

EB/CAM/09/7

March 17, 2009

To: Members of the Committee on Executive Board Administrative Matters
(Mr. Mojarad, Chair; Mr. Bakker, Mr. Itam, Mr. Lee, Ms. Lundsager,
Mr. Mozhin, Mr. Rutayisire, Mr. Stein)

From: G. Russell Kincaid, Committee Secretary

Subject: **Official Business Travel by Administrative Assistants to Executive
Directors**

The attached paper responds to a request from an Executive Director for the Committee's consideration of the above issue, and is circulated to members of the Committee at the request of the Chairman. It will be considered by the Committee at the meeting on **Thursday, March 19, 2009, at 3:00 p.m. in Room HQ1 12-120B.**

Questions may be referred to Ms. Michaels, SEC (ext. 35451).

This paper will shortly be posted on the extranet, a secure website for the Executive Directors and member country authorities.

Att: (1)

Other Distribution:
Members of Executive Board

TRAVEL BY OED ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS

1. This note sets out key issues arising from Mr. Itam's request that the CAM give consideration to introducing a new policy permitting Staff Assistants to Executive Directors and Administrative Assistants to Executive Directors to travel on official Fund business.¹

2. **Background:** Mr. Itam notified the Secretary's Department of his intention to include an Administrative Assistant in an office delegation attending the IMF conference in Tanzania. The Handbook on Executive Board Administrative Matters does not explicitly permit OED Assistants to travel on official business.

3. **Rules for OED official business travel:** The Executive Board has approved specific policies authorizing official travel by Executive Directors and Alternates (and, by extension, Senior Advisors), and also Advisors to Executive Directors.² The Handbook on Executive Board Administrative Matters is silent, however, on official travel by OED Assistants.³ The Legal Department advised that, as specific Board decisions had been made to permit business travel by other categories of OED personnel, the absence of such a rule for OED Assistants should not be interpreted as an implicit approval by the Board of such travel. Accordingly SEC advised Mr. Itam that the travel request for his Assistant could not be authorized, as it was not provided for under present rules. This advice was consistent with the outcomes of two previous known requests over 10 years. Mr. Itam has sought consideration of this issue by the CAM and subsequent Executive Board approval of a new policy to permit such travel.

4. **Rules for official travel by Fund support staff:** Staff Assistants and Administrative Assistants employed on the Fund staff may undertake official business travel for the Fund, at the discretion of their department heads. Rule N-16(a) of the Fund's By Laws, Rules and Regulations provides that official travel by staff may be undertaken only with the approval of the Managing Director; the authority to approve official travel by staff in turn has been delegated to the heads of departments and offices (GAO No. 4, rev. 11, sec. 2.01). Rule N-16 does not distinguish between categories of staff. All travel by Fund staff must be conducted in compliance with the policies for travel and allowances set out in GAO No. 4. In practice, while in the past Fund staff assistants or administrative assistants were considered part of the standard mission complement, they now participate less frequently in Fund missions owing to budget constraints and improved technology.

¹ Executive Directors may appoint Staff Assistants (at grade level A5) or Administrative Assistants at grade A6– A9). In this note, the term “OED Assistants” covers both categories.

² The rules for the travel of Executive Directors were established by the Executive Board in their present form in the 1990s (see EBAP/93/82, Correction 1, 12/14/93, EBAM/96/145, 9/3/96; EBAM/99/155, 11/12/99) although the travel allowances for Executive Directors' business travel were amended more recently in 2007 to be in alignment with those of the Fund staff (see EBAM/07/136, 12/14/07). The current rules for Advisor travel have also been in place for over ten years (see EBAM/98/80, 4/29/98).

³ Travel by OED Assistants to overseas Annual Meetings is specifically approved by the Executive Board through a separate process in every year in which such meetings are held.

5. **Options:** The rationale for the present absence of authority for travel by OED Assistants is unclear, although it may reflect a view that such travel was not necessary to support travel by Executive Directors or Alternates, and perhaps for budgetary reasons (in this regard, it should be noted that official travel by Advisors is also explicitly limited).⁴ However, the OEDs now have defined travel budgets and Executive Directors face incentives to prioritize mission travel. Accordingly, the CAM may wish to recommend to the Executive Board that the gap in the travel policies be addressed, such that official business travel by OED Assistants would be permitted. This new policy could permit OED Assistants to receive the same travel allowances as their counterparts on the Fund staff, while being subject to the same travel notification requirements as other members of OEDs. It may also be appropriate to require OED Assistants to travel in tandem with an Executive Director, Alternate ED, Senior Advisor, or Advisor, consistent with the support nature of their job.

6. This change could be effected by amending Part III-B, Section 5 of the Handbook (on Reimbursements and Allowances) by inserting the text shown in bold below:

“b. Other travel of **Advisors to Executive Directors, Staff Assistants to Executive Directors and Administrative Assistants to Executive Directors**, other than travel to Annual Meetings, home leave, and emergency travel, shall be approved by the Executive Board. Requests will state the purpose of the travel. **Requests for travel by Advisors shall indicate whether the requested travel is on behalf of the Executive Director or to the same destination as the Executive Director or other member of the office. Requests for travel by Staff Assistants to Executive Directors and Administrative Assistants to Executive Directors shall be for the purpose of providing necessary administrative support to the Executive Director, Alternate Executive Director, Senior Advisor to Executive Director, or Advisor to Executive Director while on mission, and shall therefore specify the same destination as that of other member(s) of the office.** If an Executive Director requests a meeting on an individual request, the matter will be placed on the agenda of the Committee on Executive Board Administrative Matters for review.

c. When in travel status, **Advisors to Executive Directors, Staff Assistants to Executive Directors and Administrative Assistants to Executive Directors** shall receive the same reimbursement for transportation expenses, the same per night allowance in lieu of subsistence, and the same insurance coverage as staff members. When in travel status on official business of the Fund in place of his or her Executive Director, as approved by the Executive Board, an Advisor will be entitled to reimbursement in accordance with the rules for Executive Directors and Alternates for reasonable expenses, incurred in connection with official Fund business and while acting in the place of his or her Executive Director, to entertain senior officials of the governments or central banks or relevant persons in the academic, public, or private sectors of the members that appointed, elected, or designated his or her Executive Director and relevant members of the media. Travel claims should be submitted within two weeks after completion of the travel.”

7. **Next Steps:** If sufficient support emerges in the CAM for such a policy change, the staff will draft a proposed decision (based on paragraph 6 above) for the CAM’s recommendation to the Executive Board, to be cleared by the CAM chair after informal consultation with CAM members. Once CAM approval has been obtained, the proposed recommendation could be sent to the Board for approval on a lapse-of-time basis.

⁴ See Section 5(b) of Part IIIB of the Handbook on Executive Board Matters.