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**IMMEDIATE  
ATTENTION**

EB/CAP/87/2

June 3, 1987

To: Members of the Committee on Administrative Policies  
From: The Committee Secretary  
Subject: External Assignments Program

There is attached for consideration by the Committee a paper dealing with external assignments for professional and career development. Mr. Goltz (ext. 7387) is available to answer any inquiries.

In the absence of a request to the Committee Secretary by the close of business on Monday, June 8, 1987, that this matter be considered in Committee, the recommendation will be deemed approved by the Committee for submission to the Executive Board on a lapse-of-time basis.

Att: (1)

Other Distribution:  
Members of the Executive Board

## External Assignments for Professional and Career Development

Prepared by the Administration Department

June 3, 1987

This report reviews the Fund's experience to date with External Assignments for Professional and Career Development, and recommends that the ceiling of staff who may participate in this program at any one time be doubled from five to ten. The review is divided into the following sections: program description and background, program experience, conclusions and recommendations, and proposed decision.

### I. Program Description and Background

External Assignments for Professional and Career Development is a program initiated in 1981 that allows management to consider temporary assignments of Fund staff to other institutions, which will enable them to gain experience that is of value to the Fund but that the staff member could not normally acquire in the Fund. Of equal importance, the program also allows member government institutions and other international organizations to benefit from the skills and experience possessed by Fund staff. Under this program, management may approve a period of leave without pay in the interest of the Fund for up to two years for a staff member to undertake assignments in government agencies or other international organizations whose activities complement those of the Fund. An extension of the assignment beyond the maximum period requires the approval of the Executive Board. A staff member on external assignment is paid by the receiving institution, but is eligible for certain benefits paid by the Fund, including economy class travel for the staff member and accompanying family, limited shipment of household effects, storage, and salary advance. In addition, the staff member may continue to participate in the Staff Retirement, Group Life Insurance, and Medical Benefit Plans provided that he maintains his contributions to these plans. The vacancies on the Fund staff created by staff members taking up such assignments may be filled by new recruits, while staff members returning from external assignments are absorbed in available vacancies. Participants are expected to serve in the Fund for a period of at least three years after their return from such assignments.

The External Assignments Program was established in 1981, following a recommendation (EBAP/81/264, Supplement 1, 8/6/81) by the Committee on Administrative Policies set forth in EB/CAP/81/5, 7/30/81 and approved by the Executive Board on August 12, 1981 (EBM/81/115, 8/24/81). At that time, Executive Directors strongly endorsed the program, noting that it would broaden staff members' experience and develop their potential contribution to the Fund's work, as well as provide another avenue to enhance the Fund's relations with member countries. A ceiling of five staff was established as the maximum number of participants on leave at any one time. The ceiling was viewed as a useful control device to monitor the program during its initial years of operation, but several Directors stressed that the Fund should stand ready to raise the ceiling, if needed.

## II. Program Experience

Since the establishment of the program, staff participation has increased every year and has been maintained at the ceiling of five since 1985. Overall, 15 staff members have participated in the External Assignments Program. Of the participants, 14 were from the economist stream and 1 from the computer stream (Table 1). The assignments have been mostly to central banks (10) and government ministries (2), but also included the OECD and the World Bank. Most assignments were for a two-year period, with only two being extended for an additional one-half and one-year period, respectively.

Since 1985, staff participation has been maintained at the ceiling of five. However, over the past few months, the demand for the program has increased, and unless the ceiling on the number of staff who can be on such external assignments at any one time is expanded, several requests will have to be turned down or postponed. Based on current demand and in the absence of the current ceiling of five, it is anticipated that seven or eight participants would be on external assignments by the end of the year.

The External Assignments Program involves leave without pay and, therefore, the Fund does not incur salary costs, but a salary advance is made available to staff members which is intended to cover their financial commitments in the duty station and their settling-in costs in connection with the assignments. The cost to the Fund includes expenses for economy class transportation, limited shipment of household effects and storage, as well as the employer's contributions to the Staff Retirement, Medical Benefits, and Group Life Insurance Plans (see Attachment I). The average length of each assignment has been 20 months. The cost per assignment has averaged about \$32,000, of which \$12,000 was for travel, shipment and storage, and \$20,000 for the Fund's contributions to the Staff Retirement, Medical Benefits, and Group Life Insurance Plans. The cost range varied from a minimum of zero (for an assignment to the World Bank, where all costs were reimbursed by the Bank), to a maximum cost of \$47,000. The average annual cost per participant is \$19,000 making the total average cost of the External Assignments Program, with its ceiling of five participants, roughly equivalent to \$95,000 per year.

Participating staff members, their Fund supervisors, and member government officials have reported that participation in the program has been beneficial to the individual staff member, the Fund, and member government institutions. Participants have found their assignments to be a valuable professional experience often adding a new dimension to their career as international civil servants, particularly for those who joined the Fund with little or no prior work experience. The Fund has benefitted by having more versatile staff members, and member countries have benefitted from the technical expertise provided by Fund staff.

Table 1. Participation in External Assignments Program

Department	Staff Member's Title	Location of Assignment	Dates of Leave
AFR	Senior Economist	World Bank	3/85-6/87
AFR	Economist	Central Bank of Guinea	5/86-5/87
AFR	Assistant Director	Reserve Bank of India	10/86-11/87
ASD	Senior Economist	Reserve Bank of India	9/81-9/82
BCS	Computer Systems Officer	Monetary Authority of Singapore	5/82-5/84
ETR	Economist	Office of the Prime Minister of Egypt	8/86-8/87
EUR	Economist	Bank of England	10/80-10/82
EUR	Economist	German Ministry of Economics	9/81-9/83
EUR	Economist	Bank of Greece	10/84-10/85
FAD	Economist	Bank of Israel	9/85-12/86
RES	Economist	Central Bank of Turkey	9/84-9/87
RES	Economist	Bank of Japan	4/87-4/89
TRE	Senior Economist	OECD	6/85-5/87
WHD	Economist	Japanese Ministry of Finance	1/83-1/85
WHD	Economist	Central Bank of Ecuador	9/84-9/86

g ahead to the medium term, there are several reasons which suggest that the External Assignments Program could play an even more important role and be in even greater demand than over the past several years. First, the External Assignments Program increases the opportunities available for staff members to broaden their background, perspective, and experience. The program allows staff members to gain valuable experience and be tested in demanding advisory roles often requiring great sensitivity, tact, and diplomacy.

Second, the Fund recruits a proportion of its career economists from the Economist Program and these staff members, most of whom join the Fund directly out of university, normally have no first-hand work experience of the national policy-making process in member government institutions. The External Assignments Program is a way for these staff members to obtain this experience, while at the same time making a valuable contribution to a member government institution.

Third, the lack of growth of the Fund, together with current staff demographics, point to a medium-term situation where a significant number of staff may reach a career ceiling at a relatively early stage with limited promotion opportunities. The plateauing of career opportunities makes it important that the Fund have programs which emphasize job enrichment and the broadening of staff members' experience and knowledge. The External Assignments Program is viewed as such a program and promotes the philosophy that change, growth, and new challenges are desirable and supported by the organization.

Finally, the External Assignments Program will continue to provide a mechanism for member government institutions to access valuable skills and technical expertise possessed by Fund staff.

### III. Conclusions and Recommendations

The External Assignments Program has proven to be a useful developmental vehicle to provide staff with a broader experience base through which the staff member, the Fund, and member organizations benefit. Member government and staff interest in the program have grown to the point where actual participation has consistently been at the maximum of five staff members at any one time since 1985. While this ceiling has not been a constraint prior to 1987, current demand and interest in the program from the staff and organizations in member countries is such that the ceiling will, by the end of this year, prove too low if the Fund is to continue supporting legitimate requests for such assignments.

When the External Assignments Program was established, several Executive Directors noted that the ceiling of five might prove too low. They recommended that the Fund stand ready to raise the ceiling if demand for the program so warranted. The demand for this program has increased,

and is expected to increase further in the years to come. It is, therefore, recommended that the maximum number of staff who may be authorized by management to participate in this program at any one time be increased to ten.

The maximum annual cost of the program to the Fund would rise from approximately \$95,000 (five participants) to \$190,000 (ten participants). It is not, however, expected that the number of participants would rise to ten immediately, although it may well approach this new ceiling over the course of the next two to three years.

#### IV. Proposed Decision

The following draft decision is proposed for adoption by the Executive Board:

The ceiling on the maximum number of staff members who may participate at any one time in the External Assignments Program for Professional and Career Development is increased from five to ten.

Attachment (1)

Cost to the Fund of the External Assignments Program  
(In U.S. Dollars)

Staff Member	Location of Assignment	Length of Assignment (in months)	Benefits				Total
			Group Life Insurance Plan	Medical Benefits Plan	Staff Retirement Plan	Travel/ Shipments Storage	
1.	London, U.K.	24	100	1,400	16,600	1,300	19,400
2.	Bonn, Germany	24	250	1,600	19,500	9,200	30,550
3.	Bombay, India	12	100	800	10,900	14,300	26,100
4.	Singapore	20	150	not enrolled	17,200	5,500	22,850
5.	Tokyo, Japan	24	270	3,600	16,600	24,000	44,470
6.*	Ankara, Turkey	36	350	6,800	32,600	7,200	46,950
7.	Quito, Ecuador	24	650	4,800	25,200	14,500	45,150
8.	Athens, Greece	12	50	900	11,700	13,200	25,850
9.	Washington, DC 1/	27	--	--	--	--	--
10.	Paris, France	24	170	5,000	34,200	600	39,970
11.	Jerusalem, Israel	15	70	3,000	14,600	22,700	40,370
12.*	Conakry, Guinea	12	80	900	9,700	5,000	15,680
13.*	Cairo, Egypt	12	30	900	11,600	18,000	30,530
14.*	Bombay, India	12	500	2,600	20,200	20,000	43,300
15.*	Tokyo, Japan	24	180	4,000	19,400	20,000	43,580
Total			2,950	36,300	260,000	175,500	474,750

\* Staff who are currently out on assignment.

1/ Cost is zero as Fund will be reimbursed by the IBRD.