the amounts due.

No special leave with pay will be granted.

## ***10.7 Attendance records***

### ***10.7.1 Submitting monthly leave reports***

A UNV volunteer must submit monthly leave reports to the UNV COT, clearly indicating any leave taken. The immediate supervisor and/or host agency and the UNV COT must certify these records.

### ***10.7.2 Checking monthly attendance records***

The UNV COT monitors the leave reports of UNV volunteers and maintains an attendance record, in the format used for UNDP staff members. The UNV COT also retains locally the original leave cards, together with leave reports and all supporting documentation such as medical certificates.

## **11. Medical/health, life and permanent disability insurance**

While matters of health are primarily the responsibility of the individual, the good health of the UNV volunteers is of paramount

concern to the UNV programme. Therefore, , the programme has in place a number of measures that provide support and protection for the UNV volunteers and the PFU members who are present in the country of assignment. These measures, including medical examinations, insurance plans, medical evacuation procedures, and arrangements to deal with death during service, are described in this section.

## **11.1 Medical examinations**

### **11.1.1 Entry medical examination**

The UNV volunteer must undergo and pass an entry medical examination by a UN examining physician or a UN-designated physician as a prerequisite before being accepted as a UNV volunteer. It is in the interest of the UNV volunteer to be assured that she/he is beginning the assignment in good health, and it is in the interest of the UNV programme that the UNV volunteers are medically fit to serve.

An entry medical examination is required for all assignments. However, in certain circumstances for short-term assignments, the requirement of a full medical examination may be waived in favour of a satisfactory medical certificate (see appendix XVIII) from a qualified member of the local medical profession. The UN examining physician reviews the medical examination and gives the required medical clearance or otherwise. The candidate will in no case be authorized to begin an assignment or undertake travel to the country of assignment until this formal medical clearance has been given.

Once clearance is given, the UNV volunteer will be authorized to travel to the country of assignment and begin service.

The medical examination and related details are to be sent by the UNDP CO in the country of recruitment to the UNJMS in Geneva. The UNJMS undertakes a further review to determine whether any additional medical information should be obtained or whether any qualifying conditions should be indicated in connection with the assignment. The UNJMS retains the entry medical

examination documentation to enable it to provide medical advice in the event of being consulted subsequently.

### *11.1.2 Exit medical examination*

Exit medical examination is not mandatory; however may be authorized subject to the requirements of the host institution or the UNV programme. When authorized, the UNV volunteer shall undergo an exit medical examination by a UN examining physician or a UN-designated physician within the last six weeks in the country of assignment. The details concerning exit medical examinations are provided in section 16.2.

### *11.1.3 Periodic medical examinations*

During their assignments UNV Volunteers may be required to undergo periodic medical examinations or to receive necessary immunizations at the request of the UNV programme headquarters based on the recommendation of the UNJMS. A complete medical examination is required every two years for a serving UNV volunteer under the age of 55 and every one year for a serving UNV volunteer above the age of 55. This measure is intended to monitor the health of the UNV volunteer and ensure that she/he remains in good health throughout the assignment. The UNV COT can provide guidance to the UNV volunteer on the periodic medical examinations.

Note: The X-rays are kept by the UNV volunteer for all the above medical examinations.

### *11.1.4 Medical reports*

All medical reports will be retained by the UNJMS in Geneva. Reports are forwarded to the UNJMS by the relevant UNDP CO (UNDP CO in the country of recruitment in the case of entry medical examinations, and UNDP CO in the country of assignment in the case of periodic and exit medical examinations).

### ***11.1.5 Reimbursement of medical examination costs***

The costs of the above medical examinations are not reimbursable by Vanbreda medical insurance. The cost of the entry medical examination is intended to be covered by the pre-departure expenses account, as applicable (see section 2.3.1.i). The exit medical examination and the periodic medical examinations are reimbursable costs charging the account as indicated below. The claims with original receipts should be submitted by the UNV volunteer to the UNDP CO for reimbursement. The accounts to be charged by the UNDP CO are mentioned below.

- i.** Entry medical examination (for internationally and locally recruited UNV volunteers): assignment travel account (pre-departure expenses account);
- ii.** Exit medical examination: repatriation travel account; as applicable;
- iii.** Periodic medical examinations: project/host agency, and not considered part of the cost of fielding the UNV volunteer;
- iv.** Costs related to travel and UNDSA for periodic medical examinations: project/host agency, and not considered part of the cost of fielding or repatriating the UNV volunteer;
- v.** In the case of fully funded and co-sponsored UNV volunteers, the entry and exit medical examination costs should be claimed directly from the cooperating organization, unless agreed otherwise with the UNV programme.

## ***11.2 Medical/dental/hospital insurance***

### ***11.2.1 Insurance coverage for UNV volunteers***

UNV volunteers and the PFU members who have been authorized to reside at the duty station will be provided with an insurance plan to cover medical, dental and hospital care (described in appendix XI), including:

- i. Medical and hospital treatment needed as a result of an illness or accident occurring during the UNV volunteer's assignment;
- ii. Curative dental care;
- iii. Vaccines such as cholera, gamma globulin and hepatitis A and B, and malaria prophylaxis;
- iv. Follow-up expenses (only for the UNV volunteer) for medical treatment required as a result of accidents and/or illness originating during the assignment. (See section 11.2.7.)

All UNV volunteers are covered under the provisions of a group insurance scheme contracted by the UNV programme with J. Vanbreda & Co. International (Vanbreda), based in Antwerp, Belgium. It provides medical, life and permanent disability insurance coverage. This coverage is provided at no cost to the UNV volunteer.

There is no age limitation on the medical/dental/hospital insurance coverage.

### *11.2.2 Effective date of coverage*

The insurance coverage takes effect from the date the UNV volunteer leaves the place of recruitment and will be in effect until the last day of the assignment and return to the country that has been indicated as the place of repatriation. The coverage period during travel before reaching the country of assignment and upon return after the assignment will be for a maximum of three travel days in each direction. Under exceptional circumstances, if the travel takes more than three days, UNV programme headquarters will review the situation on a case-by case basis. No medical and life insurance coverage will be provided for any diversion from the authorized route, during assignment and repatriation travel. There will be no insurance coverage if the UNV volunteer decides to remain in the country of assignment or delay her/his travel to the place of repatriation after the completion of the assignment. In such a case, the insurance coverage ends on the last day of the assignment. In periods of annual leave and official travel during an assignment the insurance coverage remains in effect.

According to the insurance policy, a UNV volunteer who is over 70 years of age at the time of appointment will not be covered by the life insurance. Coverage will also cease at 70 for those UNV volunteers whose assignments begin before they are 70. Medical and disability insurance coverage has no age restriction.

Additional information on the insurance scheme is given in appendices XI, XII, XIII.

### *11.2.3 Insurance coverage for PFU members*

The PFU members who have been authorized by the UNV programme headquarters to join the UNV volunteer at the duty station are also provided with medical insurance at no cost to the UNV volunteer while at the duty station during the assignment. No medical insurance coverage will be provided to the PFU members who do not join the UNV volunteer at the duty station. This coverage is limited only to the medical insurance scheme (appendix XI) and is provided once the relevant marriage and/or birth certificates have been submitted. There is no coverage of PFU members for life and disability insurance.

The UNV volunteer will be required to pay the medical insurance premium for additional primary dependants who have been authorized by the UNV programme to travel to the duty station. This coverage is compulsory and unless the UNV volunteer provides documentary evidence affirming adequate insurance of additional primary dependents, the monthly premiums at the prevailing rate for the additional primary dependants, will be deducted from the VLA on a monthly basis by the UNDP CO. (See also section 2.4.4.) For those recognized dependants in the PFU who reach the age of 21 and who remain at the duty station, the UNV volunteer may choose to continue the medical insurance, provided she/he bears the full cost of their insurance premium.

It is the responsibility of the UNV volunteer to inform that her/his dependant(s) has arrived at the duty station. In case of delay in informing UNV programme headquarters of the arrival date, the dependent(s) will be covered only as of the time/date UNV HQ is

informed. No reimbursement will be made for any medical claims submitted prior to informing UNV programme headquarters.

#### *11.2.4 Submission of claims and reimbursement*

The UNV volunteer and dependants who have been authorized to reside at the duty station will be entitled to receive 100 percent reimbursement of medical/dental/hospital expenses incurred, in accordance with the schedule of compensation of the Vanbreda medical insurance scheme and as described in appendix XI.

The following procedures apply to submitting claims for reimbursement of medical/dental expenses:

- i. The UNV volunteer should pay the medical/dental bills to the care provider, complete the required insurance claim form (which can be obtained from the UNV COT) and, after certification by the UNDP CO, submit it directly to Vanbreda for reimbursement. If the UNV volunteer has left the duty station on repatriation in order to use her/his accumulated leave, the claims for reimbursement must be submitted to the UNV programme headquarters for certification and onward transmission to Vanbreda for settlement directly to the UNV volunteer. Before submitting the claim for certification, the UNV volunteer should ensure that she/he has retained copies of bills and prescriptions for future reference;
- ii. Claims should normally be submitted within three months from the date when the expenses were incurred. They must be supported by original documentation (e.g. medical, surgical, dental, pharmaceutical and hospital bills) and accompanied by prescriptions and diagnosis. Claims will not be reimbursable if submitted more than 24 months after the expenses were incurred.

#### *11.2.5 Advances/direct payment to the hospital*

If expenditures are large and beyond the means of the UNV volunteer (which is often the case for hospital expenses), the UNDP CO is authorized by UNV programme headquarters to make an advance payment up to an established maximum

amount (indicated in the addendum) or the amount equivalent to the accrued RSA, whichever is greater. To avoid hardship to the UNV volunteer, the advance must be deducted by the UNDP CO from the VLA in monthly installments not exceeding thirty percent of the monthly VLA, or be recovered in full upon settlement of claims by Vanbreda.

In the exceptional circumstances where hospitalization bills are expected to be substantial, the UNDP CO may request the hospital to directly contact and forward the estimate/proforma to Vanbreda for guarantee of payment. The hospital will subsequently submit its invoices directly to Vanbreda for reimbursement.

#### *11.2.6 Insurance provided by other companies*

If the UNV volunteer is entitled to reimbursement by another insurer, reimbursement by Vanbreda will be made as appropriate on the basis of the difference between the costs actually incurred and the reimbursement obtained from other sources. It is the obligation of the UNV volunteer to attach to the claim any payment slips made out by other insurers, with details of the amounts reimbursed.

#### *11.2.7 After-service medical insurance*

A UNV volunteer may be authorized to continue with medical insurance coverage after the end of the assignment, in the case of an injury or illness that has been properly certified and confirmed as having occurred during the assignment and that requires continued follow-up treatment. The request for such an extension must be submitted by the UNV volunteer either before the expiry of the assignment to the UNV COT for onward transmission to the UNV programme headquarters or directly to the UNV programme headquarters, within three months of the end of the assignment, along with all the medical reports and recommendation of the UN-designated/attending physician. (See also section 16.2.) The UNV programme headquarters will seek the advice of the UNJMS with regard to the acceptability of the claim and, if approved, the duration of extended coverage. The

coverage of after-service medical insurance will be for a maximum period of 12 months. The former UNV volunteer should submit the original receipts for medical expenses that have been incurred, as well as reports from the attending medical practitioner, to the UNV programme headquarters for certification and forwarding to Vanbreda for appropriate reimbursement directly to the former UNV volunteer.

The life insurance coverage is not provided during this period.

The PFU members and additional primary dependants who joined the UNV volunteer at the duty station are not entitled to this provision.

#### ***11.2.8 Medical insurance after termination of assignment on medical grounds***

If the assignment of a UNV volunteer is terminated on medical grounds, based on the advice of the UNJMS, the medical insurance coverage will be maintained until the last day in the letter of commitment or up to a maximum of six months, whichever is longer. The procedure for reimbursement is described in the preceding section. (See also sections 10.3.3 and 15.3.1.)

The life insurance coverage will not be provided during the period following termination on medical grounds.

### ***11.3 Medical evacuation***

#### ***11.3.1 Request for medical evacuation***

When a UNV volunteer or any of the PFU members at the duty station is severely injured or becomes seriously ill and a UN-designated physician certifies that adequate treatment or facilities are not available at the duty station, medical evacuation may be authorized by the UNDP RR, based on the advice of the UN examining physician and/or the attending physician, as applicable. In the event of emergency medical evacuations using the international SOS facilities, refer to section 11.3.9 below.

If required, in the opinion of the UNDP RR, advice may be sought from the UNJMS in Geneva. In this case, the UNDP CO should immediately submit the complete medical report directly to the UNJMS, copying only the cover letter to the UNV programme headquarters, together with the following information:

- i. Name of the UNV volunteer/patient;
- ii. Date of birth;
- iii. Country of assignment;
- iv. The patient's condition and the diagnosis of the attending physician. It is strongly recommended that the consent of the UNV volunteer be sought before dispatching the medical reports in order to protect the patient's rights to confidentiality;
- v. The opinion of the local UN-designated examining physician on the need for medical evacuation, including the recommended destination and whether the patient needs to be accompanied by a nurse, doctor or a family member. This decision is based solely on medical grounds. Other factors such as family circumstances, unfamiliarity with the language or local conditions at the place of medical evacuation cannot be taken into consideration;
- vi. The proposed travel itinerary.

Normally, the evacuation is to the nearest designated medical evacuation point, within the region, where medical facilities to treat the patient are available. The UNDP CO will make all arrangements, including booking flights and appointments with the doctor and the hospital in the place of evacuation. If there is a UNDP CO in the country of evacuation, the UNDP CO in the country of assignment will also seek support from them.

The UNDP CO, in consultation with the UN-designated examining physician, can decide, in more serious medical evacuations, whether the patient should be accompanied. This decision is based solely on medical grounds. The travel expenses of an unauthorized accompanying person must be borne by the UNV

volunteer herself/himself and no UNDSA will be payable. If the UNV volunteer is not the patient but is the person accompanying the patient, then the days of her/his absence will be treated as annual leave.

If possible, the UNDP CO will inform the UNV programme headquarters (and cooperating organization, if applicable) in advance of the evacuation, but otherwise, as soon as possible immediately afterwards. In case of an emergency during the weekends and outside working hours, the UNJMS in Geneva may be reached by telephone. **[The Medical Director, UN Medical Service, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10 Switzerland fax no. +41 22 917 0007; tel. No. +41 22 917 2520, email SecrServiceMedical@unog.ch]**

### *11.3.2 Request for in-country medical evacuation*

The UNDP CO is authorized to arrange the medical evacuation of the UNV volunteer and/or PFU members to the nearest place of evacuation within the country of assignment, if the medical facilities at the duty station are not adequate.

### *11.3.3 Submission of medical evacuation details to the UNJMS*

In all medical evacuation cases, the UNV COT in the country of assignment will ensure that a complete medical report is sent without delay to the UNJMS for their records.

### *11.3.4 Destination of medical evacuation*

As standard practice and as advised by the UNJMS, the medical evacuation travel will be to the nearest city or country where the required medical facilities are available. However, UNV volunteers may be authorized to travel to the place of recruitment/home country if other factors, such as the presence of family, language barriers, availability of free medical care to nationals of that country and cost, favour this course of action.

Such a decision will be based on the advice of the UN-designated examining physician.

### *11.3.5 UNDSA for the UNV volunteer and/or accompanying person*

UNV volunteers and/or PFU members who are authorized to travel on medical evacuation within or outside the country of assignment, but not to the place of recruitment/home country (see section 11.3.7), are entitled to UNDSA as follows:

- i. When not hospitalized, the patient receives 100 percent UNDSA at the rate applicable at the place of authorized evacuation up to a maximum of 15 days. When hospitalized, no UNDSA will be paid;
- ii. The authorized accompanying person receives 50 percent of the UNDSA as long as the patient is not hospitalized and 100 percent UNDSA when the patient is hospitalized up to a maximum of 15 days;
- iii. The payment during medical evacuation will not exceed one and a half times the UNDSA rate;
- iv. After 15 days of 100 percent UNDSA, the UNV programme headquarters may authorize an ad hoc UNDSA, based on the medical certificate from the attending physician recommending a prolonged period of medical evacuation. The rates payable are as follows: two thirds of the UNDSA to the patient and half of the two thirds of the UNDSA to the authorized accompanying person when the patient is not hospitalized. When the patient is hospitalized, two thirds of the UNDSA is paid to the accompanying person. Hotel bills must be submitted for the payment of this ad hoc UNDSA. In the event that no hotel bills are submitted, the UNV volunteer will be paid one third of the DSA rate;
- v. No UNDSA payment will be made for the children who accompany the patient for family or other reasons.

### *11.3.6 Advance UNDSA*

A maximum of five days of UNDSA will be authorized to the patient/accompanying person before departure on medical evacuation to cover the period when the patient is not hospitalized. Upon return from the evacuation to the duty station, the patient should submit a travel claim for any adjustment in the payment.

### *11.3.7 Medical evacuation to place of recruitment/home country*

If the authorized place of medical evacuation is the place of recruitment/home country, the patient and the accompanying person do not receive UNDSA during hospitalization and outpatient consultations.

### *11.3.8 Medical escort*

The medical escort authorized to accompany the patient on medical grounds will be paid 100 percent of the UNDSA whether or not the patient is hospitalized as soon as she/he arrives in the place of authorized evacuation. This payment continues only until the patient is handed over to the medical authorities and the escort returns by the next available flight.

### *11.3.9 Resources for medical evacuations*

The relevant costs (transportation and UNDSA) for all approved medical evacuations, within or outside the country of assignment, will be met from the resources managed by the UNV programme headquarters. They will be charged by the UNDP CO to an account designated by the UNV programme headquarters for this purpose.

If the UNDP RR considers using the International SOS facilities for emergency evacuation, she/he has both the right and

obligation to request from them a prior estimate of the costs involved. This is appropriate given the relatively high costs of these emergency evacuations.

#### ***11.3.10 Special programme initiatives***

The above provisions may not be applicable to UNV volunteers assigned to special programme initiatives, in particular those assigned to UN peace-keeping operations. The medical evacuation procedures and policies of the agency/mission concerned will apply.

### ***11.4 Insurance for permanent disability and death***

#### ***11.4.1 Injury or illness directly attributable to the performance of official duties***

In the event of injury or illness directly attributable to the performance of official duties on behalf of the UNV programme which leads to partial or complete disability of a permanent nature, the UNV volunteer will be entitled to compensation in accordance with the provisions of the insurance contracted by the UNV programme with Vanbreda. These provisions are described in appendix XIII.

The claim for compensation should be submitted, along with the medical report, directly to Vanbreda, with a copy of the transmittal note to the UNV programme headquarters. While the UNV programme headquarters will assist in the process, the settlement will be in line with the agreement signed between the UNV programme and Vanbreda, and is a matter between the UNV volunteer and Vanbreda.

#### ***11.4.2 Death occurring during the assignment***

According to the insurance policy, a UNV volunteer who is over 70 years of age at the time of appointment will not be covered by the life insurance. Coverage will also cease at 70 years of age for

those UNV volunteers whose assignments begin before they are 70 years of age.

In the event of death of a UNV volunteer during the assignment due to any cause except the exclusions described in appendix XII, the designated beneficiary (or the estate of the UNV volunteer, if no beneficiary is designated) will be entitled to the capital sum established in the policy. These provisions are described in appendix XII. The UNV volunteer is required therefore, at the time of recruitment, to complete, sign and submit the UNV-VC-7 "Designation, change or revocation of beneficiary" form to the UNV COT for onward transmission to the UNV programme headquarters. (See appendix V) Given the importance of this matter, the UNV volunteer should ensure that the "Designation, change or revocation of beneficiary" form is kept up to date.

#### *11.4.3 PFU members and additional primary dependants*

The PFU members and additional primary dependants are not provided with life and permanent disability insurance coverage.

### ***11.5 Death and transportation of the remains of the deceased***

In the unfortunate event that a UNV volunteer or one of her/his family members dies during the assignment, all parties will do their utmost to lend maximum support to the surviving members of the family. The necessary administrative measures involved are described below.

#### *11.5.1 Notification of death*

The UNDP CO RR will immediately contact the UNV programme headquarters with the following information:

- i. Full details of the cause of death;
- ii. Whether or not the body has been positively identified;

- iii. Whether or not repatriation of the remains is feasible;
- iv. A copy of the birth certificate or its equivalent (e.g. copy of relevant pages of passport).

When the UNV programme headquarters receives this information, they will inform the next of kin, the cooperating organization and the UN executing agency, as appropriate.

#### *11.5.2 Submission of documentation*

The UNDP CO will forward the following documents to the UNV programme headquarters as soon as possible:

- i. A full report on the cause of death, including police report, autopsy, coroner's report, etc;
- ii. Attested copies of the death certificate;
- iii. A full medical report.

#### *11.5.3 Payment of allowances and benefits*

If a UNV volunteer dies, the PFU members at the duty station will be paid VLA up to the date of decease plus a lump sum equivalent to 1½ months' payment of VLA. In addition, the RSA accrued at the time of death will be paid to PFU members at the duty station. However, if there are no PFU members at the duty station, the above amounts will be paid to the designated beneficiary or pro-rated according to the "Designation, change or revocation of beneficiary" form if there is more than one designated beneficiary. (See section 4.2 on the "Designation, change or revocation of beneficiary" form.)

#### *11.5.4 Personal belongings of the deceased*

The UNDP CO will assist in ensuring the custody and dispatch of the deceased's personal belongings as advised by the next of kin.

### ***11.5.5 Escort and transfer of remains of the deceased***

When instructed by the UNV programme headquarters, the UNDP CO will arrange for the burial, local interment, or transportation of the remains as appropriate. (See appendix XII regarding life insurance coverage for international UNV volunteers).

When a UNV volunteer who was serving unaccompanied dies at the duty station, whether single or married, the UNV programme headquarters may authorize a person to escort the remains to the place of recruitment/home country. A round-trip direct least costly (DLC) economy class ticket and UNDSA for a maximum duration of five days may be provided to the accompanying person at the organization's cost.

In the event of death of PFU members at the duty station, the UNV programme headquarters may also consider paying the travel expenses of the UNV volunteer or one PFU member at the duty station to accompany the remains to the place of recruitment/home country.

## **12. Security**

### ***12.1 Overall security arrangements in the country of assignment***

#### ***12.1.1 Responsibility for security***

The responsibility for the protection of the UNV volunteers and the PFU members lies with the host government in the country of assignment. The UNDP RR, who in most cases also acts as the UN designated official (DO) for security, will exercise responsibility for all arrangements. She/he will assist the government in ensuring the security and protection of UNV volunteers and their families in emergency situations arising from political and other crises, including natural disasters. (Note: In certain countries, the Department of Safety and Security (DSS)

may have designated someone other than the UNDP RR as the UN DO for security. Subsequent references to the DO refer to whichever senior official of the UN system has been designated in that capacity.)

### *12.1.2 UN Field Security Handbook*

The DO will be guided by the provisions of the UN Field Security Handbook, which are equally applicable to UNV volunteers. A copy of the Handbook may be obtained from the DO.

### *12.1.3 Local UN security plan*

UN Volunteers and their family members are required to obey the instructions of the DO relating to all phases of the UN security plan for the locality of the assignment, such as precautionary measures, concentration, relocation and evacuation. Any failure to comply with this provision will result in the DO and the UNV programme declining all responsibility for any injury, loss or damage sustained and can lead to termination of the UNV volunteer's assignment. If a UNV volunteer refuses or fails to comply with the instructions for evacuation/relocation and remains at the duty station/country of assignment, the life insurance plan and coverage will cease to apply.

### *12.1.4 Security clearance*

Security clearance is mandatory for the UNV volunteer who travels to an area where a security phase is in effect, as is the case for all other UN personnel. Security clearance is provided by the DO or DSS, as applicable. It is critical for the UNV volunteers to understand that it is their personal responsibility to obtain a written security clearance before beginning either official or personal travel. Any failure to do so may render invalid the life insurance coverage as well as constitute grounds for termination of the assignment.

## ***12.2 Security relocation/evacuation***

### ***12.2.1 Temporary safe haven***

If the DSS authorizes relocation/evacuation of UN international personnel from a duty station/country of assignment for security reasons, the DO will make arrangements for the UNV volunteers to travel to the designated safe haven with the other UN international personnel. The PFU members authorized to join the UNV volunteer at the duty station at the UNV programme's expense will also be covered, if so authorized by the DSS.

### ***12.2.2 Return to duty station or termination of assignment***

Within two months of the security relocation/evacuation, the UNV programme headquarters will make a decision, in consultation with the UNDP RR and/or the host agency concerned, on whether the UNV volunteer should return to the duty station or whether the assignment should be terminated. (See appendix XV.) This will be considered as "other circumstances that make it difficult for the UNV volunteer to continue her/his assignment". (See section 15.3.1.)

### ***12.2.3 Annual leave, and determination of the home visit following a security evacuation***

Annual leave will be accrued during the security relocation/evacuation at the normal rate. However, if the UNV volunteer returns to the duty station after an evacuation to the home country, the travel allowance for the home visit will be as described in section 8.7 above (that is, the period until the next home visit will be counted as from the date of return from the evacuation).

#### ***12.2.4 Payment of allowances***

The UNV Guidelines on Security Evacuation, which include payment of allowances during security evacuation, are provided in appendix XV.

### ***12.3 Residential security***

#### ***12.3.1 Responsibility of UNV volunteers***

UNV volunteers are responsible for taking all measures to ensure the security of their accommodation and personal effects, including subscribing to a personal property insurance plan. (See also section 12.5.2 and appendices VII and VIII).

#### ***12.3.2 Residential security measures***

In exceptional situations, special measures for residential security may be approved by the DSS for the duty station. These are applicable throughout the UN system, for the duty station or the country as a whole, and may include such measures as installing window bars, alarm systems, engaging security guards (watchmen), etc.

When the DSS approves any or all of the residential security measures for the international personnel in a given country or duty station, the UNDP CO is authorized to approve reimbursement of the actual costs based on reasonable local rates and submission of the original receipts. The rate of reimbursement for UNV volunteers is 100% of the amount actually spent, up to the limits established by the DSS. The costs of installing residential security measures are charged to the project/ donors. While some of these costs can be foreseen and be included in the proforma, there may be costs for new/ additional measures as approved by the DSS during the course of the assignment.

The UNV volunteers on assignments of less than three months (e.g. electoral observation) will not be entitled to the reimbursement of costs of residential security measures.

### *12.3.3 Reporting incidents*

UNV volunteers must report to the UNDP CO any incidents relating to security, particularly those involving threats or violence to them or the members of their family, including any incidents related to residential security (theft, break-ins, etc.). The UNDP CO will inform the DSS and the UNV programme headquarters accordingly, together with the measures taken.

## *12.4 Sexual harassment*

Sexual Harassment is understood as any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favor, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behavior of a sexual nature (including pornography, sexually-colored remarks) that has or that might reasonably be expected or be **perceived to cause offense or humiliation to another**. Sexual harassment may occur when it interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. Sexual harassment normally implies a series of incidents. However, a one-time incident could fall within the definition of sexual harassment if it has an unambiguously offensive sexual character. Both male and female staff members can be either the injured party or the offender.

Sexual harassment is contrary to the intent of the UN Charter and therefore contrary to the policies of all UN organizations worldwide. At the UNV programme headquarters, a panel has been established to help deal with queries or complaints about sexual harassment when a UNV volunteer is a victim, perpetrator or witness. Detailed information on the subject is provided in appendix XVII.

UNV volunteers are invited to discuss or receive further information in confidence on any specific issue related to this matter. They are advised to call the UNV programme headquarters switchboard +49 228 815 2000 between 9am and 5pm (central European time) and ask to speak to a member of the UNV Panel on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse or send an email to the panel at SEA-Panel@unvolunteers.org.

## ***12.5 Compensation for loss of or damage to personal effects***

### ***12.5.1 Cases directly related to emergency situations***

UNV volunteers will be entitled to reasonable compensation if their personal effects are lost or damaged as a direct result of an emergency situation created by war, civil commotion or natural disaster. Such an emergency situation must have occurred in a place where the UNV volunteer was obliged to be to discharge her/his official duties.

The compensation will be within the limits and under the terms and conditions established by the UNV programme headquarters. They are defined in appendix X, together with the procedure for submitting claims for loss or damage to the UNV Claims Board.

The UNV Claims Board will not review any request for compensation from a UNV volunteer who has not submitted the inventory list of personal effects before the date of damage to or loss of the personal effects. Therefore the UNV volunteers are advised to submit an inventory of their personal effects to the UNV COT, as shown in appendix VII, immediately after moving into permanent accommodation. In turn, the UNV COT will forward a copy to the UNV programme headquarters. UNV volunteers are advised to update and re-submit the inventory every six months or as necessary at any time when the UNV volunteer has bought a new item. While considering claims for compensation for loss of or damage to personal effects, the UNV Claims Board will disregard items that are not listed in the inventory unless satisfactory evidence of purchase or acquisition after the submission of the last inventory can be produced.

### ***12.5.2 Cases unrelated to emergency situations***

Damage to or loss of personal effects, which occurred as a result of circumstances other than those outlined in the above section, are not the responsibility of the UNV programme and will not be reviewed by the UNV Claims Board. UNV volunteers are therefore advised to insure their personal effects against burglary and fire as soon as they arrive at the duty station.

It is the responsibility of the UNV volunteer to insure personal effects with an insurance company of her/his choice. The UNV programme, however, provides an option to insure with Herbert L. Jamison & Co. (See appendix VIII) All matters with this or another insurance company are strictly the responsibility of the UNV volunteer.

Nevertheless, the UNV programme will subsidize the cost of such insurance. The UNDP CO is authorized to reimburse to the UNV volunteer, a specified percentage of the annual premium (see addendum) up to an established maximum amount, upon presentation of the receipt from the insurance company. Such claims must be submitted directly to the insurance company together with copies of the latest inventories before and following the incident and in accordance with the procedures of the company.

## **13. Special Facilities**

### ***13.1 Hazardous Duty Station Supplement (HDSS)***

#### ***13.1.1 Purpose***

In line with the UN system, the UNV programme has established a way of recognizing service under extremely hazardous conditions through the payment of a special supplement, known as HDSS. This supplement is a recognition of the hazardous conditions of a given duty station that affect the welfare of staff/UNV volunteers whose work responsibilities require them to

be present in such locations and under these conditions. It in no way represents the value of the life of the UNV volunteer, which remains as precious as anyone else's. As far as security measures are concerned, UNV volunteers are part of the UN security system. Together with their dependants, they are given an equal treatment as international UN staff. The ICSC manages the designation of hazardous duty stations, in consultation with the DSS.

### *13.1.2 Eligibility*

The HDSS is payable monthly to UNV volunteers whose duty station has been designated as hazardous by the ICSC, or who are required to work for a limited period in a location which has such a designation. The list of duty stations designated as being eligible for HDSS is reviewed monthly by the ICSC, and changes in the list are communicated to the UNDP COs. HDSS is paid for both short-term and long-term assignments.

### *13.1.3 Amount of HDSS and method of payment*

The UNDP CO is authorized to pay the HDSS to UNV volunteers at a rate that has been established by the UNV programme (see addendum), based on a global formula and agreed upon with the Office of the Human Resources Management of the UN Secretariat. The level is reviewed from time to time.

UNV volunteers serving in duty stations designated as hazardous are paid on the basis of full calendar months, as from the date of assuming duties to the date of departure, including:

- i) absences on home visit, annual leave of less than one month;
- ii) during absences on maternity or sick leave of less than one month outside of the duty station;
- iii) during travel on official business ( of less than one month) occurring during the period of assignment to the hazardous duty station.

Should the UNV volunteer's arrival or departure not coincide with the first or last day of the month, respectively, HDSS will be

prorated. While on official mission to location designated as hazardous duty station, HDSS is prorated.

### **13.2 Rest and recuperation**

There is no regular provision under the conditions of service for international UNV volunteers for special facilities used by some UN organizations, such as rest and recuperation (R&R), voluntary absence for the relief of isolation (VARI), occasional recuperation break (ORB), mandatory absence for the relief of stress (MARS), and supply travel on rotation, procurement/ stress relief missions, etc. These special facilities are not considered part of the general conditions of service of UNV volunteers and are therefore not covered in this Handbook.

However, the UNV programme encourages host agencies to extend any of the above facilities to the UNV volunteers, as offered to their other internationally recruited personnel. In such cases, regardless of the funding source of the assignment, the host agency is required to provide the UNV volunteers the same entitlements as it provides to its internationally recruited personnel. The agency concerned may also have to process travel authorizations, payment of an advance and settlement of travel claims.

The cost related to any of the above facilities is not part of the normal cost of fielding the UNV volunteer. It should be met by the agency concerned from other resources.

## **14. Special programme initiatives**

The UNV programme, given its mandate, has been increasingly called upon to participate in peace-keeping operations, electoral observation missions of regional bodies and emergency operations of UN agencies. In almost all cases, such operations are governed by different rules and regulations in view of their special nature and complexity.

If the UNV programme participates in special programme initiatives, it may be necessary and advisable to amend the

administration of the entitlements of UNV volunteers to conform to the policies and procedures of the partners.

The entitlements of the UNV volunteers under special programme initiatives may thus be different from those outlined in this Handbook. The UNV programme will decide mission-specific entitlements and conditions of service and communicate them to the UNV volunteers at the time of recruitment through the compact. It could also arise that certain entitlements and facilities for the UNV volunteers under special programme initiatives could be different from the other UNV volunteers who serve in the same country but with different agencies.

The same is true for other special arrangements in which the programme participates, such as TOKTEN, Corporate Volunteers, Interns, Online Volunteers and others that may be identified from time to time.

## Chapter Three

### Conclusion of UNV assignment

#### 15. Separation from service

There are a number of circumstances that may result in the early departure of the UNV volunteer from her/his assignment and from the duty station. The consequences and the procedures to be followed differ in each case.

##### *15.1 Resignation by the UNV volunteer*

###### *15.1.1 Resignation notice period*

A UNV volunteer may resign from her/his assignment by giving the appropriate period of notice, as shown in the table below:

<b>Duration of current contract (or current contract extension)</b>	<b>Required notice period</b>
Up to 3 months	1 week
More than 3 months but less than 12 months	3 weeks
12 months or more	6 weeks

Such a resignation will not be considered as a termination of assignment as defined in section 15.3. The UNV programme headquarters will determine, in consultation with the host agency and UNDP CO, whether or not annual leave should be authorized during the notice period. Failure to give the prescribed period of notice may result in deduction from entitlements (to compensate the difference between actual and required notice period) and can be considered as abandonment of post and result in the consequences described under section 15.4.4.

The UNV programme headquarters reserves, however, the right to waive all or part of the notice period. Therefore the actual date of separation will be established by the UNV programme headquarters, in consultation with the UNDP CO.

### *15.1.2 Resettlement Allowance (RSA)*

The UNV volunteer will be paid RSA for the completed months of satisfactory service. (See section 16.5.)

### *15.1.3 Accepting another assignment before completion of the assignment*

When a UNV volunteer wishes to separate from UNV service before the end date specified in the letter of commitment in order to accept employment elsewhere, it will be considered as resignation. No exception to this rule will be made.

### *15.1.4 Resignation during the period covered by the first letter of commitment - repatriation travel implications*

A UNV volunteer who resigns in the first year of an assignment, during the period covered by the initial letter of commitment, will not be provided with repatriation travel at the expense of the UNV programme. However, the authorized PFU members will be eligible for repatriation travel provided they have stayed at the duty station for a minimum of six months (after the commencement of the UNV assignment) on the last working day of the UNV volunteer. A resignation after the first year of assignment, but still within the period of the initial letter of commitment will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the UNV programme headquarters, to decide whether the repatriation travel of the UNV volunteer will be paid for.

### *15.1.5 Resignation during extension period - repatriation travel implications*

A UNV volunteer who has completed the duration of the initial contract but resigns during an extended assignment will be provided with repatriation travel at the organization's expense, as will the authorized PFU members who have completed a minimum of six months at the duty station.

## ***15.2 Separation by mutual consent***

Separation by mutual consent can be arranged in exceptional circumstances where such a course is considered advisable by the UNV programme headquarters. Resignation in order to undertake another assignment is not considered as mutual consent. Separation can be arranged by amending the expiry date of the assignment or by other means mutually agreeable to both the UNV volunteer and the UNV programme headquarters.

## ***15.3 Termination by the UNV programme***

### ***15.3.1 Termination before the end of the contract date***

The UNV programme headquarters may terminate the assignment of a UNV volunteer before the expiry date, by giving the appropriate notice (see section 15.1.1) to the UNV volunteer in the cases outlined below:

- i.** Premature termination of the project;
- ii.** Unsatisfactory work performance by the UNV volunteer;
- iii.** Prolonged incapacity to work because of illness (see section 11.2.8);
- iv.** Other circumstances that make it difficult for the UNV volunteer to continue her/his assignment;
- v.** As a disciplinary procedure, in cases of misconduct. For details please refer to the section 15.4;
- vi.** For facts anterior to the appointment that had they been known would have precluded the contract.

### ***15.3.2 Payment of VLA and RSA***

The UNV volunteer will be paid VLA, pro-rated if necessary, up to the date of separation. RSA will be paid in full for the completed

months of satisfactory service, contingent upon the volunteer having no outstanding financial obligations. (See section 16.5.)

### ***15.3.3 Repatriation travel***

If the UNV programme headquarters terminates the assignment of a UNV volunteer for any of the reasons described above in section 15.3.1 i, ii, iii, the UNV volunteer and her/his PFU members will be repatriated at the organization's expense.

## ***15.4 Disciplinary measures for UNV volunteers:***

### ***15.4.1 Reprimand***

i) A reprimand is a written notice issued by a supervisory official to a UNV volunteer usually relating to minor incidents in connection with work-related matters. A letter of reprimand has the connotation of a warning and is not considered a disciplinary measure. In this sense it is distinguished from a written censure, which is a disciplinary measure and can only be issued by the UNV Executive Coordinator.

ii) A copy of the letter of reprimand is placed in the official personnel file of the UNV volunteer concerned and forms part of the accumulated record of service. A copy is forwarded to UNV programme headquarters.

### ***15.4.2 Letter of Censure***

i) A letter of censure is a written notice issued by the UNV Executive Coordinator for actions (i.e. willful or intentional acts) that demonstrate misconduct, not rising to the level of early separation or summary dismissal.

ii) A copy of the letter of censure is placed in the official personnel file of the UNV volunteer concerned and forms part of the accumulated record of service.

### *15.4.3 Separation*

A UNV volunteer might be separated with notice, before the end of contract date, by giving appropriate notice (see Section 15.1.1) for significant misconduct which does not rise to the level of summary dismissal.

### *15.4.4 Summary Dismissal*

#### **a) Summary dismissal**

The UNV programme headquarters will summarily dismiss a UNV volunteer without notice in the following cases:

- i. Gross negligence, serious misconduct, abandonment of post<sup>5</sup>, or mismanagement/ misappropriation of funds;
- ii. Non-observance of the provisions contained in the code of conduct described in this Handbook or the provisions of other codes of conduct of the host agencies as applicable;
- iii. Discovery or misrepresentation or omission on the UNV PHS form of facts prior to assignment and relevant to the UN Volunteer's suitability which, had they been known at the time of recruitment, would have prevented her/his recruitment.

#### **b) Forfeiture of entitlements**

Summary dismissal will result in forfeiture of entitlements. These entitlements include resettlement allowance and accrued leave during the period of the contract in which the incident causing the summary dismissal occurs. Repatriation travel entitlement will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

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<sup>5</sup> abandonment of post: a UNV volunteer who absents himself/herself from duty station without satisfactory explanation for more than 10 working days is considered to have abandoned his/her post.

### **15.5 Suspension from UNV service**

If a UNV volunteer is involved or implicated in any investigation by the host agency, host government, UNDP or UNV programme for non-compliance with the code of conduct, mismanagement in her/his functional capacity, misappropriation of project resources, etc. the UNV programme headquarters may, in consultation with the UNDP CO, decide to temporarily suspend the UNV volunteer from service for a period deemed necessary. During the suspension, the UNV volunteer will not report for duty, and will not leave the country of assignment without explicit written authorization from the UNV programme headquarters. The UNV volunteer will be notified in writing of her/his suspension, including the terms and length of the suspension, which should normally not exceed three months, but can be extended on an exceptional basis by a decision of the Executive Coordinator. UNV volunteers are required to cooperate fully in any investigation or disciplinary proceeding that is endorsed by the UNV programme. VLA will be paid in full during the suspension. Annual leave and RSA will accrue. Investigations are expected to be conducted expeditiously to settle the matter.

If, as a result of the investigation, the UNV volunteer is found guilty of gross negligence, serious misconduct, mismanagement/misappropriation of funds, or any other of the violations detailed in section 15.4, she/he will be subject to disciplinary measures as described in section 15.4.

### **15.6 Recovery**

The UNV volunteer may be held accountable and financially responsible in the case of damage resulting from extreme or aggravated failure to take reasonable precautions (gross negligence) or in case of recklessness.

In such a case the UNV programme headquarters reserves the right to take appropriate action.

## **16. Completion of assignment**

### **16.1 Travel**

#### **16.1.1 Repatriation travel**

On successful completion of the assignment, the UNV volunteer and her/his PFU members are expected to return to the place of recruitment/home country. The place of repatriation should be the same as the place of home visit. The UNDP CO will inform the UNV programme headquarters of the departure plans as early as possible and seek authorization for their repatriation travel. In the context of the above, the UNV volunteer is normally required to stopover at the capital city for debriefing and checkout with UNV/UNDP and host agency. Such stopover should not exceed three days and respective cost is charged to the host agency/project.

#### **16.1.2 Repatriation package**

##### **i. Arrangements for international travel**

The UNV Programme, at its discretion, may offer the UNV volunteer either of the two following travel options:

- a) The UNV volunteer and each PFU member are provided with a most direct and least costly (DLC) economy class ticket from the duty station to the nearest airport in the place of recruitment/home country. In addition, each of them receives UNDSA in advance for unavoidable overnight stop-overs and a lump sum for airport-related terminal expenses. The UNDSA for the accompanying members of the PFU is payable at the 50 percent rate, unless the PFU travels separately from the UNV volunteer, in which case the first member of the PFU is paid UNDSA at 100 percent.

Or alternatively

- b) The UNV volunteer and each PFU member receives a cash amount that is equivalent to a designated percentage (see

addendum) of a full economy class fare for the most direct route from the duty station to the nearest airport in the country of recruitment/home country. The UNV volunteer will be responsible for organizing her/his own travel and that of the PFU members. There are no other payments such as UNDSA (per diem) for food, lodging and sundry charges for unavoidable stop-overs and airport expenses.

At any point of time the UNV Programme has the discretion to revoke an option previously agreed upon.

## **ii. Shipment of personal effects**

The UNV volunteer and each PFU member receives a lump sum to meet costs related to the shipment of personal effects, including transport, customs clearance, storage, insurance, etc. The lump sum for shipment of personal effects for PFU members is subject to the condition that they have remained at least six months at the duty station.

Regardless of whether or not the UNV volunteer organizes the travel for her/himself and PFU members, she/he is responsible for all aspects of any shipment she/he makes with the lump sum provided.

### ***16.1.3 UNV volunteer choosing not to return to the country of recruitment/home country***

In certain situations, a UNV volunteer or her/his PFU members may choose not to return immediately to the country of recruitment/home country, to stay on in the country of assignment or travel to a third country. In this event, the UNV volunteer should provide the UNDP CO with a written, signed and dated statement discharging the UNV programme and the UNDP from legal and financial obligations for damages, injuries and other liabilities beyond the expiry date of the assignment. Moreover, during this period, she/he will have no status as a UNV volunteer and ceases to have protection for security, medical and other emergencies. She/he will have to make her/his own arrangements for residence permits/visas and accommodation. The UNV volunteer will also have no insurance coverage from the

UNV programme beyond the end of assignment date, including at the time of travel to place of recruitment/home country if she/he undertakes this after the last date of the assignment.

#### *16.1.4 Special situations*

The situation of a) both spouses being assigned as UNV volunteers or b) one spouse being a staff member of one of the UN system organizations is covered in section 19.

#### *16.1.5 Locally recruited UNV volunteer*

A locally recruited UNV volunteer will be entitled to repatriation travel at the end of the assignment provided that she/he has served for a minimum of 12 months.

#### *16.1.6 Repatriation travel via a different route or mode of transport*

If a UNV volunteer or any PFU member wishes to travel via a route which is not the direct and least costly (DLC) route, or wishes to use a mode of transport other than air, she/he will be authorized to do so, with the following conditions:

- i. The UNV volunteer pays the excess costs;
- ii. She/he must discharge UNDP and the UNV programme with a written, signed and dated statement of legal or financial obligations for damages, injuries or any other adverse occurrences arising during the trip. However, the UNV volunteer and the PFU members will remain under the insurance scheme with Vanbreda until the end of the assignment.

#### *16.1.7 Travel arrangements for fully funded and co-sponsored UNV volunteers*

The travel arrangements, shipment of personal effects and any other entitlements of a fully funded or co-sponsored UNV volunteer and her/his PFU members at the duty station will be in accordance with the procedures and regulations of the cooperating organization, unless agreed otherwise with the UNV programme. In the case of arrangements made directly with the cooperating organization, the UNV volunteer is required to submit related claims directly to the cooperating organization.

The UNV volunteer and PFU members' travel plans must be communicated to the UNV programme headquarters as soon as possible so that the cooperating organization may be advised accordingly.

## **16.2 Exit medical examination**

Exit medical examination is not mandatory; however may be authorized subject to the requirements of the host institution or the UNV programme. When authorized, the UNV volunteer should complete a full exit medical examination according to the standard UN format, within the last six weeks of the contract but before departure from the country of assignment and submit results to the UNDP CO. All medical reports will be retained, as strictly confidential material, by the UNDP CO in the country of assignment. It is not required to submit these reports to the UNV programme headquarters for onward transmission to the UNJMS in Geneva, except in the circumstances described in the following paragraph.

As mentioned in section 11.2.7, if the exit medical examination reveals a service-related injury or illness that has been properly confirmed as having occurred during the assignment, the UNV volunteer may be authorized to continue with after-service medical insurance coverage. If the exit medical examination suggests that continued medical treatment may be necessary beyond the end of assignment, then the results and corresponding report, and the recommendation of the UN-designated/attending physician, should be submitted by the UNV COT/UNDP CO to the UNV programme headquarters. The UNV programme headquarters will seek the advice of the UNJMS as to whether the condition of the UNV volunteer can be considered

as being service-incurred, whether extended medical insurance coverage is desirable and for how long (up to one year).

If the exit medical examination is authorized and cannot be done because medical services are not available in the country of assignment (which should be confirmed to the UNV programme headquarters by the UNDP CO), the UNV volunteer should undertake it at the place of recruitment/home country and forward it to the UNV programme headquarters within three months of arrival. In instances such as this, the former UNV volunteer submits to the UNV programme headquarters the original receipts for reimbursement of costs.

The UNV programme will not be able to consider or process any request from a former UNV volunteer for compensation or after-service health insurance coverage unless it has been medically established that the illness or injury is directly attributable to the UNV assignment.

The costs related to the exit medical examination will be charged to the repatriation travel account code provided by the UNV programme headquarters.

Fully funded and co-sponsored UNV volunteers will seek reimbursement from their respective cooperating organizations, unless agreed otherwise with the UNV programme.

### ***16.3 End of assignment report***

All UNV volunteers are required to complete an end of assignment report. Depending on the duration of the assignment, initial and annual reports may also be required. The reports are completed online. After completion they become available to the UNV CO, to the UNV programme headquarters and to the UNV volunteer's supervisor who completes a related form providing his/her comments. The formats for the reports and guidance notes are available on the Internet (<http://www.unv.org/reports>). The payment of end-of- assignment entitlements is contingent upon submission of the end-of-assignment report. There will be no exceptions regarding the submission of this report.

## **16.4 Final checklist**

Before completing the assignment the UNV volunteer will be required to complete a final checklist (see appendix XIV) and supply documentary evidence to confirm that she/he has no outstanding obligations (financial or otherwise).

## **16.5 Resettlement Allowance (RSA)**

### **16.5.1 Purpose**

The RSA is to assist the UNV volunteer in resettling both professionally and personally upon completion of UNV service.

### **16.5.2 Payment of RSA**

Once the UNV volunteer has satisfactorily completed the assignment and submitted the end-of-assignment report and duly certified checklist (mentioned in sections 16.3 and 16.4), she/he will be entitled to payment of the RSA. The UNV volunteer may choose to have this paid 100 percent in US dollars in the country of assignment, or deposited in US dollars in a specified bank account.

The RSA is accrued at a fixed amount per month of satisfactory service. (for the amount see addendum) No RSA will be paid for assignments of duration of less than three months. However, if the assignment is extended and the total length of the assignment reaches three months or more, the UNV volunteer will accrue the RSA retroactively from the beginning of the assignment.

The UNDP CO will be authorized by the UNV programme headquarters to pay the RSA at the time the repatriation travel is authorized. Before making the payment, the UNDP CO should ensure that any amount due from the UNV volunteer is recovered, that the UNV volunteer has met any other outstanding obligations and that the final checklist has been completed. (See also sections 16.3, 16.4 and appendix XIV)

Delay on the part of the UNV volunteer in meeting obligations will result in delay in payment of the RSA. Payment may be withheld, partially or fully, in cases where claims from Vanbreda for medical/hospital bills during medical evacuations or advances related to medical evacuation are pending or if the UNV volunteer has not presented satisfactory evidence that enables the UNDP CO to fully certify that all obligations have been met, including possible outstanding amounts related to recovery (see also section 15.6).

### *16.5.3 Payment of RSA to a UNV volunteer choosing not to return to the place of recruitment/home country*

A UNV volunteer who has satisfactorily completed the assignment but does not wish to return to the place of recruitment/home country will still be entitled to payment of the RSA in full, subject to completing the final obligations and submitting a written, dated and signed statement discharging the UNV programme and the UNDP from legal and financial obligations for damages, injuries and other liabilities beyond the expiry date of the assignment. (See also section 16.1.3.)

### *16.5.4 Fully funded and co-sponsored UNV volunteers*

In the case of fully funded and co-sponsored UNV volunteers, this entitlement will be in accordance with the procedures and regulations of the cooperating organization, unless agreed otherwise with the UNV programme.

### *16.5.5 UNV volunteers under special programme initiatives*

Payment of RSA to UNV volunteers under special programme initiatives may be mission-specific and therefore different from the above.

## **17. Recourse procedures**

### *17.1 Review of administrative decisions*

Administrative decisions of the UNV programme relating to UN Volunteers' assignments and conditions of service may be formally reviewed using appropriate procedures and mechanisms within a specific time period. A UNV volunteer who wishes to pursue such a review should follow the procedures in appendix XVI. In this regard, please note that neither the issuance of a reprimand, nor the placement on suspension with entitlements constitute an administrative decision subject to recourse procedures.

### ***17.2 Office of the Ombudsperson***

The UNDP Office of the Ombudsperson is an official body based in New York whose purpose is to give discreet and objective assistance and advice to UNDP staff members on matters relating to their employment contracts. It also serves as a mechanism for resolving disputes. Although UNV volunteers are not UNDP staff members, they have been given access to the office on questions regarding their letter of commitment with the UNV programme. Thus, a UNV volunteer may seek informal advice or guidance confidentially from this office. Their advice is not legally binding on either party, and their service is to be considered as advisory.

A formal application for intervention by the UNDP Office of the Ombudsperson on behalf of a UNV volunteer may however be made only after all official channels for resolution of the matter between the UNV volunteer and the UNV programme have been exhausted. Communication with the UNDP Office of the Ombudsperson should be in writing and should be addressed to: Office of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Ombudsperson, Uganda House, 336 E. 45th Street, New York, NY 10017. Email: [ombudsperson@undp.org](mailto:ombudsperson@undp.org).

### ***17.3 Retroactive payments***

A UNV volunteer who believes that, during the course of the assignment, she/he has not received an allowance or payment to which she/he was entitled should submit a written claim to the UNV programme. This claim must be made within three months

following the date that the UNV volunteer believed that the payment was due, or within three months following the date that the conditions of service for international UNV volunteers were modified so as to render her/him ineligible for an allowance or payment.

## **18. After completing the assignment**

### ***18.1 Opportunities beyond the assignment***

A UNV volunteer is expected to complete the full term of the assignment as agreed between her/him and the UNV programme.

UN Agencies sometimes consider UNV volunteers serving with them as internal candidates for vacant field staff positions and/or as candidates for other positions and short-term assignments. The UNV programme will be pleased to see such opportunities arise, not least because they confirm quality recruitment and pay tribute to the individual performance of the UNV volunteer. The UNV programme expects that UNV volunteers complete their assignment before taking up a position with a UN agency.

Following their service with the UNV programme, former UNV volunteers are encouraged to remain active with volunteer ("V") activities and programmes and to stay in touch with the "V" community. One of many such options is through Online Volunteering.

### ***18.2 Re-rostering***

A UNV volunteer who wishes to continue her/his volunteer services with the UNV programme may apply for re-rostering, provided that she/he has a proven record of satisfactory service, and has not already reached the maximum number of years allowed (See overall guideline 9, at the beginning of this Handbook.) To apply, the former UNV volunteer can either access the online application system at <http://www.unv.org/> or forward an updated PHS as follows:

i. For long-term and development-oriented assignments:

UNV Recruitment Resources Centre  
PO Box 25711  
1311-Nicosia, CYPRUS  
Telephone: (357 22) 878360  
Fax: (357 22) 878361  
roster@unvolunteers.org

ii. For short-term assignments in humanitarian relief, crisis prevention and recovery, electoral observation, peace-keeping operations:

Special Programme Initiatives  
United Nations Volunteers  
Postfach 260 111  
D-53153 Bonn, Germany  
Fax: (49 228) 815 2303

## **19. Special situations**

Certain allowances and benefits are adjusted in special situations, either when both husband and wife are assigned as UNV volunteers or when the UNV volunteer has a spouse serving as a UN staff member. This section describes the adjustments to allowances and benefits in those situations.

### ***19.1 Both husband and wife assigned as UNV Volunteers***

#### ***19.1.1 SIG***

Irrespective of whether they are assigned to the same or different duty stations, the payment of the installation portion of the SIG will be as follows:

- Unaccompanied by PFU member(s): Each receives the SIG applicable at base rate.
- Accompanied by PFU member(s): One of the two receives the additional amount of SIG. The other receives the SIG applicable at the base rate.
- In the event of the UNV volunteer being accompanied only by the spouse and subsequently the spouse is recruited as a UNV volunteer within the initial six months, the UNV volunteer is required to refund the additional amount of SIG.

### *19.1.2 MLA*

Whether they are assigned to the same or different duty stations, both receive the MLA.

### *19.1.3 AA*

The AA will be paid at the full rate to both, husband and wife, even if they are both assigned at the same duty station.

### *19.1.4 FA*

One receives the FA irrespective of the location of the PFU members. The other does not receive the FA.

### *19.1.5 Travel allowance for the home visit*

The travel allowance for the home visit will be determined on the contract and duty station of the individual UNV volunteer. The PFU members will be covered for home visit under the contract of one spouse only.

### *19.1.6 HDSS*

HDSS is payable to both spouses.

### ***19.1.7 Residential security measures***

Reimbursement will be made to one spouse only if they are at the same duty station. Reimbursement will be made to both if they are at different duty stations.

### ***19.1.8 RSA***

The RSA is payable to both spouses.

## ***19.2 UNV volunteer's spouse is a UN staff member***

### ***19.2.1 SIG***

When the spouse of a UNV volunteer is an internationally recruited UN staff member, the UNV volunteer receives the base rate of the SIG (whether or not they have dependants and/or are assigned to the same or different duty stations).

### ***19.2.2 MLA***

The UNV volunteer receives the MLA.

### ***19.2.3 AA***

The AA will be paid at the full rate, even if the spouse is assigned at the same duty station.

#### *19.2.4 FA*

No FA is payable.

#### *19.2.5 Travel allowance for the home visit*

If the spouse has the home leave entitlement, the UNV volunteer will not be provided with the travel allowance for the home visit

#### *19.2.6 HDSS*

HDSS is payable to the UNV volunteer.

#### *19.2.7 Residential security measures*

Reimbursement will be made to the UNV volunteer if she/he is at a different duty station from the spouse.

#### *19.2.8 RSA*

The RSA is payable to the UNV volunteer.

#### *19.2.9 Repatriation*

The UNV volunteer will not be entitled to repatriation if the UN staff member continues to be in the country of assignment and/or the UNV volunteer is entitled to repatriation as part of the entitlement of the UN staff member.