

Secretariat responses to questions received by 22 June 2019, 6 pm

24 June 2019, 1 pm

Please provide further information on:

1. The reasons for the current high rate of approved posts which are unfilled (75 of 453)
2. Further explanations of how this vacancy rate relates to the proposed increases in staffing

Response:

1. The reasons for the current high rate of approved posts which are unfilled (75 of 453)

Normal turnover and recruitment processes make it inevitable that not all approved posts will be filled at any given moment. Turn-over can be exacerbated due to stress and increased workload. In addition, recruitment for approved posts in core budget has been generally frozen in the past 18 months due to cashflow uncertainties, the ongoing structure review and the need to ensure that new staff to be recruited would fit the requirements of the organization for the coming years. In the short term, individual contractors and consultants have been used to undertake urgent and essential work. Recruitment similarly has been frozen for Programme Support Costs (PSC) funded positions.

Vacancies in supplementary funded positions also exist due to normal turnover and the time required for selection process. In addition, there can sometimes be lengthy postponements in posting positions due to uncertainty about available funding or delays in receiving sufficient funding for the position. Again, short-term contracts and temporary staff may fill the gaps, which results in inefficiencies and stress on core staff.

A number of staff are currently on long-term sick leave, and some are taking frequent sick days due to the stress of the workload. This has also resulted in the need for additional individual contractors and temporary staff.

In total the secretariat currently has 180 consultants and individual contractors and 28 individuals serving on temporary contracts. This is more than double the number of unfilled approved posts. Fellowship assignments provide much needed support across different workstreams, but this is not sustainable.

2. Further explanations of how this vacancy rate relates to the proposed increases in staffing

The proposed budget reflects an increase in staffing levels of 26 posts in the core budget. These additional posts are a mixture of shifting existing posts from supplementary to core as a result of the stabilization of existing and ongoing mandates and some cases additional posts as a result of new mandates and activities.

New proposed posts in the supplementary budget relate to the need for new work in supporting the extended implementation of and engagement of experts in established processes and constituted body work programmes. The adoption of the budget would not immediately led lead to these posts being created within the secretariat. The approval of the creation of the posts would occur only after

the agreement of multi-year funding arrangements with donors. In this regard the proposal for supplementary posts should be viewed as the maximum potential extent of posts over the biennium.

The secretariat considers that post-Katowice and following its structure review provides an excellent opportunity to review, adjust and stabilize staffing levels throughout the secretariat. The secretariat also expects that this increase in staffing levels will allow for the reduction in the number of individual contractors being employed, and provide the continuity and stability within several workstreams.