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What is your educational background and nationality, what made you apply to the JPO program and what is your motivation to work with your UN agency?

I hold a bachelor's degree in law, a master's in public administration and policy studies, and postgraduate studies in Humanitarian Operations. This academic foundation has given me solid grounding in governance, policy analysis, and the operational aspects of development and humanitarian work.

I am Ethiopian and have worked with several international NGOs across humanitarian and development contexts. These experiences exposed me to program implementation in complex environments and strengthened my commitment to contributing to global development efforts.

Initially I was not aware of the JPO opportunity, until I was introduced by my former supervisor who noticed my talent and encouraged me to apply. Then, I applied to the JPO Program at UNDP because it offered meaningful international exposure, structured professional development, and the opportunity to contribute directly to UNDP's mandate. It aligned with my long-term goal of engaging in international development at a global level.

My motivation to work with UNDP stems from its role as a leading development actor, supporting governance, resilience, and sustainable development worldwide. I was also inspired by the context and program's focus on supporting Yemen rule of law and access to justice engagement along with systemic solutions, partnerships, and impact at the country level.

How did you prepare for CV writing, motivation letter and interview?

I prepared for the CV, motivation letter, and interview by tailoring all my materials to clearly align my background with the UNDP's mandate, the job requirements, and the expected results of the role. I focused on highlighting how my previous experiences, competencies, and career aspirations fit with the position and the program's outcomes and priorities.

For the motivation letter, I ensured my narrative was coherent and demonstrated both my professional motivation and the value I could bring. I emphasized the link between my experience, my interest in international development, and my long-term goals.

During the interview, I used the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to structure my responses. This helped me provide clear, concrete, and demonstrable examples that showed how I have applied my skills and handled real situations. I also prepared by reviewing the key competencies required for the role and reflecting on experiences that best illustrated them.

[What are the main activities and tasks you are working on, what SDG's are you helping to implement and what is a day at the office/in the field like?](#)

Throughout my various roles, I have worked on a range of development and humanitarian programs with a strong focus on policy advice, coordination, donor relations, and program and partnership management. At the **UNDP Resilience Hub for Africa**, I support the development of integrated solutions on human mobility, particularly addressing displacement, migration, and cross-border vulnerabilities through resilience-building, governance support, and socioeconomic recovery initiatives. My work involves developing and socializing regional development solutions framework for Sub-Saharan Africa, facilitating regional coordination, generating policy insights, supporting knowledge products, and strengthening partnerships with development partners.

Previously, during my tenure with UNDP Yemen, I worked on programs targeting climate- and conflict-affected populations. This included facilitating and coordinating technical working groups, supporting livelihood recovery, local governance strengthening, climate adaptation initiatives, and community-based resilience in crisis-affected areas.

Across these roles, I directly contribute to several **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, including **SDG 1 – No Poverty; SDG 13 – Climate Action; SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals**; as well as SDGs related to resilience, livelihoods, reduced inequalities, and sustainable communities.

A typical day involves coordinating with HQ, regional or country offices, engaging with partners and donors, contributing to resources mobilization, program design and supporting analytical or policy-related tasks. Also, attending various coordination platforms both virtually and in-person, socializing and cultivating partnerships for impact are important aspects of my daily schedules. My work blends programmatic support with policy engagement, aimed at strengthening resilience and improving outcomes for communities affected by climate shocks, conflict, and mobility-related challenges.

[What is the biggest motivator for you when it comes to your work and what is the most challenging project that you have worked on/are working on?](#)

The biggest motivator in my work is the opportunity to continuously learn and the ability to contribute to solutions that improve the lives and resilience of people affected by conflict, climate shocks, and structural vulnerabilities. Working in development and humanitarian settings allows me to see how well-designed

programs can restore stability, expand opportunities, and strengthen institutions, impact that continues to inspire and push me to grow professionally.

In terms of challenging assignments, the most difficult context I worked in was **Yemen**. The country has endured more than a decade of protracted conflict, which has severely weakened institutions, disrupted basic services, and driven widespread humanitarian needs. Yemen is also one of the world's most climate-vulnerable and water-scarce countries, with erratic rainfall, extreme weather events, and rapidly depleting groundwater worsening food insecurity, livelihoods, and community resilience. These overlapping pressures make program delivery extremely complex and often limit the scale of impact despite significant effort and investment.

In my current role with the **UNDP Resilience Hub for Africa**, the biggest challenge is the **mismatch between the scale of needs across the continent and the resources available**. Many countries face intersecting crises-climate change, fragility, conflict, food insecurity, and economic shocks that are regressing progress on multiple SDGs.

Despite these constraints, the motivation to keep contributing stems from the belief that effective policies, strong partnerships, and resilient programming can help communities navigate these pressures and support their systems to strive for stability, dignity, and opportunity.

[What has been the most rewarding experience to date for you at your duty station? \(work and/or non-work related\)](#)

One of the most rewarding aspects of my duty station experience has been the opportunity to work alongside professionals from truly diverse cultural and professional backgrounds. Collaborating with colleagues from different regions and disciplines has broadened my perspective, strengthened my adaptability, and enriched both my personal and professional growth.

Equally meaningful has been the friendships and connections I've built with people from all corners of the world. These relationships have shaped my understanding of different cultures, values, and lived experiences, and they continue to inspire me every day.

I have also been fortunate to travel to places I would never have imagined visiting, experiences that have allowed me to see contexts firsthand and better understand the realities of the communities we work with. Engaging directly with people affected by crisis or development challenges has deepened my appreciation of global issues beyond what any report or briefing could offer.

Professionally, one of the most rewarding realizations has been witnessing the power of multilateralism in action. Seeing how coordinated efforts across agencies, governments, and partners can contribute to development, peacebuilding, and resilience has reinforced my commitment to international development and the UN's mission. It has shown me not only the scale of global challenges but also the profound impact that collective action can achieve, also importantly, what resilience truly means.



If the case, what is your experience with relocation to another duty station?

After completing two years with UNDP Yemen, I had the opportunity to relocate for my third year under the program to the UNDP Resilience Hub for Africa, based in Nairobi, Kenya. The transition has been rewarding, enriching, and energizing. Relocating has allowed me to broaden my professional network and strengthen my ability to work effectively in a different regional context. I am maximizing the learning opportunities that come with being part of a regional hub, deepening my exposure to diverse development challenges across the continent, and expanding my overall knowledge base. It has truly been a privilege to experience the program from both a country office and a regional perspective.

On a personal level, I am very much enjoying Nairobi and Kenya, the culture, vibrancy, natural beauty, and the welcoming environment have all contributed to making this relocation a fulfilling experience. The move has not only enhanced my professional growth but also enriched my life outside of work.

What set of skills have you developed most throughout your assignment?

Throughout my assignment, I have significantly strengthened a diverse set of skills, particularly **impactful communication**, **emotional intelligence**, and **diplomacy** as a result of regular engagement with a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including donors, regional bodies, government counterparts, and other development partners.

I am more able to communicate complex information clearly and strategically by tailoring messages to diverse and multicultural audiences and engaging effectively through briefs, presentations, and partner coordination. Working in high-pressure and challenging contexts like Yemen has also deepened my emotional intelligence, helping me listen actively, manage difficult conversations, and navigate different perspectives with empathy and cultural awareness. In addition, I have honed my diplomacy and stakeholder-management skills by engaging donors, government officials, and partners with tact. Together, these skills have enhanced my effectiveness in multilateral environments and strengthened my confidence in representing my organization and supporting impactful programming.

Have you been in touch with other JPOs and/or with the Dutch representation/embassy at your duty station? Did you attend the online information meetings with the Dutch National Coordinator for International Positions (NCIF). What are your experiences?

I have been in regular contact with other JPOs as well as colleagues from the Dutch representation/embassy at my duty station. I make a conscious effort to maintain these connections both on a personal and professional level. These interactions have been valuable for exchanging experiences, discussing career development, and navigating the dynamics of working in an international environment. Engaging with fellow JPOs has also created a sense of community, friendship and mutual support, which I deeply appreciate.

I also attended an NCIF online information meeting last year, and I found it extremely helpful and informative. The session provided clarity on career pathways, available support mechanisms, and practical guidance on navigating the JPO program and future international opportunities. It was reassuring to see the level of engagement from the Dutch National Coordinator for International Positions, and the insights shared during the session helped me better understand how to strategically plan my next steps.

The interactions with JPO colleagues, the embassy team, and the NCIF have contributed positively to my experience in the program. They have reinforced the importance of building networks, staying informed, and taking full advantage of the supportive ecosystem available to JPOs.

How do you feel your JPO assignment will influence your career choices/opportunities within the UN?

My JPO assignment will have a strong and positive influence on my future career choices and opportunities within the UN. Over the course of this experience, I have gained substantial exposure to the UN system's structures, mandates, and operational modalities, which has given me a much clearer understanding of how multilateral organizations function and how impact is achieved at scale.

Through my work, I have developed solid technical expertise in development and peacebuilding programming, policy support, coordination, and partnerships. I have also gained firsthand professional insight into the mandates and comparative advantages of various UN agencies, which has helped me better understand where my skills and interests align within the wider UN family.

The assignment has reinforced my commitment to a long-term career in international development, and it has equipped me with the competencies, networks, and practical experience needed to pursue future positions within the UN. The JPO program has been instrumental in shaping my career trajectory and strengthening my readiness for more advanced roles in the multilateral system.

What piece of advice would you give to those who are considering applying to the JPO Programme? What are your lessons learned?

The JPO Program has been an amazing journey for me, and my strongest advice to those considering applying is: **go for it**. It is truly a privilege for anyone who aspires to work in a multicultural environment, contribute to the global development or humanitarian agenda, and gain firsthand experience in what multilateralism really means.

One of my biggest lessons learned is the importance of staying open - open to learning, to new contexts, to diverse perspectives, and to continuous personal and professional growth. The program offers immense opportunities to develop both technical expertise and soft skills such as diplomacy, communication, and emotional intelligence. Make the most of these experiences, because they shape you in ways that no classroom or training can.

Another key lesson is the value of building relationships. The UN is a people-centered system, and the connections you make with colleagues, partners, fellow JPOs, and mentors will support you throughout your career. Engage actively, ask questions, and learn from those around you.

Finally, be prepared to stretch yourself. Working in complex environments means facing challenges, adapting quickly, and finding solutions with limited information or resources. These moments, while sometimes demanding, are also the most transformative. They help you understand the realities of global development and strengthen your ability to deliver meaningful impact.

The experience has broadened my worldview and given me a deeper appreciation of international cooperation, diversity, and multilateral action. For anyone passionate about contributing to global change while growing both personally and professionally, it is a remarkable and rewarding opportunity.