Rules of Procedures of the Paul Hoffman Staff Assistance Fund

(Based on Terms of Reference agreed by CGSM at its 36th Session on 12/3/75 and the UNDP Staff Council at its 37th meeting on 13/3/75)

(Applying to Headquarters and Field Offices)

Purpose

1. The purpose of the Fund is to provide financial assistance in any event of emergency or personal misfortune which directly affects staff members of the UNDP and/or UNFPA, who are serving on a Permanent, Probationary or Fixed-Term Contract of at least one year. The assistance provided under the Fund will normally be in the form of loans but in exceptional cases consideration shall be given to providing grants. Loans made by the Fund shall be interest free.

Composition

2. The Committee of the Fund shall comprise of five members from the staff of UNDP and UNFPA Headquarters jointly nominated annually by the UNDP Staff Council and the CGSM. The Committee shall elect its own officers which should include a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. As necessary, a second Secretary may also be designated.

3. The Chairman shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Fund. In the absence of the Chairman his place shall be successively taken up by the Vice-Chairman, the Secretary and the Treasurer.

4. The field offices shall establish local committees which will have the responsibility of forwarding applications to Headquarters. These committees shall consist of one representative of the Staff Field Unit elected by the staff and one member appointed by the Resident Representative.

Meetings and Quorum

5. A majority shall be a simple majority of those present, and forming a quorum. In the event of a tie, the decision of the presiding officer shall be final.

6. The Committee will have regular meetings once a month at which matters of policy and procedures, finance and any pending applications may be discussed. The quorum for such meetings will be: The Chairman or Vice-Chairman and two other members.

7. In case of emergency, ad hoc meetings can be called to deal with individual cases. These meetings may proceed with a quorum of any three members.
Conduct of Business

8. Staff at Headquarters needing assistance should obtain application forms I and II and other relevant documentation from the Committee's Secretary. A member of the Committee, normally the Secretary, shall be required to interview each applicant located at Headquarters. Applicants located in the field will obtain the application forms from and be interviewed by the local committees.

9. The cases shall be presented to the Committee by the Secretary and the Committee shall decide on the basis of written and oral presentation. The Committee may request the Secretary to provide additional information on any case. In the absence of the Secretary, the Chairman shall designate a member to interview and present the case.

10. The local committees will interview the applicants, screen and forward the application forms I and II, the letter of the applicant and its own recommendations to the Committee at Headquarters, but will not be empowered to take a final decision. This decision will be taken at Headquarters on the basis of information provided from the field by the local committees. Communication may be exchanged by cable, to be followed as soon as possible by the necessary written information.

11. Upon being granted a loan a staff member should sign form III which authorizes the Committee to request the Office of Financial Services at Headquarters and the Resident Representatives in field offices to deduct monthly repayments from the staff member's salary.

12. At Headquarters, the Treasurer should make a request to the Office of Financial Services in form IV to have the loan repayment deducted from the salary of the staff member. In the field offices the Resident Representative should arrange for the loan repayment to be deducted from the salary of the staff member and monies collected should be IOYd to Headquarters crediting account code DP-520-20-13.

13. The Chairman of the Committee shall be responsible for preparing an annual report on the activities of the Committee and submitting it to the Staff Council six weeks before the term of office of the Staff Council expires.

14. The deliberations of the Committee and the decisions resulting therefrom shall be treated as strictly confidential.

Criteria

15. The Committee should be guided by the following criteria:

(a) assistance should not be given to pay off existing debt(s);
(b) no assistance should be granted if other assistance is available under the Staff Regulations and Rules or other available modalities including, for example, banking facilities, Credit Union facilities, and for field offices any assistance by way of advances (ARL) under paragraph 23 of Section V-E (page V-E-13) of the UNDP Administrative Field Manual;

/...
(c) assistance may be made to staff members in the event of a misfortune befalling them, such as sickness or death of an immediate member of their family, loss suffered through fire, flood, riot, or genuine emergency which results in financial obligations beyond the staff member's ability to meet;

(d) the Committee may consider applications for assistance for reasons other than those stated under (c) above if the Committee is convinced that a case merits consideration for the welfare of a staff member;

(e) the amount of the loan should be appropriately related to the monthly net salary, including allowances, of the applicant, and will normally be recoverable from the staff member's salary over a reasonable amount of time (normally twelve months) which should not exceed the current duration of a staff member's appointment. Lump sum repayments, either in full or partial may be sought;

(f) where a staff member who has been granted a loan separates before the full amount has been recovered, the balance remaining shall be deducted from any final settlement due to the staff member, at the time of separation. If insufficient funds are available to satisfy the debt, the staff member will be expected to repay the remaining balance (as provided for in form III).

Finance and Accounts

16. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the custody and proper accounting of all assets of the Fund and his duties shall include:

(a) acting as collector of monies due to the Fund and disbursing officer in respect of loans and grants;

(b) organizing the collection of voluntary contributions;

(c) submitting a receipt and payments account and status report on loans to the Committee monthly;

(d) submitting year-end financial statements to the Committee.

17. Monies belonging to the Fund shall be kept at a bank approved by the Committee and withdrawals shall normally be made under the joint signatures of the Chairman and the Treasurer. In the event of the absence of the Chairman and/or the Treasurer, withdrawals may be made under the joint signatures of any two members of the Committee.

18. Upon the recommendation of the Treasurer, the Committee may decide to place in fixed deposits, monies which may not be immediately required.

19. The year-end accounts of the Fund shall be audited by the Auditing Committee of the UNDP Staff Association.
1. The Paul Hoffman Staff Assistance Fund was set up in 1975, in honour of Paul Hoffman, the first Administrator of UNDP. The purpose of the Fund is to provide financial assistance to staff members in situations of emergency or personal misfortune which directly affect UNDP/UNFPA staff members.

2. Assistance provided under the Fund is normally in the form of interest-free loans, but in exceptional cases, consideration is given to providing grants. The Fund is financed in part from contributions of UNDP and its Staff Council, as well as from the self-financed aspect of the Fund, through repayments of loans.

3. The Fund is managed by a Committee which screens applications for loans. The members of the committee are nominated by the Staff Council and Management. Applications from staff in country offices are screened by local committees and forwarded to the Committee at Headquarters for final decision. Staff members with permanent appointments or fixed-term appointments of at least one year are eligible.

4. The criteria for granting financial assistance are as follows:
   - Assistance should not be given to pay off existing debt(s);
   - No assistance should be granted if other assistance is available under the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules or other modalities, including for example banking facilities, credit union facilities, and for country offices, any assistance by way of advances (ARs) which may be available;
   - Assistance may be made to individual staff members or groups of staff members in the event of a misfortune, such as sickness or death of the immediate member of their family, loss suffered through fire, flood, riot, or other genuine emergency which results in financial obligation beyond the staff member’s ability to meet the obligation; and
   - The committee may consider applications for assistance for reasons other than those stated above if the committee is considered that a case merits consideration for the welfare of the staff member.

5. All requests for financial assistance will be treated in a confidential manner.
6. The amount of a loan should be appropriately correlated to the monthly net salary, including allowances, of the applicant. Once a loan has been granted to a staff member, repayments are recovered by means of payroll deductions from the staff member's salary over a reasonable amount of time (normally twelve months) which should not exceed the current duration of a staff member's appointment. In case a staff member who has been granted a loan separates before the full amount has been recovered, the balance remaining will be deducted from any final settlement due to the staff member, at the time of separation. If insufficient funds are available to satisfy the debt, the staff members will be expected to prepay the remaining balance.

7. Persons interested in applying for assistance from the Fund should apply to the Paul Hoffman Staff Assistance Fund, UNDP, 1 UN Plaza, New York, New York 10017 (see Appendix 31.0 for the form), through their respective offices.
To: Mr. ElBallah Hagena, Chairman  
UNDP/UNFPA Staff Council

From: Gary Davis, Chairman  
Paul Hoffman Staff Assist. Fund

Subject: Membership of Paul Hoffman Assistance Fund Committee

Appointments to, and the renewal of the membership of the Committee of the Paul Hoffman Staff Assistance Fund has become somewhat irregular of late. I am accordingly writing you now at year end to bring you up to date on the status of the Committee, and to alert you to the need for certain actions by the Staff Council.

Attached is the latest circular regarding the Committee, as well as a copy of its "Rules and Procedures" as agreed by the CGSM in March 1975 which continue in force. From these two items you will see that it is intended that the Committee members are to be jointly nominated by the Staff Council and the CGSM to serve annually. The period of service has traditionally been from January 1 to December 31 each year.

In my own experience as a member in 1987 and 1988, and now as Chairman in 1989, the annual renewal and/or replacement of members has fallen aside. Rather, our memberships have simply continued de facto, and in 1989 the announcement of the Committee's membership was not even sent out in conjunction with the usual announcement of various boards and committees approved by the CGSM. The attached circular was in fact only issued after our urging, and came as you can see after more than half the year had passed. I am sure that under your leadership of the Council, and working together, we can get back to a more orderly handling of appointments/renewals to the PHSASF Committee, as part of the normal annual consultations in the CGSM on the membership of various panels and committees.

In anticipation of that process, allow me to provide a bit more detail.

First, of the ten people named in the attached circular, Hazel Scott transferred overseas sometime in August, and is therefore no longer available to participate on the Committee.
While the "Rules of Procedures" provide for five members of the Committee, the actual membership has de facto risen to nine (not counting Hazel Scott). Although irregular as far as the 1975 rules are concerned, this larger membership is desirable since even with nine members we continue to have difficulty from time to time raising the quorum necessary to do our business. A part of that problem stems from the fact that four out of nine of the present members work in the Daily News Building, and the meetings are called, by definition, at short notice since we are usually dealing with emergency situations. Thus, I would recommend that the Staff Council and the CGSM agree to legitimize the status quo, and amend the 1975 "Rules" to expand our membership to either 9 or 10.

Another problem we are experiencing on the Committee which you may wish to keep in mind in considering nominations for its 1990 membership is our crying need for someone, stationed in the DC-1 building, who has the skills and hopefully the time and goodwill to serve as our Treasurer. Hazel Scott had been doing so up until her transfer last summer (in the course of which she took our books with her, presumably to finish work on them). Since then, Mr. Trevor Lessey who works for UNFPA kindly agreed to serve as Treasurer, but the offer has proven academic, since we still have not received the books back from Hazel Scott despite requests by cable and by phone. In any event, once we are able to straighten out the problem of the lack of books, it will nevertheless prove difficult for Trevor to function as Treasurer, since the bank accounts are here, and when operating correctly, each check must be signed by two officers of the PHSAF—which could entail a lot of running back and forth between here and the Daily News Building, or a lot of delay in getting people their checks. I hope and trust that this problem can be solved in the selection our 1990 membership, allowing us to get the finances and accounting of the PHSAF back on a satisfactory footing.

Thank you for your co-operation - I look forward to discussing these matters with you in due course.