

Job Description (JPO)

Associate Legal Officer (Human Rights)

Note: this post is opened in the context of the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) scheme sponsored by the Government of the Netherlands and is addressed exclusively to **eligible developing countries nationals** (see for the list of eligible developing countries and criteria the website of the Dutch Ministry:

http://www.minbuza.nl/en/Key_Topics/Development_Cooperation/Associate_Experts_Programme

I. GENERAL INFORMATION:

Title of the post: Associate Legal Officer (Human Rights) JPO

Sector: Protection

Location: Human Rights Liaison Unit within the Division of International Protection (DIP) in Geneva.

Grade: P1 step I or P2 step I the first year, depending on the level of education and experience

Duration of the assignment: Initially one year with the possibility to extend up to 3 years

II. SUPERVISION:

Title and name of Supervisor: Senior Liaison Officer (Human Rights), Ms. Simone Schwartz-Delgado

Content and methodology of the supervision: The Associate Legal Officer (Human Rights) will work in close coordination with, and under the supervision of the Senior Liaison Officer (Human Rights) (hereafter SLO) who will be responsible for training and guiding the JPO on the mandate and work of UNHCR and the relevance of the human rights instruments, standards and mechanisms for virtually all aspects of the Office's work. This 'training element' will be conducted both in the form of in-depth briefings, and, to an even larger extent, through on-the-job training. The SLO will be responsible for reviewing draft documents/positions etc. prepared by the JPO and providing him/her with detailed feedback in the form of constructive comments aimed at helping the JPO to constantly improve his/her performance. The SLO and JPO will, as a team, formulate the overall strategies and objectives for the human rights liaison function within the Division of International Protection.

III. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Organizational Context:

The Human Rights Liaison Unit is part of the Policy and Law Pillar ("Pillar I") of the Division of International Protection (DIP). The Unit aims at promoting the effective use of international human rights law and UN human rights mechanisms to strengthen the protection of persons of concern to UNHCR.

The human rights liaison function, performed by a team composed of a Senior Liaison Officer (Human Rights) and the Associate Legal Officer (Human Rights), fulfills the Unit's

responsibilities for promoting the integration of human rights standards into all areas of UNHCR's work and the effective use of the UN and regional human rights mechanisms as protection tools, in line with UNHCR's responsibilities in this regard as a member of the United Nations.

The goal of the Human Rights Liaison Unit is three-fold: firstly to contribute to the development of international human rights law and to the strengthening of the refugee legal framework by including issues related to refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, stateless persons and returnees into legal instruments, policy documents, recommendations and other outcome documents of the Human Rights Council, the Human Rights Treaty Monitoring Bodies and the UN Special Procedures. Secondly, to contribute to the mainstreaming of human rights into all areas of UNHCR's work and promote the effective use of human rights law, procedures and standards for advocacy and as complementary protection tools in the respective UNHCR operations. Thirdly, to function as the liaison between UNHCR, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the human rights bodies and institutions to strengthen human rights approaches and ensure continuous exchange of relevant information.

The Human Rights Liaison Unit acts as focal point on human rights issues within UNHCR and is responsible for keeping colleagues abreast of normative and institutional developments of relevance within the field of human rights. In close coordination with country offices, the Human Rights Liaison Unit prepares submissions to the human rights mechanisms and represents UNHCR in the different human rights fora. The Unit provides legal advice and contributes to capacity-building to colleagues on the usage of human rights mechanisms for the protection of persons of concern to UNHCR. The team also reviews draft strategies, policy papers, manuals/tools/handbooks etc. prepared by the General Legal Advice Section and by other units within DIP and DOS and the Regional Bureaux to ensure that relevant human rights standards are effectively integrated into these.

2. Specific functions to be performed by the Associate Legal Officer (Human Rights):

1. Promote the integration of issues and persons of concern to UNHCR into the work of the seven (7) UN Treaty Bodies (CCPR, CESCR, CAT, CEDAW, CRC, CERD, CMW), which are responsible for monitoring State parties' compliance with their treaty obligations and for providing authoritative interpretations of the respective treaty norms. The Associate Legal Officer (Human Rights) is specifically responsible for keeping UNHCR's Regional Bureaux and Field offices informed of upcoming treaty body sessions during which countries under the offices' responsibility will be considered, and for inviting the respective Bureau/country office to prepare contributions; reviewing, editing and finalizing draft documents prepared by the Bureaux/Field offices covering countries up for examination by the treaty monitoring bodies; together with the team of interns, cover the treaty body sessions and provide timely feedback to Bureaux and Field colleagues on discussions and conclusions (incl. concluding observations) of relevance to UNHCR; encouraging UNHCR colleagues to use concluding observations and recommendations issued by the treaty bodies as protection advocacy and lobbying tools by highlighting the direct relevance of these to UNHCR's work (i.e. this task encompasses a training/awareness raising element). The Associate Legal Officer is

also contributing to the elaboration and analysis of General Comments and General Recommendations issued by human rights treaty monitoring bodies.

2. Follow the Human Rights Council regular and special sessions, as well as the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR); together with the intern team, cover plenary sessions and parallel/side meetings of relevance to UNHCR and finalize the internal reporting from these for dissemination among UNHCR staff. In close coordination with the SLO, follow negotiations on draft resolutions and decisions and lobby and support States to incorporate issues and persons of concern to UNHCR into relevant resolutions. Support the integration of humanitarian issues and persons of concern to UNHCR into the UPR mechanism by encouraging the Regional Bureaux and Field Offices covering countries up for review to prepare information for submission to the OHCHR for inclusion in its Compilation Reports: review, edit and finalize such UNHCR's contributions to the OHCHR Compilation Report, monitor the UPR sessions and provide UNHCR staff in the Regional Bureaux and Field Offices with timely feedback, especially in regard to conclusions and recommendations, which are of direct relevance to the work of UNHCR.
3. Promote the integration of issues and persons of concern to UNHCR into the work of the Special Procedures by keeping the Regional Bureaux and Field Offices informed of upcoming country visits by mandate holders and by reviewing and finalizing UNHCR briefing notes prior to such missions. The Associate Legal Officer also contributes to the liaison with Special Rapporteurs and Independent Experts in the context of studies in the field of human rights, training sessions and follow-up activities to missions by Special Procedures mandate holders. Together with the SLO, the Associate Legal Officer (Human Rights) is responsible for analyzing thematic and country-specific reports (including recommendations contained in these) published by Special Procedures mandate holders, in order to assess their relevance as protection advocacy/lobbying tools for UNHCR, and for sharing the conclusions of this analysis with UNHCR staff.
4. Assist in the induction and training of new interns and contribute to the ongoing coordination and supervision of the intern team.
5. Distribute requests and coordinate responses from/to OHCHR regarding various UN resolutions and reports.
6. Assist the SLO in his/her review of draft policy documents prepared by GLAS, other DIP sections, as well as by the Regional Bureaux to ensure that human rights standards (and mechanisms) are effectively integrated and mainstreamed into these policies and guidelines; upon request, provide colleagues in GLAS and the Regional Legal Advisers with legal advice concerning the scope and content of particular human rights standards.
7. Further develop UNHCR's cooperation with human rights NGOs.
8. Actively contribute to initiatives aimed at combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and follow-up on relevant issues related to

minorities and indigenous peoples, as well as serve as a back-up focal point to the SLO for the process of the mainstreaming of human rights within the UNDG.

9. Conduct human rights training and capacity-building activities for UNHCR staff and other interlocutors on the interface between human rights and refugee law/protection, as well as the relevance of the human rights mechanisms to UNHCR's work.

10. Undertake other duties as required.

IV. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE:

Qualifications: Master degree in law with substantive knowledge of international human rights and/or refugee law.

Experience: 3 years of work experience with a BA/LLB or preferably 2 years with a MA/LLM, including in the area of human rights and/or refugee protection.

Required skills and competencies:

- Substantive knowledge of the legal and institutional human rights framework;
- Excellent legal analysis and drafting skills;
- Very good knowledge of international refugee law is desirable;
- Excellent team-working and diplomatic skills, required to appropriately represent UNHCR before representatives of the human rights mechanisms;
- Ability to clearly and convincingly communicate UNHCR positions before the Office's interlocutors;
- Training skills and/or experience in facilitation of learning desirable.
- Ability to quickly absorb large quantities of written and orally presented human rights-related information (legal, policy, political) and to analyze the relevance of it to UNHCR, and share information on relevant developments and outcomes in a clear manner with UNHCR staff, thereby promoting the increased use of the human rights instruments and mechanisms as protection tools for persons of concern to UNHCR.

Training components and learning elements:

Training components: briefing/training sessions and on-the job training

Learning elements:

- substantive human rights and refugee law;
- the mandate and work of UNHCR in different operations around the world;
- the role of human rights in the UN system, in particular following the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, and the responsibilities of UN agencies to mainstream human rights into all areas of their work;
- the interface and synergies between human rights and refugee law and the role of human rights in humanitarian action;

- knowledge of the functioning of the UN human rights machinery and regional mechanisms;
- legal analysis;
- drafting legal documents, policy and position papers;
- providing legal advice;
- promoting the use of human rights standards and mechanisms in UNHCR's work, e.g. through training, conducting workshops/seminars, in daily oral and written communication with UNHCR staff;
- diplomatic skills, basic management skills, team working, representing UNHCR.

HOW TO APPLY:

<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c49a.html>

Deadline for applications: **25 July 2010**, close of business, Geneva time.