

**SUMMARY OF THE PUBLISHING SECTION GENERAL STAFF MEETING
3 p.m. to 5 p.m., 5 October 2011, DAG Library Auditorium, UNHQ**

In attendance:

Mr. Magnus Olafsson, Director, Meetings and Publishing Division
Mr. Narendra Nandoe, Chief, Publishing Section
Mr. Ramon Del Rosario, Deputy Chief, Publishing Section
Ms. Susana Levy, Publishing Officer, Publishing Section
Ms. Sarah M'Bodji, Associate Publishing Officer, Publishing Section
Staff of the Publishing Section
Staff Representatives

Summary of Discussions

The staff of the Publishing Section (PS) was briefed regarding the forthcoming changes to the operations of the Section by Mr. Olafsson and Mr. Nandoe as follows:

Budget implications on structure of the Section

1. Mr. Nandoe opened the meeting and introduced Ms. Susana Levy, the new Publishing Officer, who took up her position on Monday, 3 October 2011. Mr Nandoe then gave the floor to Mr. Olafsson.
2. Mr. Olafsson began his presentation by saying that he had a very serious message to the staff, and the representatives of the staff, and that this message had to be taken seriously by all: management, staff representatives, staff members and OHRM.
3. The decisions taken by DGACM are based on the directives of the Secretary-General on 28 April 2011 to "do more with less" and in a manner that is not "business as usual", with a proposed budget reduction of \$42 million for the 2012-2013 budget proposal.
4. The Secretary-General's final budget proposal assumes that 37 TC posts and 4 GS posts will be abolished in the PS.
5. The optimal business model for the PS has been designed based on a Manning Table of 40 staff members in the PS (4 Professionals and 36 General Service Staff). The new model would consist of digital printing operations only (black & white, as well as colour), with the abolishment of offset printing. Furthermore, this model assumes no finishing services other than those that the digital machines can provide, with further processing requirements to be outsourced in the absence of technological capability. Specifically, processing of publications currently processed on offset machines will be outsourced.
6. As it is recognized that this business model cannot be implemented immediately, it is assumed that it will only become operational in 2014-2015.
7. In the meantime, the so-called hybrid model will be functional during 2012-2013. In this model, the PS will provide offset printing services and finishing. This model requires 64 posts (4P; 20 TC; 40 GS).
8. The 2012-2013 model implies that 81 posts need to be abolished.

9. The 2014-2015 model implies that 105 posts need to be abolished.
10. The reasons for this change in processes are due to the reduction in demand for hard copies (one third in volume as compared to two years ago), a trend that will continue; and secondly, to the decrease in staff required by digital printing.
11. The seriousness of the situation being faced by the Section and the resulting implications were emphasized.

Solutions and options

12. Mr. Olafsson stressed that ensuring job security would be an essential part of the re-organization process. He said he had requested a permission from the USG to begin immediately consultations with OHRM to achieve these plans.
13. The options available to staff members, which OHRM would be likely to table, were issues like buy-outs, agreed terminations, training for new functions, re-classification of TC to GS, and priority given to PS staff in finding alternate jobs in the Organization.
14. Moreover, fresh additional posts were announced: 24 desktop publishing (DTP) posts from the Documents Division are now being processed under the auspices of the Publishing Section, with the possibility of 24 additional language posts. This DTP operation is to be managed by Ms. Levy. Staff was encouraged to apply for these vacancies via Inspira. However, it was pointed out that the posts cover all the six official languages of the organization.
15. Also, in the near future, the establishment of a printing service in the Publishing Section to cover 15% of total outsourcing costs for quality control, and of an ePUB centre for the generation of e-files by the Publishing Section are possibilities that could be used by the current staff.

Staff Questions and Concerns

Outsourcing of the printing operations

16. The lower cost of outsourcing the operations as opposed to printing publications in-house was questioned. Mr. Olafsson and Mr. Nandoe responded that some losses are being incurred through offset printing, possibly due to low charge-back revenue and high staffing costs. However, the process of cutting posts would be managed carefully in order to find solutions for all.
17. With regards to concerns about the quality of the outsourced printing, Mr. Olafsson stated that outsourcing will be done through the PS and that Quality Assurance functions will be based in the PS.
18. The possibility that there may be a need to reinstate use of the machines in the case that printing operations may be re-established in the future was raised. Mr. Olafsson stated that the change in work processes were permanent and that there was "no way back", quoting statistics of 700 copies for the UN journal being currently printed as compared to 6,500 previously.
19. With respect to the shipping, packing, stock control and central storage functions, and interactions with outside contractors during the outsourcing process, Mr. Nandoe stated that there would be a reduced need for central storage given the reduction in printing.

Placement and career options further to the abolishment of posts

20. The way in which the buyout process would work was raised, an issue that has to be clarified with OHRM. Staff was encouraged to take this option if eligible.
21. The suggestion that posts at the lower level be abolished, while promoting staff into posts at a higher level was made, a proposal that would be discussed with OHRM, as per Mr. Olafsson.
22. The reason for the abolishment of posts being restricted to the Publishing Section and for the 7% cut in the budget instead of the prescribed 3%, as is being undertaken in other departments, was questioned.
23. Concerns regarding the recent memo from Ms. Angela Kane were voiced, specifically in terms of how the reorganization in the Publishing Section fits in with the guidelines. Mr. Nandoe assured staff that in keeping with the staff rules, those eligible for permanent conversions will receive them.
24. The requirement to pass the ASAT exam in order to be eligible for conversion from the TC category to the GS category was of concern. Mr. Nandoe replied that OHRM would be requested to consider waiving this requirement.
25. Staff expressed interest in the visit of the USG to the Section.
26. Management welcomed the views, opinions and suggestions of staff, and informed staff that discussions regarding placement options would be initiated immediately with OHRM.