

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION I
OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES

TO: Mr. Daudi L. Mwakawago
A: Special Representative of the Secretary-General
UNAMSIL

DATE: 25 October 2005

REFERENCE: AUD-7-5-16 (05-00190 /05)

FROM: Patricia Azarias, Director
DE: Internal Audit Division I, OIOS

P. Azarias

SUBJECT: **OIOS Audit No. AP2005/622/06: UNAMSIL Personnel Vacancy Rates**
OBJET:

1. I am pleased to present herewith our final report on the audit of the above subject, which was conducted during May and June 2005.
2. We note from your response to the draft report that UNAMSIL has accepted the recommendations. Based on the response, we are pleased to inform you that we have closed recommendations 4, 5 and 6 in the OIOS recommendations database. In order for us to close the remaining recommendations (1, 2, and 3), we request that you provide us with additional information as indicated in the text of the report and a time schedule for implementing each of the recommendations. Please refer to the recommendation number concerned to facilitate monitoring of their implementation status. Please note that OIOS will report on the progress made in implementing its recommendations, particularly those designated as critical, in its annual report to the General Assembly and semi-annual report to the Secretary-General.
3. IAD is assessing the overall quality of its audit process and kindly requests that you consult with your managers who dealt directly with the auditors and complete the attached client satisfaction survey form.
4. I take this opportunity to thank the management and staff of UNAMSIL for the assistance and cooperation provided to the auditors in connection with this assignment.

Copy to: Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations
Ms. Donna-Marie C.-Maxfield, OIC, ASD/DPKO
Mr. Kiplin Perkins, Chief Administrative Officer, UNAMSIL
UN Board of Auditors
Programme Officer, OIOS
Bolton Tarleh Nyema, Chief Resident Auditor, UNAMSIL

Office of Internal Oversight Services

Internal Audit Division I



UNAMSIL Personnel Vacancy Rates

Audit no: AP2005/622/06
Report date: 25 October 2005
Audit team: Niagara Chandra, Auditor-in-Charge
Zdenka Kolmackova, Audit Assistant

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
UNAMSIL Personnel Vacancy Rates (Assignment No. AP2005/622/06)

In May and June 2005, OIOS conducted a review of personnel vacancy rates in the United Nations Missions in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL or the Mission). The major objectives of the review were to determine if vacancies had been filled in a timely manner and if the processes involved in filling vacancies were transparent and thus ensured the recruitment of the most qualified individuals.

OIOS noted that vacancies, particularly those relating to international posts, were not always filled in a timely manner. The rate for international staff which range from 13 to 18 per cent appears to be high compared to the overall average vacancy rate ranging from eight to ten per cent. The overall vacancy rate could have been further improved if the Mission had established performance goals and implemented a proper monitoring system relating to the submission of requests to PMSS/DPKO for shortlists and the selection of suitable candidates from shortlists provided by PMSS/DPKO. OIOS also noted the need for PMSS/DPKO to promptly provide the requested shortlists to the Mission and issue offer letters to suitable candidates selected by the Mission.

In order to help ensure greater transparency and integrity of the recruitment process, there was a need for UNAMSIL's Civilian Personnel Section to closely monitor the recruitment tasks performed by requisitioning sections. The Civilian Personnel Section also needs to regularly serve as an observer at all interviews conducted by the requisitioning sections.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. OIOS conducted an audit of personnel vacancy rates in the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in May and June 2005. The audit was conducted in accordance with the standards for the professional practice of internal auditing in the United Nations organizations.
2. Vacancies are created by the General Assembly authorizing posts based on requirements determined by UNAMSIL and subsequently by the separation of staff that had been recruited against the authorized posts. The average authorized posts for the Mission ranged from 991 for the Fourth Quarter of 2002-2003 to 752 for the Fourth Quarter of 2004-2005. Responsibilities for filling posts requiring the recruitment of international staff are shared by PMSS/DKPO and the Mission. Based on the request of the Mission, PMSS/DPKO provides shortlists. The Mission selects suitable candidates from the shortlists and PMSS/DPKO issues letters of appointment to the suitable candidates.
3. On 1 July 2005, UNAMSIL officially entered a six-month transitional period, which commenced with the downsizing of the both the military and civilian components during the 2004 - 2005 budget year. UNAMSIL is expected to enter its final phase in January 2006 when it will dispose of its assets and possibly transform into a new, smaller mission under a different mandate.
4. The comments made by the Management of UNAMSIL on the draft audit report have been included in the report as appropriate and are shown in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES

5. The major objectives of the review were to:
 - a) Determine if vacancies had been filled in a timely manner, and
 - b) Determine if the processes involved in filling vacancies were transparent and thus ensured the recruitment of the most qualified individuals.

III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

6. The review covered the recruitment activities implemented during the 2004 - 2005 budget year and involved the reviews of the activities performed by the Mission in filling identified vacancies. We held discussions with heads of sections where the vacancies existed and with the concerned staff of the Civilian Personnel Sections (CPS) and the Office of the CAO. The CPS' files containing communications on recruitment against identified vacancies were also reviewed.

IV. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

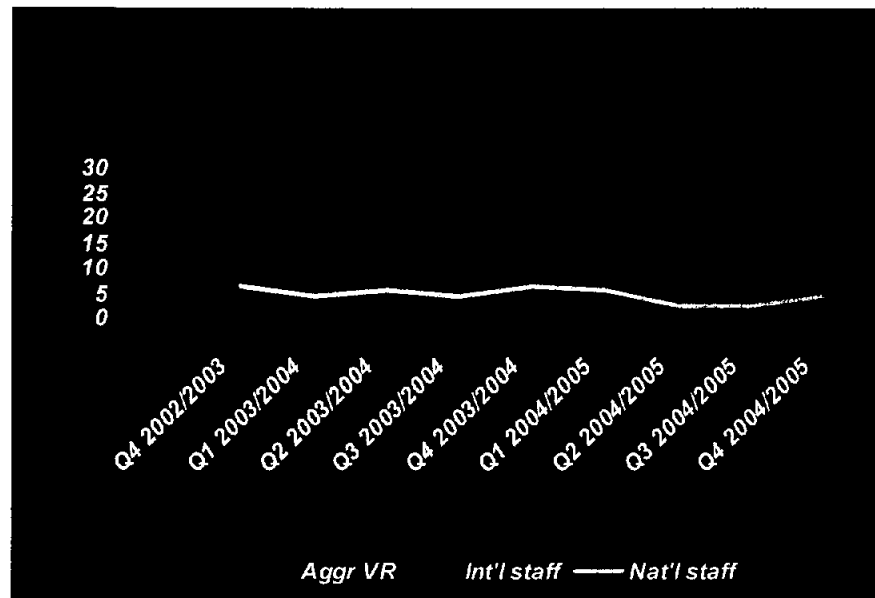
7. OIOS noted that vacancies, particularly those relating to international posts, were not always filled in a timely manner. The rate for international staff which range from 13 to 18 per cent appears to be high compared to the overall average vacancy rate ranging from eight to ten per cent. OIOS also noted that UNAMSIL's Civilian Personnel Section had not closely monitor the recruitment tasks performed by requisitioning sections. Such monitoring could have enhanced the integrity and transparency of the recruitment process and thus ensure the recruitment of the most qualified individuals.

V. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Timeliness of the recruitment

8. UNAMSIL has a delegated authority for recruitments against authorized national posts and shares responsibilities with PMSS/DPKO for recruitments against authorized international posts. The Mission is responsible for preparing job descriptions, requesting PMSS/DPKO for shortlists and selecting suitable candidates that have been short listed by PMSS/DPKO.

PMSS/DPKO is also responsible for issuing offer letters to suitable candidates recommended by the Mission. Chart 1 presents the aggregate vacancy rate for national and international staff and the vacancy rates for both categories of staff from the fourth quarter of 2002 - 2003 to the fourth quarter of 2004 - 2005 budget years.



International staff

9. Apart from the third quarter of 2004 - 2005 when the vacancy rate for international staff reached 24 per cent due to mandated downsizing, the Mission has generally maintained a vacancy rate ranging from 13 per cent to 18 per cent. As indicated in Chart 1, this vacancy rate is high compared to the aggregate vacancy rate for international and national staff in comparison to the 10 per cent vacancy rate apparently considered to be acceptable by DPKO. We reviewed the vacancy monitoring report of the Mission for May 2005 and conducted a detailed review of all twenty posts for which recruitment processes were initiated between December 2004 and 31 May 2005. The reviews indicated the need for UNAMSIL to establish performance goals that could be used to measure the timeliness of its own recruitment processes. There was a need for predefined timeframes as follows:

b) From the effective date of a vacancy (e.g. when an authorized staffing table is received or when UNAMSIL becomes aware of the separation date of an incumbent staff) to the date when the head of a unit/section should request UNAMSIL Civilian Personnel Section (CPS) to commence the process of filling an identified vacancy;

c) From the date the CPS receives a formal request from the requisitioning section (i.e. the unit/section where the vacancy exists) to the date when UNAMSIL should request for a shortlist from PMSS/DPKO; and

d) From the receipt date of a shortlist to the date when UNAMSIL should complete selecting a suitable candidate from shortlist provided by PMSS/DPKO.

10. Since there were no performance goals, we used the average number of days to determine the timeliness of the Mission's recruitment processes. We noted that UNAMSIL requested PMSS/DPKO for shortlist on average eleven days after the effective dates of the twenty selected vacancies provided in Annex I. Compared to the average of eleven days, there were disproportionate time-lapses of 40 to 245 days in UNAMSIL's request for shortlist for five of the twenty selected vacancies (listed in Table 1 below). In addition, as of 31 May 2005, the recruitment process had not commenced with respect to three other posts (see Table 1 below) that became vacant 150 to 300 days earlier. These time lapses are attributed to the requisitioning sections since UNAMSIL generally requested PMSS for a shortlist within two days of the CPS receiving a request from the requisitioning unit/section to commence the recruitment processes necessary to fill the vacancy. Heads of requisitioning sections needed to promptly request the CPS to commence the processes of filling identified vacancies.

Table 1: Disproportionate time lapse in the Mission requesting PMSS for shortlist

Post	No. of days from the effective date of vacancy to the date when the UNAMSIL requested PMSS for shortlist	No. of days from effective date of vacancy to 31 May 2005 (pending action)
Security Officer	40	n/a
R & I Assistant	245	n/a
Chief of General Service	81	n/a
Chief Aviation Officer	51	n/a
Supply Assistant, Rations	38	n/a
Child Protection Adviser	n/a	300
Chief Civil Affairs	n/a	180
Chief Information Officer	n/a	150

11. We were not provided with the requested specific, verifiable reasons for each of the above-mentioned time lapses. In addition, it was not clear if the achievement of the program of work of the Mission was impacted by delays in filling the posts. Although the CPS informed us that it prepares monthly reports of its activities, it could not provide the requested samples of these reports for review. We noted from discussions with the CPS that there was no consolidated record of all vacancies filled. In this regard, the CPS informed us that it needed more time for research in order to produce a list of vacancies that were filed during 2004-2005 Budget Year. In our view, the inability of the CPS to quickly produce basic statistics on its recruitment activities during a specific period indicates the need for improved monitoring systems and reporting systems.

12. The Mission was also sometimes slow in selecting suitable candidates from shortlists provided by PMSS/DPKO and/or in notifying PMSS/DPKO of its inability to find suitable, interested candidates from the shortlists. Compared to the average of 30 days, there were disproportionate time-lapses of 39 to 82 days from the receipt dates of three shortlists (or about 40 per cent of received shortlists) to the dates when UNAMSIL completed the selection of suitable candidates from the shortlists. Eighty-nine days after receiving another requested shortlist from PMSS on 31 May 2005 (the date of this audit), the Mission had not selected a suitable candidate. The four cases are listed in Table 2 (below). We were not provided with any reasons specifically for the four cases. However, we noted that the selection of suitable candidates had been delayed in

other instances, particularly in connection with the downsizing of the Mission, by PMSS/DPKO providing shortlists of individuals that were either not suitable or no longer interested in the posts. In such instances, the Mission had requested PMSS/DPKO for revised shortlist.

Table 2: Disproportionate time lapse in the Mission selecting Suitable candidates from shortlists provided by PMSS/DPKO

Post	Time lapse from the receipt date of shortlist to the date when suitable candidate was selected	Time lapse from the receipt date of shortlist to the date of this audit on 31 May 2005 (pending action)
Head of License in the Public Information Section	82	n/a
Fuel Assistant	39	n/a
Chief of General Service	57	n/a
Finance Assistant	n/a	89

13. The PMSS/DPKO was also sometimes slow in providing the requested shortlists to the Mission and issuing offer letters to suitable candidates recommended by the Mission. As of the date of the audit, PMSS/DPKO had provided the Mission with only seven of the twenty requested shortlists. In two of the seven cases, there were disproportionate time-lapses of 81 and 52 days respectively, compared to the average time lapse of 26 days for DPKO to provide shortlists to the Mission (see Table 3 below). Five of the twenty requested shortlists had been pending for periods ranging from 77 to 166 days after the Mission made the requests. There were also some disproportionate time-lapses in PMSS/DPKO issuing offer letters to suitable candidates. Of the seven suitable candidates selected by the Mission, PMSS/DPKO had issued only two offers – i.e. one for the Chief of General Service Section and the other for a Procurement Assistant. Both offers were issued more than 60 days after the Mission had made its selections. As of the date of the audit, PMSS/DPKO had not conveyed offers to another three of the seven recommended suitable candidates. In our opinion, PMSS/DPKO needs to identify the causes of these disproportionate delays and implement appropriate measures to shorten the recruitment process.

Table 3: Disproportionate time lapse in PMSS providing the requested shortlists to the Mission

Post	Time lapse from the date UNAMSIL recommended suitable candidate to PMSS to the date of this audit on 31 May 2005 (pending action)	Time lapse from the date UNAMSIL recommended suitable candidate to the date when PMSS provided the shortlist
Travel Assistant	166	n/a
Logistics Officer	77	n/a
Supervisor, Property Survey	84	n/a
Claims and Property Assistant	84	n/a
Chief, Aviation Officer	98	n/a
Supply Assistant, Rations	n/a	52
Audio Visio Assistant	n/a	81

Recommendations 1, 2 and 3

UNAMSIL Management should:

- a) Shorten the recruitment processing time attributed to the Mission, by establishing performance standards that require heads of sections to initiate recruitment actions and to complete the selection of suitable candidates within predefined timeframes following the effective date of a vacancy and after the receipt of short lists from PMSS/DPKO (AP2005/622/06/01);
- b) Take corrective action by identifying delays and monitor the compliance of heads of sections with established performance on the initiation recruitment action and selection of suitable candidates (AP2005/622/06/02); and
- c) Establish predefined timeframes for requesting revised short lists from PMSS/DPKO when original short listed candidates are found to be not acceptable to UNAMSIL (AP2005/622/06/03).

14. *UNAMSIL accepted recommendations 1 and 2 and stated that they will be complied with immediately.* Recommendations 1 and 2 will remain open in OIOS' database pending receipt of a copy of the communication to heads of sections specifying the performance standards they should comply with when initiating recruitment actions and when selecting suitable candidates from shortlist provided by PMSS/DPKO. *UNAMSIL also accepted recommendation 3 and explained that weekly follow-up emails and monthly reminders are sent to PMSS/DPKO.* Recommendation 3 will remain open until UNAMSIL formally notifies OIOS of the predefined timeframes within which it will request PMSS/DPKO for a new shortlist.

National staff

15. Recruitment against a national post begins when the concerned section submits a request to the CPS for a short list. The CPS advertises the vacancy and prepares the shortlist on the basis of applications received. The requisitioning section prepares a second shortlist, interviews short listed candidates and recommends the successful candidate to the CPS for recruitment. We noted the speedy recruitment of national staff. It took on average 30 days from the initiation of recruitment action by requisitioning units to the issuance of letters of appointment to successful candidates by the CPS.

16. However, some recruitment steps might be avoided if the approval of the CAO is obtained earlier during the recruitment process. We were informed that the approval of the CAO is required in order for the recruitment process to proceed. However, a review of the recruitment process flow chart indicated that the approval of the CAO is obtained after a suitable candidate has been identified. Therefore, if the CAO objects to the recruitment, all processes leading to the identification of the suitable candidate becomes unnecessary. Discussion with the Budget Unit in the CAO's office indicated that the unit was not aware of the process flow chart provided to us by the CPS. In addition, the unit explained that in practice, the CAO notifies heads of sections of vacancies at the beginning of the budget year upon receiving the authorized staffing table. Recruitment against any of those vacancies does not require the approval of the CAO. However, the approval of

the CAO is required where redeployment of posts is involved. The Budget Unit concurred that such approval should be provided earlier during the recruitment process.

17. We were informed that the CAO had transferred responsibility for post management from the CPS to the Budget Unit. This new arrangement should have resulted in improved budgetary control of posts. However, this new arrangement had not yet been implemented or reflected in the recruitment process flow chart. Since the Budget Unit did not yet have the capacity. The staff of the unit now requires access to and training in IMIS and FPMS.

Recommendations 4 and 5

UNAMSIL Management should:

- a) Ensure systematic and consistent compliance with the established recruitment procedures by properly reflecting the Budget Unit's role in post management by circulating to all Mission heads of sections (AP2005/622/06/04); and
- b) Also ensure that the Budget Unit be appropriately equipped by being given access to and training in the IMIS and FPMS systems to perform its new functions without further delays (AP2005/622/06/05).

18. *UNAMSIL accepted recommendations 4 and 5 and has already implemented them.* Based on the action taken by the Mission, OIOS has closed recommendations 4 and 5.

B. Recruitment of the most qualified individuals

19. Best practices require the use of interview panels comprising three to five members. The members of the interview panel should include a human resource officer which is already the practice at UNHQ. However, the CPS was not represented in all interviews including those relating to the recruitment of national and international staff. Interviews and/or "comparative analyses" leading to the selection of suitable candidates were conducted exclusively by requisitioning units/sections. Since the CPS did not participate in interviews and since the requisitioning units/sections were allowed to shorten the short lists, the CPS could not ensure full transparency and integrity of the recruitment process.

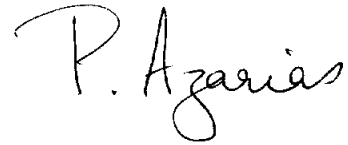
Recommendation 6

In order to help ensure greater transparency and integrity of the recruitment process, UNAMSIL should closely monitor the recruitment tasks performed by requisitioning sections and regularly serve as observer at all interviews (AP2005/622/06/06).

20. *UNAMSIL accepted recommendation 6 and indicated that due to staffing constraints, the Personnel Section was not always able to partake in all recruitment interviews conducted simultaneously by the sections. Efforts will be made to spread future recruitment interviews to allow the participation of Personnel Section.* Based on the Mission's response, OIOS has closed recommendation 6.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

21. We wish to express our appreciation to the Management and staff of the Civilian Personnel Section for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "P. Azarias".

Patricia Azarias, Director
Internal Audit Division-I, OIOS

