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71FUND/AC.12/11

## WORKING METHODS OF THE SECRETARIAT

### Note by the Director

**Summary:**

In order to ensure that the grading of posts within the IOPC Funds Secretariat is made in conformity with the United Nations common system, a consultant was engaged to review the classification of posts within the Secretariat and develop a formal job classification methodology. On the basis of the consultant's report, the Director reviewed the grading of all posts. Policies in staff matters have been developed. The monitoring of the claims handling process has been strengthened. The use of information technology has also been strengthened.

**Action to be taken:**

Information to be noted.

### 1 Introduction

The Director reported on the developments of the Secretariat's working methods to the governing bodies at their October 2002 sessions (document 92FUND/A.6/15 and 71FUND/AC.9/12). In this document the Director reports on recent developments.

### 2 Director's authority in staff matters

- 2.1 At its October 1998 session, the 1992 Fund authorised the Director to determine the grades of individual posts in the general service category and in the professional category up to grade P5 and to decide on promotions for these categories, provided that the increased costs resulting therefrom could be covered within the total budget appropriation for Personnel adopted by the Assembly. It was decided that decisions relating to grades above the P5 level (ie grades D1 and D2) would be taken by the Assembly, on the basis of proposals by the Director (document 92FUND/A.3/27, paragraph 23.6; cf document 71FUND/EXC.54/17/A.21/24, paragraph 22.3).
- 2.2 At their October 2001 sessions, the governing bodies authorised the Director to create positions in the General Service category as required, provided that the resulting cost would not exceed 10% of the figure for salaries in the budget (document 92FUND/A.6/28, paragraph 26.3 and 71FUND/AC.6/A.24/22, paragraph 16.5). The Director has not used this authority since the October 2002 sessions.

- 2.3 At their October 2002 session the governing bodies confirmed that the Director had the authority to change job descriptions of staff and make any adjustments necessary to make the most effective use of the available resources in the light of the changing needs of the Organisations (document 92FUND/A.7/29, paragraph 18.3 and 71FUND/AC.9/20, paragraph 14.3).

### **3 Classification of posts**

- 3.1 Staff Regulation 17 of the 1992 Fund provides that the emoluments of members of staff should follow the United Nations common system as applied by IMO. In view of this provision and the growth of the Secretariat in recent years the Director believes that it is important that the grading of posts in the 1992 Fund Secretariat is made in conformity with the principles applied within the United Nations system.
- 3.2 The Director therefore engaged a consultant who has extensive experience of classification of posts for both large and small organisations within the United Nations system (including the International Maritime Organization) to review the job descriptions of all staff within the Secretariat and to develop a formal job classification methodology. The consultant carried out this task during the period July to September 2003. During this period, the consultant interviewed all staff members and reviewed their job descriptions.
- 3.3 The consultant's findings and recommendations were considered by the Management Team. In early October 2003, the Director took a decision on the grading of all posts and issued revised job descriptions written in a standard format for all staff members. He also changed the job titles for some posts and these changes are reflected in the table in paragraph 4.4 below.
- 3.4 In the light of the assessments made by the consultant and in order to bring the Funds' grading of posts in line with the grading of similar posts in other organisations within the United Nations system, the Director up-graded five posts in the Professional Category and four posts in the General Service Category and reclassified one post from the General Service Category to the Professional Category. The Director's decisions took effect on 1 October 2003.

### **4 Structure of the Secretariat**

- 4.1 The Secretariat is structured in departments, namely the Claims Department, the Finance and Administration Department and the External Relations and Conference Department. The Director's Office, which is outside the departmental structure, comprises the Director, the Deputy Director/Technical Adviser, the Legal Counsel, the Director's Personal Assistant and the Secretary to the Deputy Director/Technical Adviser and to the Legal Counsel.
- 4.2 The Director, the Deputy Director/Technical Adviser, the Legal Counsel and the three Heads of Department comprise a Management Team which manages the operation of the Organisations.
- 4.3 Under the structure established by the governing bodies, the Director has delegated authority to the Deputy Director/Technical Adviser, the Legal Counsel and the Heads of Departments, within the limits laid down by the governing bodies in the Internal and Financial Regulations.
- 4.4 The Secretariat has budgetary appropriations for 30 staff members as detailed below. An organisation chart showing the structure as at 15 October 2003 is at the Annex.

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Posts		Posts approved by governing bodies
Professional Staff Category		
	Director	1
	Personal Assistant to the Director	1
	Deputy Director/Technical Adviser	1
	Legal Counsel	1
	Head, Claims Department	1
	Claims Managers (one working part-time, one post vacant)	3
	Head, Finance and Administration Department	1
	Finance Manager	1
	IT Manager	1
	Human Resources Manager (part-time)	1
	Office Manager	1
	Head, External Relations and Conference Department	1
	French Translator (vacant)	1
	Spanish Translator (vacant)	1
	Information Officer (vacant)	1
	<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>17</i>
General Service Staff Category		
	<i>Director's Office</i> Secretary to the Deputy Director/Technical Adviser and to the Legal Counsel	1
	<i>Claims Department</i> Claims Administrators	2
	Claims Assistant	1
	<i>Finance and Administration Department:</i> IT Administrator	1
	Finance Assistants	2
	Office Assistant	1
	Receptionist	1
	<i>External Relations and Conference Department</i> Translation Assistants	2 <sup>&lt;1&gt;</sup>
	Publications Administrator (Vacant)	1
	Conference Administrator	1
	<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>13</i>
<b>Established posts</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>Posts vacant</b>		<b>5</b>

<sup><1></sup> One post job sharing.

- 4.5 Five posts are currently vacant – four in the Professional Category and one in the General Service Category. Of the four professional vacant posts one post is that of Claims Manager (never filled) the post of Spanish translator (never filled) and that of a French translator, which has been vacant since May 2003. The Director does not intend to fill these three posts for the time being. In respect of the two vacant translator posts the Director is continuing to assess whether to rely on freelance translators rather than employing in-house translators.
- 4.6 In respect of the External Relations and Conference Department, tasks were re-distributed between the three posts not related to translation matters. The posts of Information Officer (Professional Category) and Publications Administrator (General Service Category) are vacant and the recruitment process is underway.

## **5 Developments in various fields**

### **5.1 General**

The Director considers that it is important to review continuously the working methods and structure of the Secretariat, in the light of experience, so as to make optimum use of the Secretariat's resources and to ensure the best possible service to the increasing number of Member States, victims of oil pollution and contributors. It is also important to ensure that the potential of staff members is used and that staff find job satisfaction.

### **5.2 Human Resources management**

- 5.2.1 With the growth of the Secretariat, it has become necessary to strengthen human resources management. The Management Team decided to set out in writing the IOPC Funds' policies relating to personnel matters. Drafts of policy documents on various issues were examined by a consultation group composed of staff from the various departments. Policies were issued by the Director in 2002 and 2003 as follows:

- Induction
- Training and Development
- Recruitment
- Probationary Period
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Grievance Procedures
- Prevention of Harassment
- Health and Safety
- Temporary Assistance

- 5.2.2 Staff training is carried out and will be further developed during 2004.

### **5.3 Claims handling and related issues**

- 5.3.1 The Secretariat has continued to strengthen its monitoring of the claims handling process. The Director and other staff members have visited the *Erika* Claims Handling Office in Lorient and the *Prestige* Claims Handling Office in La Coruña and Bordeaux. A number of meetings have been held in London, Brest, Lorient and Paris between Fund officers and the experts examining various categories of claims arising from the *Erika* incident. Corresponding meetings have been held in La Coruña and Bordeaux in respect of the handling of claims arising from the *Prestige* incident. The Deputy Director/Technical Adviser and one of the Claims Managers held workshops in La Coruña and Brest with experts engaged to examine claims in the fishery and mariculture sectors arising from the *Prestige* incident. Templates for expert reports have been developed.

- 5.3.2 A report on the review of the *Nakhodka* incident is contained in document 92FUND/EXC.22/12 and 71FUND/AC.12/14. Some of the lessons learned have been applied in respect of the *Erika* and *Prestige* incident.
- 5.3.3 The Director commissioned a study to develop technical guidelines for the assessment of claims in the fishery, mariculture and fish processing sectors in States where documentary evidence is likely to be limited or lacking totally. A preliminary discussion on this study took place at the 1992 Fund Administrative Council's session in May 2003. The study is being reviewed in the light of this discussion (cf document 92FUND.A.8/24).
- 5.3.4 In order to strengthen even further the management of the claims handling process the Director intends to prepare procedures for staff and experts on various steps in the claims handling process.
- 5.4 Financial and administrative matters
- 5.4.1 The joint Audit Body for the 1992 Fund and the 1971 Fund created by the governing bodies has commenced its work and held meetings in October 2002 and in March and July 2003. The Director believes that this Audit Body will contribute to increased transparency in the operation of the IOPC Funds.
- 5.4.2 The work on strengthening financial control has continued, taking into account recommendations made by the External Auditor. The Investment Advisory Bodies have also made valuable proposals in this regard. In February 2003 the Director approved an "Investment Manual" produced by the Secretariat as part of the on-going work within the Secretariat of documenting all administrative procedures.
- 5.4.3 The preparation of quarterly accounts has improved financial information and financial control.
- 5.4.4 The Secretariat's use of information technology has been strengthened by improvements to the claims databases and by off-site back up systems. Critical systems have been duplicated in order to reduce vulnerability. Steps have been taken to secure the confidentiality of the Secretariat's IT systems and to ensure the complete restoration of the systems in the event of a major computer failure.
- 5.4.5 A communications network has been established to administer all computer systems in the Secretariat and Claims Handling Offices. This network also allows IOPC Funds' staff on mission to communicate with the Secretariat's computer systems.
- 5.5 External Relations and Public Information
- 5.5.1 Two recent major incidents, the *Erika* and *Prestige*, have focused the Secretariat's attention on the importance of informing the public in Member States affected by a spill of the role of the IOPC Funds. In connection with these incidents, the Director and the Head of the Claims Department have given numerous interviews on television and radio and to various journalists. Press releases have been issued where appropriate. Circular letters have been sent to key categories of people. In these activities the 1992 Fund has been assisted by a French and a Spanish agency specialising in these matters.
- 5.5.2 Further consideration will be given on what means can be used to provide information on the IOPC Funds and the international compensation regime to Member States and public bodies as well as to the general public in States affected by major oil spills.

**6      Action to be taken by the governing bodies**

The governing bodies are invited to take note of the information contained in this document.

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**ANNEX**

**STRUCTURE OF THE IOPC FUNDS' SECRETARIAT**

