

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**BETWEEN**  
**THE GOVERNMENT OF BELGIUM**  
**AND**  
**THE UNITED NATIONS**  
**CONCERNING THE BELGIAN JUNIOR PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS PROGRAMME**

This Memorandum of Understanding (hereafter referred to as "MoU") is entered between the Government of Belgium represented by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Development Cooperation, Digital Agenda, Telecom and Post (hereafter referred to as "Belgium") and the United Nations concerning the Belgian Junior Professional Officers (JPO) Programme. The basis of this MoU is ECOSOC resolution 849 (XXXII) of 4 August 1961.

WHEREAS Belgium wishes to continue the collaboration existing with the United Nations since 1963 in the use of Junior Professional Officers for the provision of technical assistance to developing countries, the Headquarters of the United Nations or its regional commissions, and

WHEREAS the United Nations welcomes the offer by Belgium to finance Junior Professional Officers for assignment to development programmes and projects administered by the United Nations , and

WHEREAS Belgium and the United Nations feel confident that the responsibilities devolving upon each as a result of entering into this MoU will be fulfilled in a spirit of friendly cooperation and on the basis of mutual understanding,

NOW THEREFORE the parties hereto have agreed as follows:

**ARTICLE I**

Selection and Recruitment Procedures

1.01 The selection and recruitment procedures are outlined in the Annex to this MoU, entitled "Annex concerning the selection and recruitment process for Junior Professional Officers funded by Belgium for the United Nations", which shall constitute an integral part of the present MoU.

## **ARTICLE II**

### Terms of Employment

2.01 Having been accepted by the United Nations and having agreed to the required Terms of Employment, Junior Professional Officers shall be appointed by the United Nations as international civil servant at a grade and level as specified in Article 13 of the Annex to this MoU, and shall be subject to the rules and regulations of the United Nations as set forth in their letter of appointment. The JPO shall be expected to carry out to the best of his/her ability the duties specified in the description of the post that s/he occupies.

2.02 Junior Professional Officers shall serve with the United Nations for an initial period of one year, each year renewable up to a maximum of three years depending on the performance of the JPO and by mutual agreement between the United Nations and Belgium.

2.03 The Performance of each Junior Professional Officer shall be appraised by the United Nations. The United Nations will report on the Junior Professional Officer's performance to Belgium according to established procedures.

## **ARTICLE III**

### Financial Arrangements

3.01 Belgium shall provide the United Nations with funds to meet all identifiable costs resulting from the employment of Junior Professional Officer under this MoU.

3.02 Prior to the initial appointment or subsequent appointment renewal of a JPO, the United Nations shall submit to Belgium for approval, an estimate of cost covering the entire anticipated amount of the initial appointment or appointment renewal, as applicable. Belgium shall in turn deposit the amount from the applicable cost estimate in an account designated by the United Nations. Alternatively, should there be adequate residual fund balances from former Belgium sponsored JPOs, Belgium may authorize the United Nations to apply the necessary funds from those residual balances towards the cost estimates, in lieu of transferring new deposits. Such deposit shall be in freely convertible currency.

3.03 No appointment shall be made until after Belgium has acknowledged the receipt of the budget estimate and unless the costs thus estimated are covered by the amount deposited by Belgium in an account designated by the United Nations. All deposits to and payments from the account will be made on the basis of United Nations' rate of exchange in effect on the date of payment. The United Nations will inform Belgium of the necessary banking instructions in this respect.

3.04 At the latest one month before the end of each JPO contract, the United Nations shall provide a new estimate of funds required to cover further expenditures expected to be incurred for the renewal of the JPO contract.

3.05 The United Nations shall carry over into the following year any residual funds not used by the United Nations and apply the funds to the following year's requirements.

3.06 The United Nations shall notify Belgium in case of insufficient funds, and invite Belgium to deposit an additional sum to cover unforeseen expenditures.

3.07 All costs incurred by the United Nations in the implementation of this MoU will be charged to funds provided by Belgium. These costs will include the following:

- (a) salaries and allowances;
- (b) transportation to and from the duty station and related costs and allowances;
- (c) travel costs within the country or area of assignment and training costs on the basis of the Duty Travel and Training Allowance (DTTA) agreed by Belgium;
- (d) travel to and from the duty station for dependents and related costs and allowances;
- (e) costs of participation in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund if applicable, and in all cases in the United Nations Staff Compensation Plan for sickness, disability and death, and of medical insurance coverage;
- (f) any other identifiable but unforeseen expenses payable in accordance with the United Nations Staff Regulations and/or the terms of appointment of the Junior Professional Officers;
- (g) Fourteen per cent of the total identifiable costs may be charged to cover the United Nations administrative costs.

3.08 Annually, as soon as audited accounts are available, the United Nations shall submit a financial statement to Belgium not later than 30 June of each year, showing the use of all funds spent for the implementation of this MoU as at 31 December of the preceding calendar year.

3.09 On termination of this MoU, the United Nations will return at once and unconditionally to Belgium any remaining balance of funds held by the United Nations on an Account as specified in Article 3.02.

#### **ARTICLE IV**

##### Offers of Appointment

4.01 As soon as a person proposed as a Junior Professional Officer in line with established selection procedures has been accepted by the parties, the United Nations will submit the Terms of Employment to the candidate, and shall ensure that copies of all relevant correspondence are forwarded to Belgium.

#### **ARTICLE V**

##### Supplementary Agreements and Arrangements

5.01 The parties may enter into such supplementary agreements and arrangements for the implementation of this MoU as may be found desirable from time to time in the light of experience.

## ARTICLE VI

### Entry into Force and Termination

6.01 This MoU shall enter into force upon signature thereof by both parties.

6.02 Either party may terminate this MoU at any time by giving three months written notice.

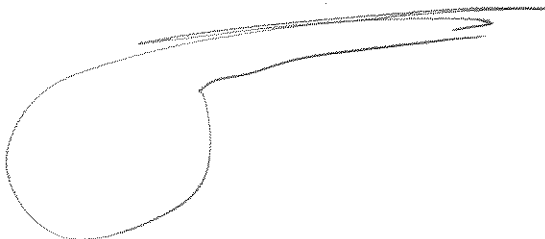
6.03 Despite the expiration or termination of this MoU, the obligations assumed by the parties vis-à-vis the Junior Professional Officers shall be fulfilled until the end of the period of their appointment.

6.04 This MoU supersedes the Agreement "l'Accord entre le Gouvernement belge et l'Organisation des Nations Unies (ONU) concernant la mise à la disposition de l'ONU des experts associés" signed in 1963.

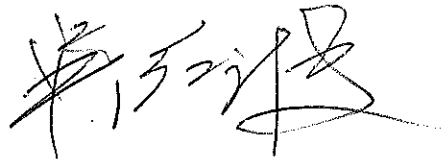
IN WITNESS WHEREOF the authorized representatives of the parties hereto, have signed this Agreement.

For the Government of Belgium

For the United Nations



His Excellency  
Mr. Alexander DE CROO  
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Development  
Cooperation, Digital Agenda, Telecom and Post



Mr. Wu HONGBO  
Under-Secretary-General for Economic and  
Social Affairs

Brussels

Date: 6-6-2017

New York

Date: 30/06/2017

**ANNEX**  
**CONCERNING THE SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR**  
**JUNIOR PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS FUNDED BY BELGIUM FOR**  
**THE UNITED NATIONS**

Annex to the MoU concluded between the Government of Belgium, represented by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Development Cooperation, Digital Agenda, Telecom and Post, hereafter called 'Belgium' and the United Nations concerning the selection and recruitment guidelines for the Belgian Junior Professional Officers (JPO) Programme.

**Recruitment and Selection Policies and Procedures for JPO posts**

**1. Funding of Posts**

1.1 On a yearly basis, Belgium will inform the United Nations on the number of JPOs to be sponsored by Belgium (including nationals of the Belgian Partner Countries), and continue to advise the United Nations at regular intervals as to how many JPOs it will continue to support.

**2. Selection of Posts**

2.1 The United Nations will submit to Belgium an updated JPO proposals list, together with detailed Terms of Reference.

2.2 Belgium will notify the United Nations by e-mail about its choice and the United Nations will earmark the selected post(s).

**3. JPO Terms of Reference**

3.1 No selection process shall commence without valid JPO Terms of Reference approved by the receiving duty station/hiring unit, Belgium and the United Nations. The Terms of Reference must describe the functions, competencies, and requirements of the JPO post, including academic qualifications, relevant work experience, and language requirements.

**4. Establishment and Publication of Vacancy Announcements**

4.1 When a post has been earmarked and funding confirmed, the United Nations in cooperation with Belgium (and in accordance with the MoU between Belgium and the United Nations on the JPO Programme) will prepare the vacancy announcement.

4.2 The vacancy announcement for the JPO post must state all competencies and other requirements for the position in conformity with the JPO Terms of Reference. It may also indicate qualifications that are desirable for the position. Only those qualifications (required or desirable) that are indicated in the vacancy announcement may be used to assess candidates' suitability for the JPO post.

4.3 All JPO vacancies will be posted on the Belgian Website (with instructions to redirect interested candidates to the United Nations Junior Professional Officer Programme website) and the website of

the United Nations Junior Professional Officer Programme. The vacancy announcement may also be posted using other appropriate means for identifying potential candidates (job portals, newspapers and other publications etc.). The JPO vacancy announcement will normally be posted for a minimum of two weeks.

## **5. Requirements and Qualifications for Selection**

5.1 The qualifications below are the eligibility criteria for selection.

a) For Belgian nationals:

- Have the Belgian nationality.
- Have a Master level degree.
- Have a minimum of two years of relevant work experience for the chosen function.
- Be no older than 32 years of age as of 31 December of the year of application.

b) For nationals of Belgium's partner countries:

- Have a nationality of one of Belgium's partner countries.
- Hold a Master level degree.
- Have a minimum of two years of relevant work experience for the chosen function.
- Be no older than 32 years of age as of 31 December of the year of application.
- Applying for a JPO position outside the country of origin/nationality.

## **6. Applications**

6.1 All applicants to a vacant JPO post must submit an application and motivation letter, together with a duly completed Personal History Form. The Personal History Form provides relevant information on a candidate's personal and professional background: academic record, work history, prior UN experience, residence status, knowledge of languages, nationality, family relationships, and other matters that are essential to making a well-documented decision.

6.2 The Personal History Form is the most important source for relevant information on a candidate and serves as the basis for detailed reference-checking. Therefore, only those candidates who have submitted a duly completed and updated Personal History Form, certifying that the information contained therein is fully accurate, may be considered for the post.

## **7. Receipt and Review of Applications**

7.1 Candidates will submit their application electronically through the United Nations Junior Professional Officer Programme website.

7.2 Applications will only be accepted in English, French or Spanish, depending on the working language used in the JPO Duty Station.

7.3 Candidates can apply for a maximum of 3 posts in each given year. All candidates will receive a message acknowledging receipt of their application and advising that only candidates who will be invited for interviews will be contacted.

7.4 The United Nations will be available for questions from applicants (by e-mail/phone).

7.5 Candidates shall only be considered for a post after having submitted a completed Personal History Form as part of the application for the position. The information provided in the Personal History Form allows verification that certain requirements are met.

7.6 The United Nations is under no obligation to consider late or incomplete applications, or to confirm receipt of a late application. In exceptional circumstances, the United Nations may opt to accept a late application.

7.7 The closing date for applications may be extended, following a preliminary review of the applications, if The United Nations and Belgium consider that the quality or quantity of the candidatures is not sufficient to conduct a competitive selection process.

## **8. Reviewing Candidatures**

8.1 Only those qualifications specified in the vacancy announcement may be used in the review of applications and the screening of candidatures for the post. The reasons for accepting or rejecting an application must be documented at each stage of the selection process.

8.2 Long-listing process: The long-listing of candidates involves an initial screening of applications. The screening will be undertaken against minimum requirements, including eligibility, academic qualifications, years of relevant work experience, knowledge of languages, etc.

8.3 Candidates will not be given further consideration, if they do not meet all requirements for the position as specified in the vacancy announcement (e.g. academic, experience, languages, etc.).

8.4 The United Nations will share the long-list of JPO candidatures with the selection analysis (the reasons why an application has been or not has been retained) with Belgium.

8.5 Short-listing process: Candidates considered qualified during the first long-listing process are further screened for short-listing. In order to finalize a short-list of candidates, a closer desk review of the candidates' professional background is undertaken against the requirements of the post, giving additional weight to those candidates who possess one or more of the desirable attributes for the post, as specified in the vacancy announcement. Consultation with the hiring unit to scrutinize relevance of academic qualifications and professional experience of individual candidates may be carried out to narrow down the number of candidates.

8.6 Clarifications from candidates may be sought through telephone, should the United Nations consider the additional information crucial for the short-listing process.

8.7 Long-listing and short-listing procedures must be followed and findings must be documented.

8.8 A short-list of JPO candidates should consist of a minimum of three and a maximum of six candidates per post.

8.9 The short-list of candidates will include a minimum of one and preferably three or more qualified women from the pool of applications. The reason for not short-listing any female candidates for a given post must be fully documented.

8.10 At any time during the long- or short-listing process, if it appears that less than three candidates meet all requirements for the post, it may be decided to either re-advertise the position, or proceed with the selection process.

8.11 The United Nations will present the list of candidates that have been short-listed for interviews to Belgium for final approval prior to undertaking the interviews.

8.12 The United Nations will contact the candidates who have been short-listed for interviews.

## **9. Interviews of short-listed candidates – practical arrangements**

9.1 The United Nations will coordinate the planning of the interviews with Belgium.

9.2 The United Nations will send out invitations to candidates and set up a schedule of interviews.

- a) Interviews of candidates with the Belgian nationality will in principle take place in Brussels. Belgium will make practical logistical arrangements .

Face-to-face interviews are the preferred option, however, interviews of candidates with computer-mediated communication tools or telephone may also be undertaken. All modalities may be applied in the interview phase of any one position.

Interviews will be carried out by the representatives of the United Nations. Belgium will participate as an observing member of the interview panel for JPOs.

- b) Interviews of candidates with a nationality of one of Belgium's partner countries may be conducted by computer-mediated communication tools or telephone from the United Nations headquarter and/or decentralized offices. The United Nations will make practical logistical arrangements.

Interviews will be carried out by representatives of the United Nations. To the extent possible, a Representative of the Belgian Embassy will participate as an observing member at the interview panel for JPOs.

## **10. Assessment of short-listed candidates**

10.1 The purpose of the interview is to further verify and clarify professional work experience through the interaction with candidates and to assess competencies required for the assignment. During the interview, fluency in languages will also be assessed.

10.2 All short-listed candidates will undergo the same selection process and by the same means, to the extent possible.

10.3 In consultation and cooperation with Belgium, the United Nations will use a range of assessment tools and techniques to evaluate short-listed candidates. Such tools and techniques may include, but are not limited to, technical testing, interviews or an assessment of work samples, competency-based panel interviews. The competency-based interview panel will include a minimum



of two members of the United Nations. A representative of the Belgian Government will participate as an observer.

10.4 The United Nations will conduct the competency-based interviews.

10.5 The United Nations will identify up to five competencies from the vacancy announcement that are the most essential for a successful JPO assignment for the purpose of interview.

10.6 When evaluating a candidate, the panel should consider only the information provided to them at the interview.

10.7 The panel will rate a candidate on each of the competencies being assessed, and assign a score for each rating, in order to arrive at an overall score of the candidate for the interview. The panel will also assign one of the following recommendations for each candidate: "recommended" or "not recommended" and rank candidates in order of suitability for a position. The scoring of each candidate will be reflected in the panel's interview report.

## **11. Selection of a Candidate**

11.1 When selecting a candidate for the post, the United Nations will consider all available information, including the applications, and shall take into account the results from all the assessment methods used to evaluate the short-listed candidates, including the technical assessment/interview and competency-based panel interview.

11.2 In the event that a fully qualified candidate cannot be found following a competitive selection process, the United Nations or/and Belgium may re-advertise the position with a view to attracting additional applications.

11.3 The United Nations will make the final selection of the candidate for each post, in consultation and cooperation with a Representative of the Belgian Government.

11.4 The United Nations will notify the interviewed candidates who are NOT selected.

11.5 The United Nations will notify the interviewed candidate who IS selected.

## **12. Reference Checks and Verification of Qualifications**

12.1 No JPO recruitment and selection process is complete without proper and thorough verification of essential information, including academic qualifications, knowledge of languages, nationality, prior UN employment, family relations within the UN System and detailed reference checks. The Personal History Form provides a useful source of information on those matters that require verification and, in particular, on the candidate's employment history for purposes of reference-checking.

12.2 Reference checks for the recommended candidate will be conducted after completion of the interview. Reference checks from a current employer will be conducted only after the United Nations has consulted the candidate and obtained permission to contact that employer for the purpose of conducting a reference check.

12.3 Feedback should be obtained from minimum three references identified by the candidate, including one former supervisor of the candidate.

12.4 Conducting the reference check by telephone is often the fastest way to obtain a reference, and may yield important information that might not otherwise be obtained through a more formal, written process. Reference checks by phone should follow a consistent format of questions, with questions and answers documented in detail.

### **13. JPO Appointments**

13.1 After finalization of the selection process in line with the present guidelines, the JPO will be appointed under an UN fixed-term contract and will have the status of an UN fixed-term staff member at the P-2 level, in line with the United Nations rules and regulations. Steps on the salary scale will be determined by the United Nations, in consultation with Belgium considering the candidate's previous experience and other Rules and Regulations followed by Belgium and the United Nations: Step 1 for JPOs who hold a Master's degree and 2 years of relevant experience, step 2 for JPO's who hold a Master's degree and three years of relevant experience, step 4 for JPOs who hold a Master's degree and four years of relevant experience, step 4 for JPOs who hold a Master's Degree and 5 years of relevant experience.