



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION I  
OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES

TO: Mr. Legwaila Joseph Legwaila,  
A: Special Representative of the Secretary-General,  
UNMEE

DATE: 18 May 2005

REFERENCE: AUD- (506/05)

THROUGH:

S/C DE:

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "P. Azarias".

SUBJECT: **OIOS Audit No: AP2005/624/02: Personnel Vacancy Rate in UNMEE**

OBJET:

1. I am pleased to present herewith our final report on the audit of the above subject, which was conducted during February-March 2005. The audit was conducted in accordance with the standards for the professional practice of internal auditing in United Nations organizations.

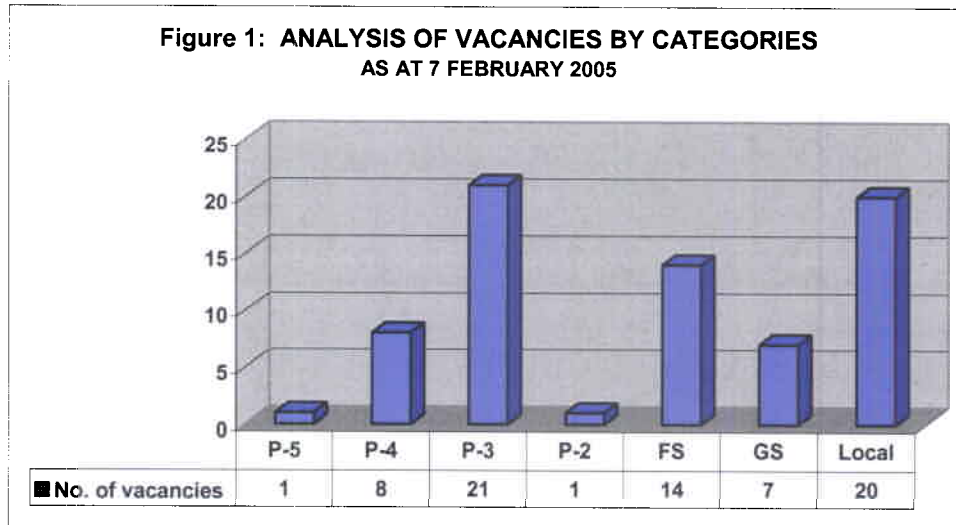
2. We note from your response to the draft report that UNMEE has generally accepted the recommendations. Based on the response, we are pleased to inform you that we have closed recommendations 1 and 2 in the OIOS recommendation database. In order for us to close recommendation 3, we request that you provide us with additional information as indicated in the text of the report and a time schedule for implementing the recommendation. Please refer to the recommendation number concerned to facilitate monitoring of their implementation status.

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.

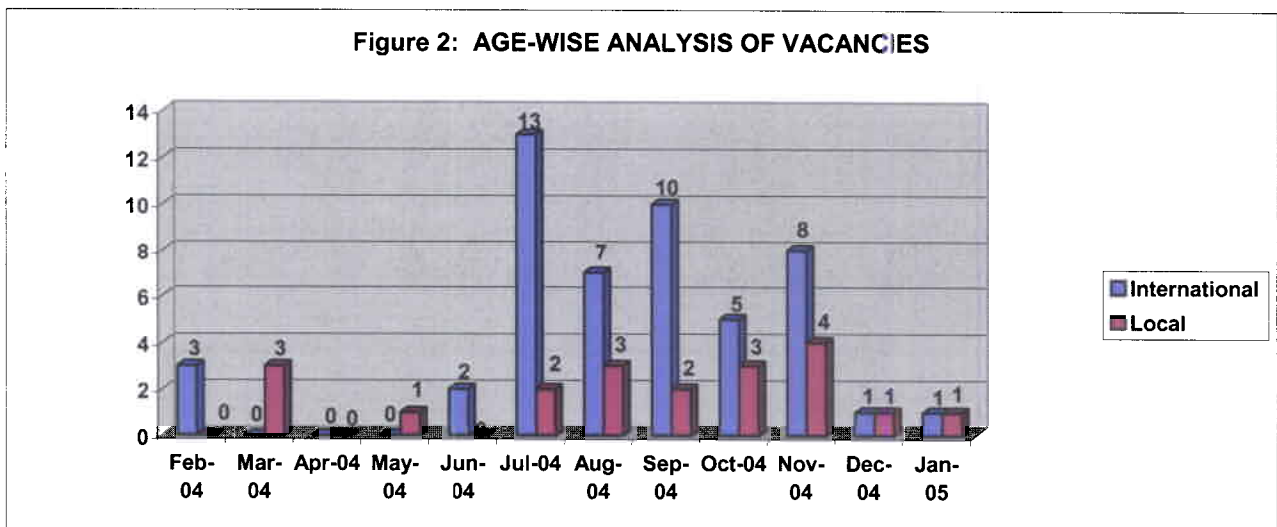
## I. INTRODUCTION

4. One of the key Mission support tasks is to manage the recruitment, training, career development and separation of Mission personnel. The Personnel Section is expected to coordinate with the Personnel Management Support Services (PMSS) at Headquarters, which among others is responsible for initiating the recruitment of international civilian personnel of missions.

5. The total authorized civilian staffing strength in UNMEE's 2004-2005 budget was 611 posts, representing 508 posts from the administrative support element and 103 posts for the substantive element. As on 7 February 2005, there were a total of 72 vacancies in the Mission, both international and local. Analysis of the vacancies by categories is represented in Figure 1.



6. The age-wise analysis of vacancies for international and local staff is shown in Figure 2.



\* The above graph does not include 2 international posts where the incumbents are being shifted to Field Service-Other Levels posts in order to downsize the posts.

## **II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES**

7. The major objectives of the audit were to:
  - i. Determine the vacancy rates, and the process and time taken to fill mission vacancies; and
  - ii. Establish the causes for the delay in filling the vacancies and assess the resultant effects on the Mission's operations.

## **III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY**

8. The audit focused on the vacancies that existed in the Mission as at 7 February 2005 and mainly covered the efficiency and timeliness in filling these vacancies. Interviews were conducted with selected staff from Personnel Section and Section Chiefs, to look into matters related to vacancies and the effect these vacancies had on the efficiency and effectiveness of implementing Mission's activities. The audit also assessed the level of compliance with established procedures for recruitment.

## **IV. OVERALL ASSESSMENT**

9. On the whole, UNMEE has been proactive in sending timely requests to PMSS for posting of vacancy announcements and in interviewing the candidates short-listed by PMSS. The delays in recruitment mainly occurred due to delays on the part of PMSS in posting the vacancy announcements and in obtaining and sending the list of technically cleared candidates to the Mission. However, there is much scope for improvement in the maintenance of records and data in the Mission's Personnel Section.

## **V. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. Vacancy position in the Mission**

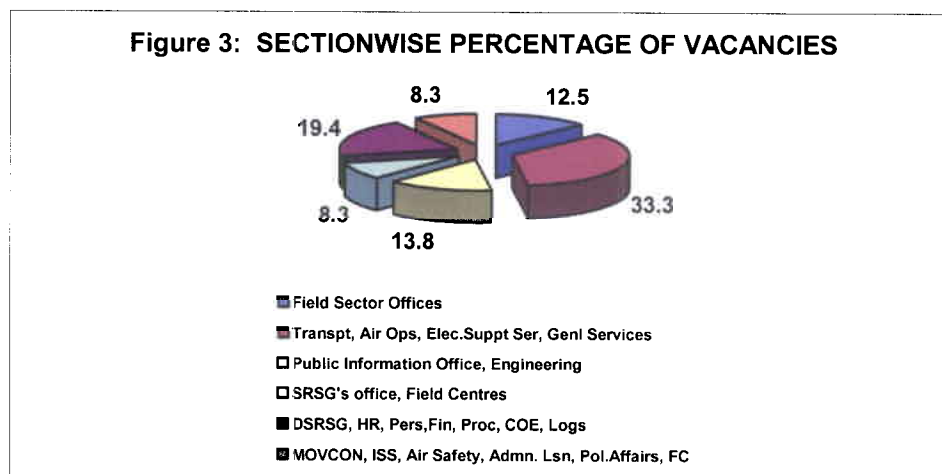
#### Downsizing exercise in the Mission

10. The UN Security Council resolution 1560 of 14 September 2004 recommended the repatriation of the infantry battalion and support elements from Sector East and the consolidation of the existing three sectors into two sectors. In line with this the Controller's Office advocated an overall reduction of 10 percent, which translated into 61 posts covering international and local staff, and United Nations Volunteers. As part of the downsizing exercise, a decision was made not to fill the unencumbered posts. Thus, 22 of 52 vacant posts for international staff (12 Professional posts and 10 FS posts) and 27 posts for national staff were earmarked for downsizing. This reduces the number of effective vacant posts to 30 international and 4 local posts.

11. Most of the vacancies (international and local) were in the Field Sector Offices (9), followed by General Services Section, Transport Section, Air Operations Section and Electronic

Support Services, each of which had 6 vacancies. The second largest number of vacancies existed in the Public Information Office and Engineering Section (5 each). Out of the total 34 vacancies in these 6 sections, 21 posts have been earmarked for downsizing, of which 3 posts have been lying vacant since October/November 2003.

12. The percentage of vacancies, section-wise, is shown in Figure 3.



13. Amongst international staff, the oldest vacancies dated to February 2004 (one each in the Field Offices in Sector Central and Sector East and one in Supply section.). All 3 are P-3 posts, and all have now been earmarked for downsizing. The next oldest vacancy is in the Contracts Management Unit for the post of Chief, Contracts Management Section (P-4). The post became vacant on 11 May 2004 and following the posting of the vacancy announcement, the deadline for receipt of applications was 18 June 2004. However, there was an inordinate delay on the part of PMSS, which sent the list of candidates to Supply Section in UNHQ more than four months later, on 29 October 2004. There was also a delay on the part of Supply Section, which gave technical clearance only on 22 December 2004, and a list of four candidates was forwarded by PMSS to UNMEE on 28 December 2004. The Mission sent its recommendations to PMSS in February 2005 and the matter is pending there.

### **B. Absence of proper documentation**

#### Non-availability of updated Staffing Table

14. OIOS called for the updated Staffing Table on 15 February 2005 but the Personnel Section was unable to provide this, stating that the Mission was in the process of reconciling the UNMEE staffing table maintained in its Field Personnel Management System database with the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) and Peacekeeping database (PKDB). The IMIS Staffing Table as on 1 February 2005 was provided to us on 22 February 2005. OIOS' review showed that there was complete mismatch of information between the UNMEE staffing table and the IMIS staffing table – because the changes proposed by UNMEE in December 2004 and January 2005 to the IMIS/PKDB staffing table were yet to be carried out by PMSS.

### Incomplete documentation/ lack of proper database

15. Information provided by Personnel Section were often delayed or incomplete and even the files of cases where selections had been finalized were found to be lacking basic information such as the date when the vacancy arose or who was finally selected and when. Personnel Section was also unable to provide complete information regarding the number of staff members planning to leave the Mission in 2005. In fact, some of the names of staff members leaving the Mission at the end of March 2005 were not provided by Personnel Section and were confirmed only after we provided the names. When we called for the list of critical vacancies, we were provided with two different sets of information, with the position shown on 21 February 2005 being completely different from the information supplied earlier on 18 February 2005.

### **Recommendations 1 and 2**

OIOS recommends that the UNMEE Administration:

- i. Request PMSS to reconcile the IMIS/PKDB database with the Mission's Field Personnel Management System database and provide UNMEE with an updated staffing table in accordance with the information provided by the Mission (AP2005/624/02/001); and
- ii. Ensure that the Personnel Section maintains complete and updated case files and records to enable proper and timely monitoring of vacancies and the presence of an audit trail (AP2005/624/02/002).

16. *UNMEE accepted recommendations 1 and 2 and implemented them immediately.* Based on the action taken by UNMEE, OIOS has closed recommendations 1 and 2.

### **C. Time taken to fill vacancies**

17. An examination of a sample of 5 cases where vacancies were filled recently revealed that on an average it took 5.5 months to fill up a post from the date the vacancy arose to the date when the offer of appointment was issued. The maximum delays were noted on the part of PMSS either in issuing the vacancy announcements or in short listing the suitable candidates and obtaining technical clearance. For instance, for the post of Editor, UNMEE News, the Mission requested PMSS 47 days prior to when the vacancy arose to issue the vacancy announcement. PMSS however took 66 days to issue the vacancy announcement and 73 days to shortlist the candidates and obtain technical clearance, which accounted for 58 % of the total time taken for filling the vacancy.

### Delay in selected candidates joining the Mission

18. Selected candidates were required to be on board within 60 days of receiving the Offer of Appointment. However, in 1 of the 5 cases mentioned above, the candidate is yet to arrive in the

Mission although a period of 73 days has lapsed while in another case, the candidate arrived after 101 days of receiving the Offer of Appointment. Thus, the time to fill up a vacancy effectively works out to 6.8 months.

### **Recommendation 3**

OIOS recommends that the UNMEE Administration request PMSS to establish specific timeframes for each stage of the recruitment process for the Mission so that unduly long time is not taken to fill up vacant posts (AP2005/624/02/003).

19. *UNMEE accepted recommendation 3 and explained that it had reminded PMSS on the negative impact of recruitment delays. Given the frenetic pace of PMSS in meeting the urgent staffing requirements of emerging missions, as well as other variables, UNMEE did not anticipate tangible changes in the near future in reducing the recruitment cycle.* OIOS believes that UNMEE should request PMSS to establish specific timeframes to serve as a benchmark for each stage of the recruitment process for compliance by the Mission. Recommendation 3 remains open pending the establishment of timeframes for the recruitment process.

#### **D. Delay in filling critical vacancies**

20. The Mission identified 9 critical vacancies as of 21 February 2005. OIOS' review of some of these cases showed the following.

21. The post of HIV/AIDS Policy Adviser (P-4) became vacant on 11 September 2004. Prior to this, the Mission requested PMSS in June 2004 to issue a vacancy announcement for the post, but PMSS issued this only in August 2004. In the meantime, given the fact that this was a critical vacancy, a candidate was selected in September 2004 on an interim basis but he joined the Mission only after four months, in January 2005. PMSS is yet to send the short-list for this vacancy announcement although a period of 6 months has elapsed from the time the vacancy arose.

22. In the case of Chief, CITS the vacancy arose on 9 January 2004 as the incumbent moved to another mission on temporary duty. However, the Mission was informed by DPKO that the post could not be advertised until the incumbent occupied a regular post in the new Mission. Thereafter, UNMEE prepared the draft vacancy announcement and sent it to PMSS in May 2004. PMSS did not issue the vacancy announcement and instead, after a delay of 5 months, sent (14 October 2004) a list of two short listed candidates who had applied for similar posts in other missions. Interviews with these candidates were conducted in November but they were not found satisfactory and PMSS was requested to send more names. There has been no development since then and this critical post continues to remain vacant for more than one year.

23. A Civilian Training Unit was set up in UNMEE at the end of 2001, even though it was not included in the staffing table. The Chief Supply Officer was transferred along with the post as UNMEE Training Coordinator in July 2002. Since then, two officials have acted as OIC,

Supply. It was only in September 2004 that a vacancy announcement was prepared and sent to PMSS for advertising in Galaxy. The shortlist is awaited from PMSS. The reasons for transferring the post to Training Unit and for managing the important work of Supply Section with an OIC for more than two and a half years are not available on file.

24. In the case of the Senior Legal Adviser (P-5) the vacancy arose on 8 September 2004. The vacancy announcement was issued on 12 September 2004 and the deadline for receipt of applications was 27 September 2004. The SRSG sent a code cable on 6 October 2004 stating that he had been without a legal adviser since the end of September 2004 and sought a temporary legal adviser until a long-term adviser could be found. One person was selected as temporary legal adviser on 29 November 2004 by PMSS. However, this arrangement was later not found feasible and Office of Legal Affairs (OLA) said it could not assign any candidate even on a temporary basis. A list of 22 candidates was sent by PMSS to OLA in July 2004 and they cleared only one candidate three months later, in late October 2004. PMSS sent the name of this candidate and also the name of another candidate who was the Senior Legal Adviser in UNAMSIL (which was now downsizing) to UNMEE on 1 November 2004. However, the Political Office overlooked these two candidates and asked for clearance of a third candidate who had submitted his name earlier on 20 September 2004 and who had also served in UNMEE earlier. This candidate was cleared by PMSS on 4 February 2005 and the Offer of Appointment was made in March 2005. However, since a vacancy announcement had been issued, the candidate should have been selected competitively. Further, the appointment of this candidate could have been done in September 2004 itself when he had submitted his application.

25. The post of Chief Civilian Personnel Officer (CCPO) fell vacant on 21 November 2004. The Mission requested for a draft vacancy announcement to be advertised in November 2004 itself. However, PMSS advertised only a generic vacancy announcement for CCPOs in January 2005. UNMEE is still awaiting the shortlist from PMSS and this critical post continues to be vacant.

#### **E. Reasons for vacancies**

26. The Personnel Section attributed the primary reason for vacancies arising in the Mission to the immediate call for downsizing in September 2004 which resulted in a temporary freeze of recruitment and also affected the morale of staff causing them to leave for other missions, particularly the new and upcoming ones. The Personnel Section stated that the resultant vacancies were slow in being filled up primarily because of frequent changes of desk officers in PMSS and because UNMEE was not perceived to be a priority mission. It appeared that PMSS desk officers were more concerned with handling start-up missions. Other factors were delay in posting of vacancies and in obtaining technical clearance, delay by the Mission in selecting short-listed candidates for interviews, withdrawal of offer by the chosen candidate which resulted in the entire selection process being repeated, inaccessibility of candidates to be interviewed and refusal of other Missions to release selected candidates until replacements were on board. Of the 17 staff members leaving the Mission in 2005, in 2 cases the appointments had expired, 2 had resigned, 2 had retired, 5 were returning to their parent office and 3 had been reassigned to DPKO.



## **F. Impact of vacancies on the Sections**

27. Sections handling operations such as Movement Control reported that inability to fill up vacancies resulted in overburdened staff (some of who may not be qualified to handle the job), inability to meet deadlines and lack of proper supervision, which impacted on the quality of work and also raised the issue of safety in operations. Communications and IT Section stated that this being a section requiring specialist skills, vacancies resulted in additional strain on existing staff and resulted in minimal maintenance of installations, thereby affecting the quality of service to the Mission. It also resulted in a lack of continuity and informed management within the Communications Section affecting the overall performance and quality of output. In other sections such as Receiving & Inspection Unit, the vacancies resulted in additional strain on staff with resources being stretched too thin. Sometimes the warehouse would have to be closed to enable the staff to assist in the receipt and inspection of food and fuel. The Political Affairs Office reported that the vacancies have resulted in increased backlog of work, slow flow of information from the Sectors to UNMEE Headquarters and vice versa, and a drop in the quantity of output such as Field Digest reports. Human Rights Section, Public Information Office and Procurement Section reported increased backlog of work that impacted on the efficiency of the sections. Security Section reported that vacancies negatively impacted on the investigations function; and considering the sensitive nature of information handled by the section, it was imperative to fill up the vacancies on priority.

## **VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

28. We wish to express our appreciation to the Management and staff of UNMEE for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

Copy to: Mr. Jean-Marie Guehenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations  
Ms. Hazel Scott, Director, ASD/DPKO  
UN Board of Auditors  
Mr. Vitali Petrounev, CAO, UNMEE  
Mr. Prances Sooja, Chief Resident Auditor, UNMEE