

Human resources management

Statement by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to the Fifth Committee

*(ACABQ report; A/66/511: Secretary-General's reports; A/66/347,
A/66/135, A/66/98 & A/66/319)*

Mr. Chairman,

The Advisory Committee considered four reports submitted by the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/66/347); the practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and possible criminal behaviour (A/66/135); personal conflict of interest (A/66/98); and the activities of the Ethics Office (A/66/319). I am pleased to present a consolidated report of the Committee (A/66/511).

With regard to the **Composition of the Secretariat**, the Committee reiterates its previous recommendation that the Secretary-General should supplement data presented in his report with analysis of demographic trends and the underlying reasons for those trends.

Noting that the representation of women against posts in the Professional category and above reflects no change from the previous reporting period, the Advisory Committee has also reiterated its position that greater efforts are required to improve the representation of women, particularly at the senior levels.

The Committee also notes that there has been a significant shift in the data for staff subject to the system of geographic ranges in 2011 when compared to 2010, which the Secretary-General attributes to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 65/247. The Committee requests that the Secretary-General provide details on the magnitude of the impact of the implementation of this resolution on the representation status of Member States, as well as comprehensive information on measures taken to address the high number of posts subject to geographic distribution which are encumbered by staff having no geographic status, in his next report on human resources management to be considered at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

The Advisory Committee welcomes the introduction of an on-line reporting tool, HR Insight, which should improve access by Permanent Missions to information on staff representation in the Secretariat. Nevertheless, the Committee expects that the Secretary-General will ensure that the integrity of the sensitive data contained in HR Insight is protected.

On the report on the **practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and possible criminal behaviour**, the Advisory Committee notes that divergent disciplinary measures have been imposed in respect of apparently similar instances of misconduct. While the Committee was informed that factors such as a history of previous misconduct or the level of delegated authority and managerial responsibility exercised may impact on the severity of disciplinary measures imposed, it expects that disciplinary measures are applied consistently and proportionately.

Concerning the issue of **personal conflict of interest**, the Advisory Committee has reiterated its previous recommendation on the proposed amendment to staff regulation 1.2 (m). The Committee has also underlined that staff members act in manner that accords with their status as international civil servants. It has also underscored the importance of financial disclosure in mitigating conflicts of interest.

With regard to the **activities of the Ethics Office**, the Advisory Committee notes that there was an overall increase of 78 per cent in the requests for the services of the Office, compared to the average for the preceding three reporting periods. The Committee is of the view that quantitative measures of the work accomplished are not sufficient to fully demonstrate whether the objectives of promoting high standards of integrity and a culture of ethics are being achieved. The Committee is of the view that appropriate evaluation criteria should be developed for this purpose.

On the Financial Disclosure Programme, the Committee considers the cost per file reviewed by the external vendor to be high. It encourages the Secretary-General to explore all available means of obtaining these services at a lower cost. The Committee concurs with the Secretary-General's view regarding the necessity of reviewing the criteria for filing eligibility in order to control future increases in the programme's cost. The Committee also supports the Secretary-General's proposal to continue the outsourcing arrangements for the review function. The Committee further supports the proposal for the development of a new and more effective IT platform, although it has recommended that the requested additional funding for that purpose be absorbed.

