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## **Agenda item 135**

### **Reports of the Secretary-General on**

**the Overview of human resources management reform: towards a global, dynamic and adaptable workforce (A/67/324); Mobility (A/67/324/Add.1)**

**and**

**the Amendments to the Staff Rules (A/67/99); Corrigendum (A/67/99/Corr.1)**

**and**

**the Composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics (A/67/329); Composition of the Secretariat: gratis personnel, retired staff and consultants and individual contractors (A/67/329/Add.1)**

**and**

**the Practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and possible criminal behaviour, 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 (A/67/171); Corrigendum (A/67/171/Corr.1)**

### **FIFTH COMMITTEE**

Statement by

Mr. Yukio Takasu

Under-Secretary-General for Management

Wednesday, 21 November 2012

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

1. I am pleased to present the reports of the Secretary-General on the human resources issues at this session of Human Resources Year. I wish to focus the proposed mobility and career development framework. The ASG for Human Resources Management, Ms. Catherine Pollard is also present at the Committee. I am grateful to the chairman of the ACABQ for his Committee's thorough consideration of the issues.

## Overview report

2. Allow me first to introduce the overview report A/67/324, which covers progress made since reforms endorsed by General Assembly in 63/250 and 65/247. OHRM has been working, in partnership with other offices, to tackle the challenges, such as different kinds of contracts, conditions of service, as well as high vacancy rates in parts of the Organization. The overview report gives updates and proposals on the range of subjects, including

- ST/AI on continuing contracts was issued in August, and we will be starting the first exercise.
- Steps to implement the new performance management and development system including “e-Performance” tool.
- Greater focus on management and leadership development as well as e-learning.
- Inspira has completed stabilization, and is now being rolled out further including to the field.
- Progress and proposed adjustments in the Young Professionals Programme, which was agreed at the last session.

3. We have also provided following regular reports.

- A/67/329 and Add.1 provide an analysis and composition of the Secretariat.
- A/67/171 contains information on all actions taken in cases of established misconduct and/or criminal behaviour and the disciplinary action, and a broad overview of the administrative machinery in disciplinary matters.
- A/67/99 contains amendments to the staff rules, which bring them into line with the recent General Assembly decisions and approved recommendations of the ICSC, as well as for clarity, building upon experience to date in implementation.

4. We could not submit at this time proposals for a comprehensive review of the system of desirable ranges. In order for us to formulate a concrete proposal, we need a clear guidance from the General Assembly on the scope of staff to be covered. I am mindful of the importance that you attach to this issue and we will address it as a matter of priority for submission to the 68th session.

Mr. Chairman,

5. The proposed new mobility and career development framework contained in Addendum 1 is at the heart of critical management initiatives by the Secretary-General. In order to transform the UN Secretariat to a truly unified and global Organization, we must implement not only Umoja, but also the more structured mobility policy. We are far from a global Organization from administrative point of view. In human resources area, there have been mobility including geographical ones, but they are ad-hoc, individually driven and without a systematic framework, limiting benefits for the Organization and the career development of staff. The Secretary-General strongly believes that mobility is a critical feature in a strengthened United Nations and is key to support the transformational initiatives that are currently underway to improve the way we are doing business. **We need a framework for global, dynamic and adaptable workforce to meet the evolving needs of Member States.**

6. The mobility framework proposed by the Secretary-General for your consideration is in response to the repeated requests of the General Assembly, including its resolutions 63/250 and 65/247. It represents a milestone for this Organization, elaborated painstakingly through full consultation with staff representatives who have invested so much effort.

7. **Current mobility** in the Organization is uneven; it is done at the initiative of staff, who is interested in moving from their current position, with selection decisions made by hiring managers. There is no centrally managed system in place with respect to organizational priorities or staff. The current system provides staff with limited opportunities for career development.

8. Currently, hardship duty stations continue to keep high vacancy rates that hamper our ability to deliver on our mandates. Staff serving in hardship duty stations remains there far too long, without clear prospect for move to other positions. We must promote **a fairer burden-sharing for service in difficult duty stations**. This problem cannot be solved without introducing a new mobility policy.

9. Our timelines to fill vacancies are far too long. On average, it takes us 171 days to select a candidate, after the vacancy announcement has closed.

Currently, many managers dedicate a significant amount of time to selection activities. The proposed model free managers to focus more on their substantive activities.

10. Today, when staff members from Headquarters go on a mission assignment, the post is blocked and can only be filled temporarily in their absence. This arrangement is disruptive for the releasing office and does not offer career progression.

Based on these reasons, the Secretary-General is convinced that it is essential to start in moving to a new structured and equitable mobility system as speedily as possible.

11. **The proposed mobility framework** is based on the principle that internationally recruited staff should move at regular intervals, by changing role, function, department or duty station. Staff should be able to make choices that meet their mobility and career aspirations.

12. Internationally recruited staff belongs to one of the job networks (consisting of job families requiring similar skill sets). Instead of selection and reassignment being done by hiring managers whose decisions are monitored by the Central Review Bodies, selection and reassignment would be done through Job Network Boards. This would allow a more strategic approach to deploying staff to mandates and looking at the needs of the Organization across a pool of staff and posts, rather than looking at a single post at a time and being dependent on individual hiring manager decisions as now. For senior positions, we will create a single Senior Review Board, composed of USGs and ASGs.

13. The system would be “self-initiated” and staff would apply for posts before expiration of their post-occupancy limits, which are between 3-7 years depending on the hardship classification of the duty station. If staff reaches post occupancy limit, they will be subject to reassignment to suitable post for which they are qualified.

14. Given diversity in the Organization’s mandates, limited scope of very specialised posts in job networks will be “non-rotational” and not be subject to mobility. Senior managers would be expected to have broad experience of the Organization. Proposal is therefore that eligibility for rotational posts at P-5 and above will require one prior geographic move.

15. **The way forward.** I would like to answer two overriding concerns expressed by many, including the ACABQ.

16. **First, impact on external recruitment.** Under the proposed framework, external candidates will be considered if no internal candidate is suitable. However, we will continue to bring fresh talents through various channels. There will continue to be opportunities for external candidates to apply because of annual attrition as a result of staff leaving, retiring or separating. External candidates continue to be recruited through the Young Professionals Programme, as well as at the senior levels. Non-rotational posts will also be open to external candidates with expertise.

17. **Second, cost implications.** Majority of mobility are non-geographical. Geographic mobility comes at a cost. But even under the current ad hoc system, geographical mobility related expenditures are incurred under common staff costs. We do not anticipate a sudden surge in geographic moves and cost. The phased implementation of the new framework by job network after 2015 will enable the Organization to manage the expenditures to the necessary minimum level.

Mr. Chairman,

18. The Secretary-General has submitted the principles and framework of a new system for the consideration and support of the General Assembly, on which basis we will develop further details of implementation. Once approved by the General Assembly, a phased implementation would begin in January 2015, after two years of intensive preparation.

19. As you note, the new system requires a significant change in the current procedure. Substantial preparatory work is necessary for setting up the new system; formulate new staff selection procedures, develop terms of reference, rules of procedure and operating guidelines for job network boards, establishment and preparatory works of the boards, change SGB and AI, and redesign Inspira, etc. We will continue consultation with staff through the preparatory process, and will report the progress regularly to the General Assembly.

20. Many of the details can be developed, redesigned and elaborated only after, not before the General Assembly provides principle endorsement of the proposed framework. Postponement of

such decision will further delay the phased implementation. Any further delay is not an option since it was already delayed two years ago. We have no more time to lose.

21. **The Secretary-General is convinced that there is urgent need for introducing a structured mobility policy. This is the key enabler for other management reforms which are on-going**, such as UMOJA, GFSS and shared services. Management and staff have made so much collective efforts to come up with this mobility framework with a hope that with support of the General Assembly we will be able to implement a new policy in January 2015.

22. I sincerely hope that **the General Assembly will give most favourable consideration and make decision this December to allow the Secretary-General to proceed with detailed preparation to meet the target date of implementation.**