

United Nations

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM



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MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION I
OFFICE OF INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES

TO: Ms. Carolyn McAskie
A: Special Representative of the Secretary-General
ONUB

DATE: 23 November 2005

REFERENCE: AUD-7.5:75 (05-00263)

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

P. Azarias

SUBJECT: **OIOS Audit No. AP2005/648/10: Vacancy Rates in ONUB**
OBJET:

1. I am pleased to present herewith the final report on the above-mentioned audit, which was conducted during the period January to May 2005.
2. We note from your response to the draft report that ONUB has not accepted most of the recommendations. Based on the response, we have closed recommendations 4 and 8, and recommendations 1, 3, 5 and 6 have been withdrawn. In order for us to close out the remaining recommendations (2, 7, 9, 10 and 11), we request that you provide us with the additional information as discussed in the text of the report and a time schedule for their implementation. OIOS is reiterating these recommendations, and requests that you reconsider your initial response concerning these recommendations. Please note that OIOS will report on the progress made to implement 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.
4. I take this opportunity to thank the Management and staff of ONUB 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. Karsten Herrel, Chief Administrative Officer, ONUB
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Mr. Nicholas Makaa, Resident Auditor, ONUB

Office of Internal Oversight Services

Internal Audit Division I



Vacancy rates in ONUB

Audit no: AP2005/648/10
Report date: 23 November 2005
Audit team: Nicholas Makaa, Resident Auditor
Judith Atiagaga, Audit Assistant

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Vacancy rates in ONUB (AP2005/648/10)

During the period January to May 2005, OIOS conducted an audit of the vacancy rates at ONUB. The main objectives of the audit were to: (a) determine the vacancy rates, the process and time taken to fill mission vacancies; and (b) identify the causes for the delays in filling the vacancies and the resultant effects on the Mission's operations.

The main findings included the following:

- As at 31 May 2005, 842 staff had been deployed, reflecting a vacancy rate of 15.6 percent, although full deployment should have been completed by March 2005. This vacancy rate comprised mainly of international staff posts without whom the national staff cannot be effective, a situation that could hamper the timely implementation of the Mission mandate if left unchecked. Majority of posts filled were national General Service posts.
- ONUB's staffing table is monitored and managed by the Personnel Management and Support Service (PMSS) in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). Some staff members were placed against posts other than the ones for which they were recruited, and in units for which they do not work. Management indicated that the Mission does not have control of the staffing table.
- The Mission had six critical positions which have been vacant since its inception. These included the posts of Chief Security Officer, Chief Public Information Officer and Chief Procurement Officer. The Mission hired an individual consultant as Chief Procurement Officer and entrusted her to perform procurement and supervisory functions, which was in violation of applicable administrative instructions and financial regulations and rules.
- ONUB had difficulties in filling the National Professional Officer posts. There is a need to reassess the requirements for NPO posts with a view to converting them to General Service posts without compromising the quality of mandate performance.
- The recruitment process was delayed and prolonged because candidates were often offered a level that was lower than the advertised post. Many such candidates declined the offers of appointment, forcing the Mission to repeat the recruitment process.
- Changes and reassignments of personnel within PMSS, and the failure to obtain candidates' technical clearance before they were included in the shortlists for selection also contributed to recruitment delays in some cases.
- The UNV Support Office at ONUB operated on a different deployment schedule from the established and authorized schedule. Some sections did not submit their requests to the UNV Support Office for recruitment, and did not act expeditiously on the shortlists provided.

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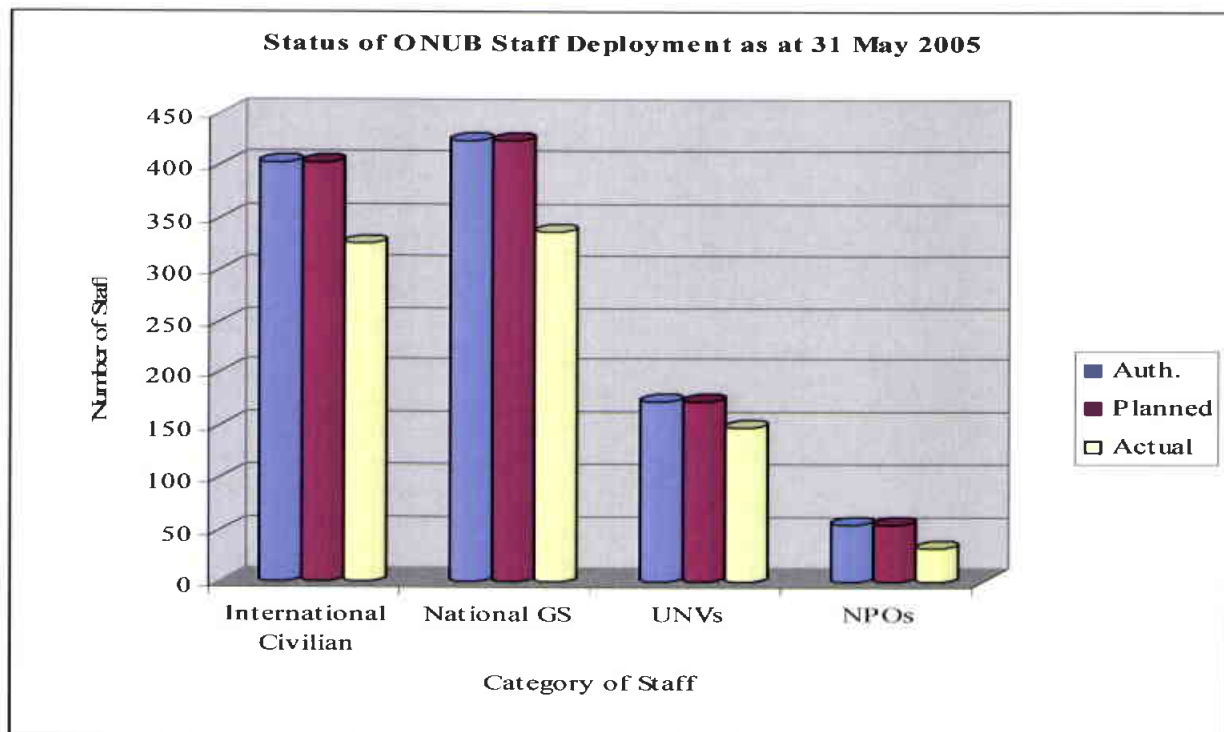
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. OIOS conducted an audit of vacancy rates at ONUB between January and May 2005. The audit was conducted in accordance with the standards for the professional practice of internal auditing in United Nations Organizations.

2. ONUB's \$330 million budget for the 2004/2005 financial year provides for the deployment of 200 military observers, 5,450 military contingent personnel (including 125 force headquarters staff officers), 120 civilian police, 403 international staff, 423 national staff (including 56 National Professional Officers) and 172 United Nations Volunteers. About 16.2 percent of this budget is for civilian personnel costs. Figure 1 provides details of the authorized strength and the actual staffing as at 31 May 2005 for the Mission's civilian staff.

Figure 1: Status of deployment of civilian staff in ONUB as at 31 May 2005



3. According to the staff deployment schedule, ONUB had planned to reach the full authorized staffing strength by 31 March 2005. However, as at 31 May 2005 the Mission had not attained its deployment target. A total of 842 out of 998 posts had been filled, giving a vacancy rate of 15.6 percent (156 posts). Out of the 156 vacancies, 46 were in the process of being filled and arrival of staff at the Mission was imminent. This would reduce the vacancy rate to 11 percent (110 posts).

4. The comments made by the Management of ONUB on the draft audit report have been included in the report as appropriate and are shown in *italics*.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVES

5. The main objectives of the audit were to: (a) determine the vacancy rates, the process and time taken to fill mission vacancies; and (b) identify the causes for the delays in filling the vacancies and the resultant effects on the Mission's operations.

III. AUDIT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

6. The audit focused on civilian vacancies that existed in ONUB as at 31 May 2005 and mainly covered the efficiency and timeliness in filling these vacancies. Interviews were conducted with responsible officials in ONUB 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

7. ONUB was lagging behind the targeted deployment schedule, which aimed to achieve full staffing by 31 March 2005. As at 31 May 2005, the Mission had 156 vacancies, representing an overall vacancy rate of 15.6 percent, and six critical posts had still not been filled. The Mission resorted to the use of an individual consultant as Chief Procurement Officer, in contravention of established rules and regulations. The Mission had been experiencing difficulties in recruiting National Professional Officers (NPOs) because a majority of the posts were in the regions, whereas most of the qualified candidates preferred to work in the capital Bujumbura. Although the Mission has done a commendable job in reducing its overall vacancy rates from 54 percent in September 2004 to 15.6 percent as at 31 May 2005, the vacancy rate for international staff was still high at 19.35 percent (or 125 posts).

V. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

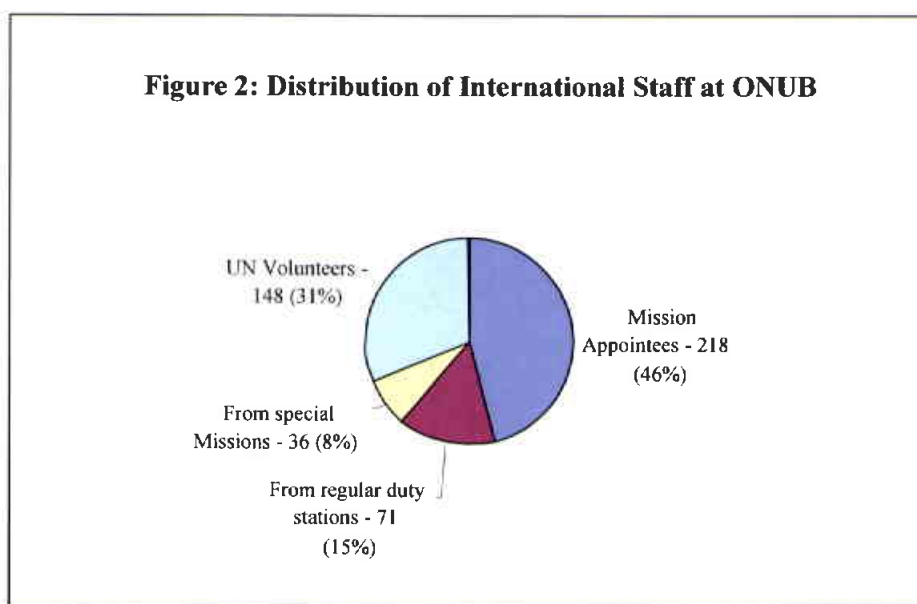
A. International Staff

Process of filling in international vacancies at ONUB

8. Recruitment of international staff for peacekeeping missions is done by DPKO's Personnel Management and Support Service (PMSS) based on an authorized staffing table. PMSS determines the instrument for filling each vacancy, i.e., targeted search, specialized placement/rotation, roster search of pre-cleared, pre-vetted candidates and through vacancy announcements. The decision on which instrument to use for recruitment comes after the Mission has identified a vacancy and forwarded a recruitment request to PMSS. At the Mission level, filling of vacancies at ONUB is initiated by a request from the concerned Section. This request is sent to ONUB Personnel Section, who then forwards the request to PMSS to initiate the recruitment process. PMSS then prepares a shortlist of candidates who have been screened, interviewed, technically cleared by respective departments and whose references have been

checked. This shortlist is submitted to the Mission for interview and selection of a suitable candidate. PMSS is required to obtain the approval of the ASG/USG for recruitment of posts at D-1 and above before the shortlist is sent to the Mission. On receipt of the shortlist, the Mission interviews the candidates and makes a recommendation which is submitted to PMSS together with a comparative analysis indicating the next most suitable candidate for the post, in case the preferred candidate is unable to take up the offer.

9. As at 31 May 2005, ONUB had a staffing strength of 325 international civilian staff and 148 UN Volunteers. Data provided by the Personnel Section indicated that besides the 148 UNVs, 71 posts were filled by staff from regular duty stations, 214 were directly recruited Mission Appointees and 36 were reassigned from other peacekeeping missions as indicated in Figure 2.



10. About 46 per cent of international staff at ONUB had been recruited as mission appointees. OIOS' data analysis of a sample of 33 staff members is summarized in Annex I. The analysis indicated that it takes an average of 55 days (almost two months) for staff to come on board after the Mission has requested PMSS for their recruitment. This timeframe does not include the time taken for issuance of vacancy announcements, receipt of applications, screening of applicants, technical clearance, interviewing, medical clearance, etc. There is need to further develop and analyze data on the various methods of recruitment used by PMSS in order to determine the time taken for each step in the recruitment process by the Mission and by PMSS. This will enable the Mission and PMSS to identify the bottlenecks in the recruitment process and develop a strategy to minimize them. OIOS will raise this matter with DPKO.

Management of the ONUB Staffing Table

11. The Mission's authorized staffing table for the period 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 consists of 998 civilian posts. The Chief Administrative Officer indicated that the staffing table is managed by PMSS at UN Headquarters. As a result, personnel are recruited and placed

against posts equivalent to the grades they hold, rather than the established posts in the units they work, without correcting the IMIS records. Management explained that there is a possibility that this is done by PMSS to deter staff from claiming Special Post Allowance (SPA). This misallocation of posts by PMSS without clarification or consultation with the Mission to establish the actual post gives an inaccurate reflection of vacancy rates and budgets for different units in the Mission.

12. The Mission Personnel Section explained that in the initial budget preparation, some functions were not foreseen and thus not included in the budget. The functions of the Regional Administrative Officers and Facilities Management Unit were left out of the 2004/2005 budget. On the other hand, the Communication and Information Technology Section (CITS) was understaffed, while the Supply Section was apparently overstaffed. The unforeseen and unbudgeted need for staff to cover the Regional Administrative Offices and the Facilities Management Unit resulted in the borrowing and loaning of posts to support those functions.

13. This practice resulted in loaning and borrowing of a total of 26 international and 5 national staff posts from one Section to another. This situation can be interpreted to mean that either the lending sections budgeted for more posts than required or that the borrowing sections have classified their posts at higher or lower grades than is required to perform the functions. OIOS believes that posts should be established at the appropriate grades that enable the programme managers to implement their programmes effectively. This will ultimately enable the Mission to ensure operational efficiency, accountability and cost-effectiveness in achieving the Mission's mandate.

Recommendations 1 and 2

ONUB Administration should:

(i) Request DPKO for delegation of authority to manage the ONUB staffing table to ensure that staff are reflected against the units for which they work and are budgeted for, with PMSS monitoring the authorized and actual staffing levels (AP2005/648/10/01); and

(ii) Ensure that each Section's staffing table is prepared based on an assessment of post requirements and supported by clearly defined duties for each post (AP2005/648/10/02).

14. *ONUB did not accept recommendation 1, stating that while it would welcome such a delegation of authority, the recommendation should be addressed to DPKO as it is outside the control of ONUB.* Based on the Mission's response, OIOS has withdrawn recommendation 1. *ONUB accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it is being implemented. Assessment and refinement of the needs of the Mission are being made, and job description for each post or job will be further refined with the implementation of e-PAS.* Recommendation 2 remains open in OIOS' database pending confirmation by ONUB that it has been fully implemented.

Status of vacancies in ONUB

15. According to the authorized staffing table and deployment schedule, ONUB should have filled all posts by 31 March 2005. However, as at 31 May 2005, ONUB had a vacancy rate of 15.6 percent representing 156 posts out of which there were 46 posts for which candidates had been selected and their arrival in the Mission was definite. This would reduce the vacancy rate to 11 percent representing 110 posts. The vacancy rates by category of staff are given in the following table.

Vacancy Rates at ONUB as at 31 May 2005

Category	Authorized	Planned	Actual	Vacant	% Rate
International Civilian staff	403	403	325	78	19.35
National Professional Officers	56	56	33	23	41.07
National General Service staff	367	367	336	31	8.45
UN Volunteers	172	172	148	24	13.95
Total	998	998	842	156	15.63

16. The overall vacancy rate for the Mission was 15.63 percent. However, the vacancy rate relating to local staff was relatively low at 8.45 percent, and that for international civilian staff was higher at 19.35 percent. Out of the 631 international staff and NPOs posts, 506 had been filled, leaving 125 posts vacant, which represented a vacancy rate of 19.8 percent in this combined category. The high vacancy rate for international civilian staff increased the risk of inadequate supervision of local staff. OIOS believes that the Mission should vigorously follow up with PMSS to reduce the vacancy rate of international civilian staff.

Recommendation 3

ONUB Administration should vigorously follow up with PMSS in DPKO to substantially reduce the current vacancy rate pertaining to international civilian staff (AP2005/648/10/03).

17. *ONUB disagreed with recommendation 3 stating that ONUB has made every effort to reduce the vacancy rate and accelerate the recruitment process. The long delays in PMSS are beyond the control of ONUB. OIOS accepts ONUB's explanation and has withdrawn recommendation 3.*

Critical positions to be filled at ONUB

18. As at 31 May 2005, ONUB had seven critical vacancies that required to be filled on an urgent basis. The report of the Secretary General (A/59/763) dated 31 March 2005 details critical posts to include among others, Chief Security Officer, Chief Procurement Officer, Medical Officer, Chief Finance Officer and Chief Budget Officer. According to that report, there is a scarcity of qualified candidates to fill these posts in the Missions, including ONUB. The critical vacant posts in ONUB and their status are shown in the following table.

Critical vacant posts at ONUB as at 31 May 2005

	Post Title	Post Level	Status	Date expected	Mission Stop gap measures
1	Staff Stress Counselor	P-4	Interviewed and selected candidate accepted offer in another Mission. Alternate candidate is being recruited.	Not known	None
2	Chief Security Officer	P-5	Mission resubmitted request for candidates on 15/03/05	Not known	P-2 was acting as OIC
3	Chief Medical Officer	P-4	Shortlist received from PMSS	Interviews in progress	P-3 Medical Officer acting as OIC
4	Chief Procurement Officer	P-4	Candidate selected	1 July 2005	Individual Consultant is CPO
5	Chief Finance Officer	P-4	Candidates interviewed, but recommended candidate not yet released.	October 2005	Finance Officer (P-3) acting as OIC
6	Chief Budget Officer	P-4	Mission resubmitted request for candidates on 15/03/05	June 2005	P-3 was acting as OIC
7	Chief Public Information Officer	D-1	Shortlist received from PMSS on 23/05/2005 for interviews.	Not known	P-4 acting as OIC

19. All the critical posts cited above have been vacant since the Mission's inception, except for the post of Chief Finance Officer which was temporarily filled until 30 April 2005. The delay in recruitment of the Chief Public Information Officer was caused by the reclassification of the post from P-5 to D-1, which had not been approved until recently. The recruitment of the Chief Procurement Officer has been delayed because the first candidate who was offered the post was not released by her organization and the alternate candidate declined the offer. As at the time of reporting, the Deputy Field Security Coordination Officer had been appointed as Officer in Charge of Security Section effective 1 June 2005 while the Chief Budget Officer and the Chief Procurement Officer arrived in the Mission in June and July 2005 respectively.

20. Management informed OIOS that PMSS has difficulties in identifying candidates for not only the critical posts cited above, but all posts in general. Three major French speaking missions started at around the same time and competed for staff with language skills i.e. ONUCI, MINUSTAH and ONUB. As a result, the Mission has in some cases taken the initiative to identify candidates on its own and recommended them to PMSS for recruitment. In one case (Logistics Assistants), the Mission had requested PMSS for several months for candidates without success, after which it identified candidates and recommended them to PMSS for clearance, but this was not accepted by PMSS since it was not in accordance with recruitment procedures. OIOS endorses PMSS' action in that the practice of recommending candidates without following the established procedures (such as advertisement through Galaxy) compromises the integrity of the recruitment process.

Recommendation 4

ONUB Administration should follow up with PMSS in DPKO to expedite the recruitment of personnel for the critical posts of Chief Security Officer, Chief Finance Officer, Chief Public Information Officer and Staff Stress Counselor to ensure

effectiveness of operations (AP2005/648/10/04).

21. *ONUB accepted recommendation 4 and indicated that implementation is ongoing. The Stress Counselor arrived in the Mission on 1 September 2005. The Chief Procurement Officer arrived in July 2005. The Chief Medical Officer has been selected, awaiting finalization by PMSS. The Chief Budget Officer arrived in June 2005. The Chief Security Officer is under recruitment. The Chief Public Information is under selection. The Finance Officer (P3) is still acting as OIC. Based on the Mission's response, OIOS has closed recommendation 4.*

Causes for delays in filling vacancies

22. OIOS' analysis of sample data for recruitment of international staff (see Annex I for details) showed that it took an average of 55 days, from the time the Mission selected a candidate and requested DPKO to recruit him/her, for the candidate to come on board at ONUB. The time taken for recruitment ranged between 14 and 121 days. Various factors contributed to the delay in the recruitment process, from ONUB's point of view. These are as follows:

(a) Clearance of candidates by DPKO and relevant departments

23. The recruitment process requires PMSS to send the personal history forms of shortlisted candidates to the Mission for interview and selection of a suitable candidate. All shortlisted candidates should be cleared by the relevant departments in New York before they can be recommended by PMSS. Mission Management however informed OIOS that there have been instances when the Mission interviewed candidates (for the posts of Legal Advisor, Political Affairs Officer and Receipt and Inspection Unit) and were later informed by PMSS that the candidates had not been technically cleared by the respective departments or were not eligible for reassignment. Technical clearance for the post of Legal Advisor took more than a month. Eventually when the Mission selected the candidate, they were informed by PMSS that the candidate was not eligible for reassignment because he/she had not completed the mandatory period before reassignment. This also happened in the case of the Receipt and Inspection Officer, and the Mission had to interview other candidates. In the case of the Chief Procurement Officer, one of the candidates selected by the Mission from the shortlist turned out to have negative references, which forced the Mission to cancel the recommendation for appointment. The candidate for the post of Political Affairs Officer was interviewed and later PMSS informed the Mission that the candidate had not been cleared and could therefore not be appointed.

24. It is important for both PMSS and the Mission to ensure that a candidate has been technically cleared and references checked before selection interviews are done. Interviewing candidates before they are technically cleared is an unacceptable deviation from the established procedure and causes avoidable waste of time and effort. PMSS also needs to ensure that the candidates included in the shortlist are eligible for reassignment before forwarding it to the missions for selection. OIOS will raise these matters with DPKO for appropriate action.

(b) Changes/reassignments within PMSS

25. Every mission is assigned a recruitment officer at PMSS to handle its personnel matters.

From a review of correspondence between PMSS and ONUB, OIOS found that changes and reassignments of the concerned recruitment officer at PMSS had a negative impact on the Mission's recruitment requests. When such changes occur, documents are sometimes misplaced and this is not known to the Mission until a follow-up is made at a later date on the status of a pending recruitment request. This lack of communication between PMSS and the Mission caused delays in the recruitment process.

26. OIOS believes that whenever there is a change of recruitment officer at PMSS, the Mission should be informed immediately so that its personnel issues can be addressed to the correct person. It is also important to have proper handing over procedures at PMSS to enable seamless transition with minimal disruption when such changes take place. OIOS will raise this matter with DPKO for necessary action. The Mission, however, needs to maintain closer contact with PMSS to follow up on pending recruitment requests so that the process of filling vacancies is not unduly delayed.

Recommendation 5

The ONUB Personnel Section should intensify follow-up on recruitment requests made to PMSS to minimize delays in recruitment (AP2005/648/10/05).

27. *ONUB disagreed with recommendation 5 and stated that Management objects to the implied criticism that it did not follow-up rigorously enough with PMSS.* OIOS has noted ONUB's comments and acknowledges that follow-up by the Mission was impaired by lack of communication on changes/reassignments within PMSS. Recommendation 5 has been withdrawn.

(c) Non-acceptance of offers by selected candidates

28. Another cause of the delays in filling vacancies was that selected candidates turned down offers of appointment issued to them, thereby requiring the Mission to restart the entire process once again. In some cases, the reason for non-acceptance of offers was that internal candidates who had applied for posts higher than their current level were offered positions at their current level.

29. A review of a sample of five cases where candidates declined the offers of appointment showed the following:

- Two candidates were interviewed and offered the post of Logistics Assistant at FS-4 level. The posts had been established and budgeted at the FS-6 level and the candidates (one of whom was serving at the P-3 level) had expected to be appointed at the FS-6 level as advertised. Both the candidates declined the offers.
- One candidate was offered the post of Regional Administrative Officer at the FS-5 level even though the post was established and budgeted at the FS-6 level. The candidate declined the offer stating that he could not accept the offer and change of duty station at the same level as his current level.

- One candidate selected for the post of Regional Coordinator of Civil Affairs (P-4) declined the offer for “personal reasons”.
- One candidate selected for the post of Chief Procurement Officer (P-4) did not take up the offer, stating that he was not being released by his organization.

30. The Personnel Section informed OIOS that offering a higher level to an internal candidate requires clearance by OHRM and this has to go through a process where the Mission/DPKO should demonstrate that other candidates have been considered for the promotion. Although external candidates may be willing to take up appointment at a lower level, internal candidates would consider applying for a higher level position as an opportunity for promotion. Therefore, although the UN reserves the right to offer an appointment at a lower level than the advertised post, in order to avoid loss of time, it is important for PMSS to obtain the candidate’s willingness to accept a position lower than the advertised post, if selected. Furthermore, if an alternate candidate is identified in addition to the preferred candidate, the alternate could be appointed in case the preferred candidate declines the offer. This would reduce the risk of having to repeat the recruitment process after the candidate declines the offer for whatever reason. OIOS will raise these matters with DPKO. ONUB, however, needs to indicate alternate candidates while preparing the comparative analysis of shortlisted candidates.

Recommendation 6

ONUB Administration should prepare comparative analyses of interviewed candidates clearly indicating alternate candidate(s) in addition to the preferred candidate, to avoid repeating the lengthy recruitment process in case the preferred candidate declines the offer (AP2005/648/10/06).

31. *ONUB did not accept recommendation 6, stating that it is already current practice. The Mission explained that where possible, the panel recommends and ranks more than one candidate if they are qualified and suitable. However, there are cases where the two recommended candidates decline, as it was the case in the recruitment of Medical Officer P-3 and Chief Procurement Officer P-4. Based on the Mission’s comments, has withdrawn recommendation 6.*

Use of a consultant to perform functions in a supervisory capacity

32. The post of Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) at ONUB has been vacant since the Mission’s inception because of lack of adequately experienced staff during the Mission’s start up stage. The Mission has endeavored to fill the position, and three candidates were successively offered the post but declined after the Mission had gone through the recruitment process. As a result, ONUB has been using the services of a consultant to perform the functions of CPO since July 2004. OIOS has the following observations, in this regard:

- The use of the services of a consultant to undertake the functions of the CPO is a violation of section 2 (f) of ST/AI/1999/7 dated 25 August 1999 on Consultants and Individual Contractors which states “Consultants shall not perform functions of staff

members of the Organization or have any representative or supervisory responsibility". OIOS is concerned to note that the consultant has been given the full operational responsibilities of a CPO, instead of an advisory role. Accordingly, the consultant represents ONUB on procurement matters, signs obligation/contract documents in contravention of the UN Financial Regulations and Rules, and exercises supervisory authority over staff members.

- The post of CPO is established at the P-4 level, and the Procurement Section already has three procurement officers serving at the P-3 level. Rather than assigning the CPO functions to the consultant, the ONUB Chief Administrative Officer needs to exercise his delegated authority to appoint one of the procurement officers as the Officer-in-Charge of Procurement Section (as has been done for the Finance Section) pending the arrival of a regular CPO.

33. As at the time of reporting however, the Chief Procurement officer had finally been recruited and assumed duties at ONUB effective July 2005. Nonetheless, OIOS would like to reiterate that the use of consultants to perform functions of staff members of the Organization is in violation of established rules and regulations and should be avoided in future.

Recommendation 7

ONUB Administration should establish and implement mechanisms to deter the use of consultants to perform functions of staff members or have supervisory responsibilities in the future (AP2005/648/10/07).

34. *ONUB disagreed with recommendation 7 indicating that it is already current practice. ONUB also indicated that the issue was not lack of procedures but the inability of PMSS to produce a candidate for the post from regular staff. ONUB relies on PMSS to find and screen suitable candidates on a timely basis. The negative impact on the operations of the mission outweighed engaging a consultant.* OIOS reiterates that the Mission should ensure compliance with the provisions of ST/AI/1999/7 governing the use of consultants. Recommendation 7 remains open pending confirmation by ONUB that mechanisms are in place to comply with those provisions.

B. National Staff

Recruitment of national General Service staff

35. National staff (423 posts) represents about 42 per cent of ONUB's authorized staff strength. The Mission is authorized to recruit 367 staff at General Service (GS) level and 56 staff at the National Professional Officer (NPO) level. As at 31 May 2005, the Mission had recruited 336 GS (including local staff on Individual Contracts/Special Service Agreement charged against posts) and 33 NPOs. OIOS acknowledges the Mission's effort in reducing the national staff vacancy rates from 61.5 percent in September 2004 to 8.45 percent as at 31 May 2005, despite the challenges in achieving ethnic balance in the recruitment of national staff,

which is problematic because of difficulties in differentiating between various ethnic groups and in finding qualified candidates from some ethnic groups. The ONUB Personnel Section informed OIOS that one staff member who is not a Burundi national but is familiar with the ethnic groups in Burundi has been appointed to the panel to assist in differentiating between the ethnic groups and thus ensuring an ethnic balance in the recruitment.

Recruitment of National Professional Officers

36. Under the approved staffing table for the period 2004/2005, ONUB is authorized to recruit 56 National Professional Officers (NPOs). The full strength of NPOs was to have been achieved by 31 March 2005, but as at 31 May 2005, there were only 33 NPOs on board with a vacancy rate of 41 percent. OIOS acknowledges the Mission's efforts to reduce the NPO vacancy rate from 100 percent in September 2004 to 41 percent as at 31 May 2005.

37. The Personnel Section has been experiencing difficulties in filling the NPO posts, most of which are established in the interior provinces of Burundi. It is difficult to identify candidates in the interior with the requisite academic requirements for NPO positions as most of the qualified candidates prefer to reside in the capital Bujumbura. Consequently, when posts are advertised for assignment in interior provinces, they do not attract the qualified candidates.

38. In particular, the ONUB Public Information Section has had major difficulties in getting qualified candidates to fill its 13 NPO posts. Consequently, on 10 September 2004, ONUB requested PMSS to convert the 13 authorized NPO posts to the GS category. This would hasten the recruitment process and would produce savings that can be used to establish more GS posts, if required. In addition, at the time of reporting, OIOS learned that the Mission had recruited 25 staff members at GS5/GS6 level in the regions against NPO posts pending further assessment from New York. In OIOS' opinion, although such reclassification of posts results in savings, ONUB needs to ensure that the quality of performance is not compromised, with negative consequences to achieving the Mission's mandated tasks.

Recommendations 8 and 9

ONUB Administration should:

- (i) Follow up with DPKO and obtain formal approval in support of the recruitment of 25 General Service staff against National Professional Officer posts (AP2005/648/10/08); and
- (ii) Ensure that conversion of National Professional Officer posts to posts in the General Service category is made only after assessing the related risks and possible impact on quality of performance of the tasks involved (AP2005/648/10/09).

39. *ONUB accepted recommendation 8 stating that the 13 NPO posts in Public Information were converted to GS level posts in the 2005-2006 Budget. Based on the Mission's response, OIOS has closed recommendation 8. ONUB disagreed with recommendation 9 stating that the*

assessment was made before the decision was taken. Recommendation 9 remains open pending receipt of a copy of the assessment made by ONUB.

C. United Nations Volunteers (UNVs)

Role of UNVs in ONUB

40. UNVs are an essential component of the staffing table as they support and supplement the staffing needs of the Mission. UNVs are also involved in promoting voluntarism at community level, capacity building and are focal points for Gender, Code of Conduct and Quick Impact Projects, along with the UN staff. Of the total civilian staffing strength of ONUB, 172 (or 17%) consist of UNVs. Requests for recruitment of UN Volunteers are made through the UNV Support Office in the Mission, which liaises directly with UNV Headquarters in Bonn, Germany upon receipt of the job description of the staff required. The recruitment process is carried out by the Special Operations Division at UNV Headquarters, Bonn.

Delay in recruitment of UNVs

41. As of 31 May 2005, 148 UNV posts (of the 172 authorized) had been filled, reflecting a vacancy rate of about 14 percent. UNVs are recruited directly through UNV Headquarters in Bonn, Germany. OIOS' analysis of sample data (see Annex II for details) showed that it took an average of 51 days to recruit UNVs for the Mission, and the timeframe ranged between 21 and 101 days. According to the staffing table deployment schedule, the full strength of UNVs in ONUB was expected to be achieved by the end of March 2005. However, OIOS' discussion with the Programme Manager at the UNV Support Office and review of their records revealed that the UNV Support Office was operating on a different deployment schedule agreed upon between the UNV Headquarters and DPKO, according to which full deployment of UNVs is targeted to be achieved by 30 June 2005. However, in preparing the monthly staffing reports at ONUB, the Mission continued to use the approved deployment schedule, which reflects that the UNV full strength should have been met by 31 March 2005.

42. Notwithstanding this contradiction, the UNV Support Office had not attained its own target of 160 UNVs by 31 May 2005. Apart from the fact that some UNVs resigned and others were repatriated from the Mission, which increased the vacancy rate, there were delays in getting UNVs on board. The UNV Programme Manager attributed these delays to non-acceptance of offers by selected candidates, additional requirements by recruiting sections (e.g. driving license) after candidates have been selected, and delays in arrival of selected candidates (e.g. notice of resignation from their previous employers) etc.

43. OIOS was informed that recruitment could not be initiated by the UNV Support Office unless a request had been received from the concerned Section. In this regard, there are 7 vacant UNV posts for which no recruitment request has been received (i.e., Political Affairs, Child Protection, Counseling Unit and Personnel Sections). Delay was also linked to some Sections not acting on the shortlist given to them for two months or more, in particular the Transport and HIV/AIDS Sections. Some other sections indicated that they could not fill the posts because they do not have office space to accommodate the UNVs. OIOS is aware that the construction of

the Integrated Mission Headquarters is underway and is expected to be completed by October 2005. The above mentioned Sections should reassess their need for the vacant UNV posts and if justified, ensure that their office space needs are adequately incorporated in the new location to hasten recruitment of the remaining UNVs.

Recommendations 10 and 11

ONUB Administration should:

- (i) Ensure that all sections' needs for office space are incorporated in the design and construction of the new Integrated Mission Headquarters currently under construction to enable the UNV Support Office to expeditiously finalize the recruitment of the remaining United Nations Volunteers (AP2005/648/10/10); and
- (ii) Hasten the recruitment process for UNVs by ensuring that requesting sections provide details of all their requirements, including related job descriptions and skills required, to the UNV Support Office to expedite the selection of the right candidates for these posts (AP2005/648/10/11).

44. *ONUB disagreed with recommendation 10 stating that it has already been implemented and indicated that the study took place.* Recommendation 10 remains open in OIOS' database pending receipt of documentation showing the study made by ONUB. *ONUB accepted recommendation 11 stating that Sections will be advised/guided by the UNV Support Office accordingly.* Recommendation 11 remains open pending confirmation by the Mission that the process of recruitment for UNV posts has been initiated by the respective Sections, or posts no longer needed have been abolished.

Participation of UNVs in rapid deployment exercises

45. Article III, Operational Framework paragraph 3.3 of the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations and United Nations Volunteers provides for the participation of UNVs in rapid deployment exercises. It states that "where appropriate, the parties shall collaborate on the inclusion of UN Volunteers in rapid deployment and Mission start-up exercise". The report of the Secretary-General (A/59/763) also recommended that the application process (to the rapid deployment roster) should be extended to UNVs serving in peacekeeping missions, under conditions to be negotiated.

46. The UNV Programme Manager indicated that UNV personnel may be temporarily reassigned to fill the gap during a transition period for UNV Support Offices only. To avert the shortage of staff at critical stages in missions, OIOS believes that DPKO should coordinate with UNV Headquarters to establish a roster of UNVs with mission experience which will increase the number of personnel available at mission start up, surge and liquidation phases. OIOS will pursue this matter with DPKO.

VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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



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**TIME-LAG ANALYSIS IN THE RECRUITMENT
OF INTERNATIONAL STAFF**

	Name	Date Mission notified DPKO/PMSS	Date s/m arrived in Mission	Days taken	Releasing Mission
1	Beatrice Trouville	30/12/2004	20/01/2005	21	ONUCI
2	Sarah Weingarten	18/12/2004	14/01/2005	26	Direct recruitment
3	Alma Djozo	07/12/2004	13/01/2005	36	UNAMA
4	Somath Dissinayake	06/12/2004	14/01/2005	38	Direct recruitment
5	Allan Hood	25/11/2004	06/01/2005	41	Direct recruitment
6	Jari Kymalainen	06/12/2004	21/01/2005	45	Direct recruitment
7	Joanne Huittinen	06/12/2004	21/01/2005	45	Direct recruitment
8	Nathalie Maulet	03/12/2004	19/01/2005	46	Direct recruitment
9	Louis David Noakes	15/12/2004	01/01/2005	47	Direct recruitment
10	Pierre Bardoux	18/11/2004	07/01/2005	49	Direct recruitment
11	Stephen Talugende	18/12/2004	09/02/2005	52	Direct recruitment
12	Abigail Togwe	29/11/2004	23/01/2005	54	UNHQ/New York
13	Anthony Montecelli	06/12/2004	05/02/2005	60	Direct recruitment
14	Vasilka Vojneska	24/11/2004	25/01/2005	61	UNMISSET
15	Biljana Vuckovic	15/12/2004	15/02/2005	61	Direct recruitment
16	Tilakraj Lama	23/11/2004	26/01/2005	63	Direct recruitment
17	Eric Boateng	25/11/2004	28/01/2005	63	UNMIL
18	Tony Choufani	23/11/2004	30/01/2005	67	UNIFIL
19	Dominique Gagnon	28/10/2004	09/01/2005	72	UNHQ/New York
20	Piera Barzano	28/10/2004	10/01/2005	73	Direct recruitment
21	Evelyn Haldene	06/12/2004	18/02/2005	73	Direct recruitment
22	Issa Kassambara	15/10/2004	05/01/2005	81	Direct recruitment
23	Desire Lohe Konate	28/10/2004	18/01/2005	81	Direct recruitment
24	Natacha Voltaire	20/09/2004	20/01/2004	121	Direct recruitment
25	DeAnna Ako-Asare	22/11/2004	30/01/2005	68	MONUC
26	Fran Gorchs-Chacou	28/10/2004	29/11/2004	32	Direct recruitment
27	Joseph Chaaya	11/10/2004	16/01/2005	96	Direct recruitment
28	Gertrude de Guzman	16/02/2005	03/03/2005	14	UNHQ/New York
29	Alpha Diallo	10/02/2005	15/03/2005	32	Direct recruitment
30	Komi G nondoli	10/02/2005	15/04/2005	63	Direct recruitment
31	Francois Zai	10/02/2005	25/03/2005	42	UNHQ, Geneva
32	Maroun Buery	24/01/2005	05/03/2005	39	UNIFIL
33	Samuel Engede	24/01/2005	18/03/2005	52	Direct recruitment
	Average total days for 33 staff members			1814	
	Average number of days per staff member			54.97	
	Average time in months per staff member			1.83	

**TIME LAG ANALYSIS IN THE RECRUITMENT OF
UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS**

	NAME OF UNV	Title	Date of Chief of Section confirmed selection	Date Candidate informed by UNV Bonn	Entry on Duty in ONUB	Days taken
1	Chaman Lal	Radio Technician	15/11/2004	26/11/2004	10/01/2005	55
2	Kanupriya Goel	LAN/WAN Assistant	09/11/2005	02/12/2005	10/01/2005	61
3	Muhammad Mursaleen	Telephone Technician	22/10/2004	22/11/2004	12/01/2005	101
4	Carlos Batalla	Camp Manager	18/11/2004	23/11/2004	14/01/2005	56
5	Joel Maoro	Vehicle Mechanic	16/11/2004	24/11/2004	16/01/2005	60
6	Virgile Comlan Lazare	Human Rights Officer	22/12/2004	04/01/2005	20/01/2005	28
7	Alexander Stoecklin	Civil Affairs Officer	30/12/2004	04/01/2005	23/01/2005	23
8	Sonia Lima	Human Rights Officer	22/12/2005	12/01/2005	03/02/2005	42
9	Yvonne Razafiniary	Nurse	01/12/2004	15/12/2005	03/02/2005	63
10	Hamissou Moussa	Civil Affairs Officer	30/12/2004	20/01/2005	06/02/2005	37
11	Emmanuel Tsegah	Medical Officer	30/12/2004	13/01/2005	13/02/2005	44
12	Amir Hashmi	Medical Officer	31/12/2004	27/01/2005	16/02/2005	46
13	Maria Minata Traore	Nurse	01/12/2004	05/01/2005	17/02/2005	77
14	Benjamin Quayeson	Personnel Assistant	26/01/2005	01/02/2005	17/02/2005	21
15	Francisco Monegro	UNV Electrician	15/11/2004	24/11/2004	20/02/2005	96
16	Menassie Mengistu	Interpreter	03/02/2005	14/02/2005	27/02/2005	24
17	Cecile Mouly	Civil Affairs Officer	30/12/2004	04/02/2005	27/02/2005	58
18	Abdulai Sahid Jalloh	Logistics Assistant	02/02/2005	10/02/2005	27/02/2005	24
			Overall total days for 10 staff members			916
			Average number of days per staff member			50.89
			Average time in months per staff member			1.70