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Fifth Committee

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Item 135: Human Resources Management

Statement by Emil Stojanovski, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand

(Check against delivery)

Thank you Mr Chairman.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. I would like to thank the members of the Secretariat and the ACABQ for introducing their respective reports for agenda item 135: Human Resources Management. I would also like to thank Ms Pollard and the Under Secretary-General for Management, Mr Takasu, for their briefings to the Committee on this item on 8 October. While the Committee will consider several reports on Human Resources Management this session, I would like to focus today on the Secretary-General's report on mobility.

Mr Chairman

The need for enhanced personnel mobility was recognised more than ten years ago in the Brahimi Report. Since that time, there has been a growing recognition of the benefits mobility can bring to any organisation. Mobility allows personnel to change their jobs every few years, bringing with them new experiences, fresh insights and bold thinking. It can improve staff morale and performance. It injects new dynamism into teams. It fosters greater cross-cultural understanding. And changing roles allows personnel to maintain a healthy interest in the organisation in which they work.

From a management perspective, there is also much to commend about increased mobility. A mobility framework can make better use and management of human and financial resources, including improving vacancy rates in duty stations where such rates remain high. Resources could be deployed to where they are most needed and where operational requirements demand. Field staff in more difficult duty stations could be rotated more equitably. Broadening professional expertise and skills is important for

any organisation, both in the public and private sectors. And from a management perspective, it is always better to have staff who are not only aware of the broader operations of an organisation, but who can understand how the place really works by spending time in different duty stations, field operations and across departments. It is especially important that in this age, when the most salient and recognisable work of the Organisation is in the field, Headquarters staff have as much a "field-facing" culture as possible.

It is for these reasons, Mr Chairman, that CANZ delegations are strong supporters of increased mobility in the United Nations. We often hear that human resources are the most important resources to the Organisation. CANZ firmly believes this. This is why we have to make sure we are putting in place a strong mobility framework which has the support of both staff and the General Assembly.

Mr Chairman

The mobility framework that has been proposed by the Secretary-General is a good starting point to building an effective and forward-leaning mobility policy. We note that nearly all of the staff unions in the UN system who have spent the past two years negotiating the proposed policy with management have fully endorsed it.

CANZ delegations recognise that the framework is intentionally broad, and much more work needs to be done over the next two years to put in place all the elements of the framework. There are many questions that CANZ and other delegations have about how the policy will operate from a practical perspective. For example, the role of staff representatives on job network boards; the administrative remedies available to staff who are unhappy with the decisions of the boards; the effect of the proposed framework on external candidates; and the proposed future costs of the policy.

We look forward to an interactive discussion the Secretariat and other delegations on these issues. We trust the Secretariat will engage constructively with all Member States and address any concerns they may have about the mobility framework in a manner that will allow the General Assembly to move forward on the proposal with full confidence.

Thank you