**Parental Leave**

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this parental leave policy is to establish parental leave in order to ensure that staff members who become a parent of a child while in UNDP’s service have sufficient time to spend with their families, bond with their child, and fulfil their parental responsibilities, as well as to foster gender parity and equal career development.

**Applicability And Effective Date**

1. This parental leave policy applies to all UNDP staff members holding a temporary, fixed-term, or permanent appointment who become a parent to a child while in service with UNDP. This parental leave policy supersedes UNDP’s policies on maternity, paternity and adoption leave for the administration of parental leave in respect of a child born or adopted on or after 1 January 2023 provided that the staff member was in service at the time of the birth or adoption. For a staff member with a child born or adopted on 31 December 2022 or earlier, UNDP’s policies on maternity, paternity, and adoption leave will continue to apply until completion of the respective leave entitlement contained in those policies.

**Terms And Conditions of Parental Leave**

**Conditions applicable to birth parents**

1. Birth parents will be granted a period of paid parental leave of 26 weeks. This consists of a two-week period of leave for pre-natal protection of the birth parent prior to the anticipated delivery date, an eight-week period of post-natal protection, and an additional 16-week period of parental leave for the purposes of parental bonding.
2. Staff members will commence pre-natal parental leave two weeks prior to the anticipated date of birth, which shall count towards the total period of paid parental leave.
3. Staff members may request to commence the pre-natal period of parental leave up to six weeks prior to the anticipated date of birth in which case the absence from work will be charged to the total period of 26 weeks of paid parental leave.
4. Staff members may request to work part-time at 50 percent for up to four weeks prior to the two-week pre-natal period, in which case the absence from work will be charged to the total period of paid parental leave.
5. If the staff member’s functions allow it, the staff member may request to work remotely up to four weeks prior to the two-week pre-natal period.
6. For birth parents, parental leave shall be used for any pregnancy-related medical conditions requiring leave within six weeks of the anticipated date of birth (in which case the absence from work will be charged to the total period of paid parental leave).
7. On the basis of the birth certificate, parental leave will be equivalent to the difference between 26 weeks and the period of pre-natal leave.
8. The first eight weeks of the post-natal period must be taken continuously beginning on the date of birth of the child. Thereafter the remaining period of parental leave may be taken within 12 months following the child’s date of birth, either continuously or in four separate periods of equal or of different duration of at least one week at a time up to the maximum entitlement of 26 weeks.
9. If a staff member is unable to return to duty because of ill health after fully exhausting the parental leave entitlement, the staff member may claim their unused uncertified sick leave entitlement or present a medical certificate, so the absence is chargeable to certified sick leave.
10. In the interest of duty of care and health and safety, for staff members serving in the field in non-family duty stations or those serving in category D and E duty stations that have an absence of adequate medical facilities which require the birth parent to travel by flight outside the duty station to give birth, the staff member should be permitted to leave the duty station six weeks prior to the commencement of the two-week pre-natal period. This six-week period will not be deducted from the parental leave period. Staff members should be requested to telecommute during this six-week period, or if the staff member’s functions do not enable telecommuting, then the relevant period will be chargeable to special leave with full pay (SLWFP).
11. In the unfortunate event that the child dies shortly before the anticipated delivery date, or during or shortly after birth, the birth parent is entitled to take a continuous period of parental leave of up to 16 weeks.

**Conditions applicable to non-birth parents**

1. All parents who are not birth parents are considered non-birth parents for the purposes of this policy.
2. A paid parental leave of 16 weeks will be granted to non-birth parents for the purposes of parental bonding, provided that the child is recognized as a dependent child of the staff member, or the spouse of the staff member, by UNDP or another UN common system organization. In the case of adoption, the child must be under the age of 18 years at the time of adoption for the staff member to be eligible.
3. Non-birth parents may take parental leave within 12 months following the child’s birth date or adoption either continuously or in four separate periods of equal or of different duration of at least one week at a time up to the maximum entitlement of 16 weeks.
4. The 16 weeks of parental leave entitlement of a non-birth parent may be used only once during each twelve-month period.

**Conditions applicable to all parents**

1. Where both parents are UNDP staff members, they will each get to utilize their own entitlement to parental leave.
2. The period of paid parental leave is not increased if the parent gives birth to more than one child, or if more than one child is adopted at the same time.
3. Sick leave is not granted to a staff member on paid parental leave. Parental leave is based on calendar weeks so any official holidays falling within periods of parental leave will not be deducted from the overall parental leave entitlement.
4. A staff member accrues service credit for all entitlements during parental leave, except when a termination of appointment is temporarily suspended or an appointment is extended, solely for the purpose of enabling a staff member to utilize their parental leave entitlement.
5. If a decision is made to terminate a staff member’s fixed-term or permanent appointment, or not to offer an extension of a staff member’s fixed-term appointment, and the staff member is on paid parental leave or is eligible to commence paid parental leave on or before the date of separation, the separation from service will be temporarily suspended for the full duration of the paid parental leave entitlement, to be utilized in one period and on a full-time basis. The period of the parental leave entitlement will be 26 weeks for birth parents and 16 weeks for non-birth parents, or the remaining period until the completion of 12 months following the child’s date of birth or adoption, whichever is shorter. This entitlement does not apply when the staff member is dismissed or separated for misconduct, for abandonment of post, for facts anterior to appointment, or when the staff member reaches the mandatory age of separation.
6. When a fixed-term appointment is extended solely to enable a staff member to utilize the paid parental leave entitlement, this extension shall not give rise to any further entitlement to salary increment, annual leave, sick leave or home leave, but credit towards repatriation grant may continue to accrue if the staff member has not returned to the recognized home country. In the event of the staff member’s death during the period of the extension, the period prior to the staff member’s death shall be taken into account in the determination of the death benefit.
7. If a decision is made to terminate a staff member’s temporary appointment, or not to offer an extension of the temporary appointment, and the staff member will be eligible to commence paid parental leave on or before the date of separation, the staff member will be paid a lump sum equivalent to the salary and entitlements for the balance of the period of the unused portion of the entitlement.
8. Special leave without pay (SLWOP) may be granted as unpaid parental leave to an eligible staff member on a fixed-term or permanent appointment, who is the parent of a newly born or adopted child. In such cases the staff member will not be required to exhaust accrued annual leave before commencement of the SLWOP. Staff members on temporary appointments are not eligible to unpaid parental leave.

**Request Procedure**

1. Staff members shall submit requests for parental leave in UNDP’s employee self-service platform as soon as possible to be processed by UNDP’s Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC) in anticipation of the birth or adoption of a child, together with the required supporting documentation.
2. If the request is submitted after the birth or adoption of the child, it must be accompanied by a birth certificate or an adoption decree. If it is submitted prior to the birth or adoption of the child, it must be accompanied by a certificate from a licensed medical practitioner or midwife indicating the expected date of delivery, or evidence that adoption proceedings have started, and it must subsequently be supplemented by a birth certificate or an adoption decree.
3. In cases of customary or de facto adoption, the staff member is required to submit a statement from the appropriate national authorities that legal adoption is not possible because there is no statutory provision for adoption or prescribed court procedure for official recognition of customary or de facto adoption. Additionally, the staff member will be required to certify by affidavit or other appropriate formal statement that the child will be residing with the staff member, and that the staff member will assume the duties and obligations of the child’s parent. Once the child has arrived in the staff member’s home, the staff member shall also submit satisfactory evidence that the child resides with the staff member and that a parental relationship has been established.
4. In the case of birth parents who are required to leave their field duty station by a flight prior to the pre-delivery period and who are claiming SLWFP instead of telecommuting, they will need to request SLWFP in accordance with UNDP’s policy on Special Leave and provide proof of travel out of the duty station such as boarding passes.
5. Requests for SLWOP as unpaid parental leave will need to be requested in accordance with UNDP’s policy on Special Leave.
6. Any staff member who will be utilizing Flexible Working Arrangements such as part-time work, teleworking, and telecommuting, will need to submit a request in accordance with UNDP’s policy on FWAs.