

Instructions from UN-GLOBE on how to get your partner recognized (29 August 2014)

As you know, on 26 June 2014, the Secretary-General issued a revised policy on personal status (ST/SGB/2004/13/Rev.1). This revised policy was a huge step forward for us, as our legal same-sex unions will now be recognized.

Since the Secretary-General's decision, quite a number of UN organizations have also revised their policies so that it falls in line with the Secretariat's, meaning that recognition of legal unions will no longer be determined by the staff member's country of nationality but on the location where the legal union was officiated. This is the so-called Jurisdiction approach. (Other UN organizations such as IFAD, UNAIDS, UNESCO, and WFP adopted such a policy even before the UN Secretariat did.)

UN organizations who now have the Jurisdiction approach are: ICAO, PAHO, UNODC, UNFCCC, UNICEF, UNHCR, and UNMICT.

You can find the actual policies for these organizations, or message announcing the policies, on our website at: <http://www.unglobe.org/resources/>

[UN-GLOBE is currently pushing the remaining organizations of the UN system to change their policies as well.]

This is what we ask you to do:

— If you are already in a same-sex marriage or domestic partnership recognized by your own country of nationality, and classified as *married*, or *the equivalent of married*:

You do not need to do anything

— If you are already in a same-sex marriage or domestic partnership unrecognized by your own country of nationality:

Write to your human resources department to request a change in personal status

— If you are not already in a same-sex marriage or domestic partnership and have been seriously thinking about it:

Consider taking this step without delay, so that your future legal partner will be eligible for benefits (see non-exhaustive list of benefits below)

Policies can be revised or abolished at any time and it is important to take advantage of them while they are still in place.

We have drafted for you a form letter (attached below) you can send to the relevant human resources office in your organization asking for recognition for your legal partner.

Please fill in your details and send.

Once you have your same-sex union recognized, we will take you through the next process: asking the pension fund to recognize your same-sex partner as well.

Please remember that recognition of your partner by your employer does NOT mean the pension fund will recognize him or her. The pension fund, the UNJSPF, operates under its own rules and procedures. The UNJSPF still bases its decision on the staff member's country of nationality, not on the locality where the union was officiated.

We will also help you write to the UNSJPF to ask for recognition for your legal partner by providing you a form letter you can use. This will be sent next week.

For now, please have your legal same-sex union recognized by your employer.

For any questions, write to us at [ohrm_globe @un.org](mailto:ohrm_globe@un.org)

WHY IT MATTERS:

Non-exhaustive list of benefits from having your partner recognized by your organization:

Malicious acts insurance

Automatically goes to spouse or in absence thereof to the designated beneficiary.

Dependency allowance

If you are a New York based G or, a P or Higher, and your spouse earns less than a UNHQ G2.

If you are a non-New York based GS then the threshold is locally established (usually it is equivalent to local wages for a G2).

For GS staff (at UNHQ) the allowance is a flat rate per annum.

The dependence allowance for P staff varies.

Rental subsidy for P staff

Family size is used in calculating eligibility.

Garage administration

Sharing of garage parking.

ID card for members of the immediate family

Useful for difficulties with the host government.

“Courtesy” grounds pass

Difficult to obtain — requires justification, ie. staff member works late and spouse collects them from the office.

Home leave for P staff

Travel of spouse paid to staff member's place of home leave.

Family visit

Non-family duty stations only — Travel paid for staff to visit spouse or for spouse to visit staff member. Usually on a one year cycle in *addition* to home leave.

Inclusion in evacuation plans

Family certificate

For UN paid travel of spouses not accompanied by staff member only in cases where this document can reasonably be expected to assist in ease of travel, ie. staff member has already been installed in Addis Ababa and spouse follows one month later.

Name of spouse in staff members Laissez-Passer

Entitled for any official UN travel (this includes home leave — if you are entitled to home leave you are entitled to an LP and to have your spouse listed on it!)

Installation in duty station

Shipping allowance increased with spouse installation.

Tax and duty free entry for personal effects upon installation.

Repatriation grant

Medical Insurance

FORM LETTER:

TO: **[HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE]**

DATE: **[DATE]**

A:

REFER:

THROUGH:

S/C DE:

FROM: **[MY NAME, MY TITLE, DEPT/OFFICE/DIVISION]**

DE:

SUBJECT: **Change of personal status category**

OBJET:

Dear **[HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER]**,

Pursuant to a recent change in [NAME OF YOUR UN ORGANIZATION] 's personal status policy, I would like to notify you of a change in my personal status. Specifically, I am hereby officially requesting that for benefits and other purposes, [MY PARTNER'S NAME] be considered my partner by [NAME OF YOUR UN ORGANIZATION]. I understand that I will be responsible for enrolling [MY PARTNER'S NAME] in any staff insurance plans.

I can provide any documentary proof needed.

Thank you and best regards,

[MY NAME, MY TITLE, DEPT/OFFICE/DIVISION]

[MY EXTENTION]

[MY ROOM NUMBER]

[MY E-MAIL]