

New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations



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Fifth Committee

Agenda item 137 United Nations Common System

**Statement on behalf of
Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ)
by
Mr Paul Ballantyne**

26 November 2012

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the delegations of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand on the topic of the United Nations Common System.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Chair of the International Civil Service Commission Mr. Kingston Papie Rhodes for introducing the report of the Commission for 2012. I would also like to thank Ms Maria Eugenia Casar, Assistant Secretary-General, Controller, and Mr. Collen Kelapile, Chair of the ACABQ, for introducing their reports.

Mr. Chairman,

CANZ supports the important work of the ICSC in regulating and coordinating conditions of staff across the UN system and providing advice to Member States on the management of human resources within this and other organizations within the common system. We welcome the Commission's latest report, and our delegations commit to engaging in a constructive discussion on the issues it highlights.

Mr. Chairman,

CANZ believes in a harmonized and equitable Common System. As such, we agree with members of the Commission that the decision to raise the mandatory age of separation should not be left to individual organizations but should rather be made across the system as a whole.

Our delegations take note of the analysis provided to the Commission which indicates that increasing the mandatory age of separation would likely only have a minimal impact on geographical distribution, gender balance, rejuvenation of the workforce, career development and succession planning within the Common System. As such, CANZ supports the Commission's recommendation to raise the mandatory age of separation to 65 years for new staff of member organizations of the Pension Fund in light of the need to maintain the long-term sustainability of the Fund. We also look forward to the results of the strategic review of the implications of applying this decision to current staff members.

Mr. Chairman,

In the current economic climate Member States have had to take measures to respond to the financial pressures they are experiencing. In light of this, CANZ delegations commend the Commission's decision to defer the scheduled pay increase for New York based UN staff and we urge all Member States to support it. We are concerned, however, that unless we take action on this issue, the pay increase will come into effect on 1 January 2013, applying retroactively to 1 August 2012. In this regard CANZ takes note of the outcome of the

Commission's review of the feasibility and suitability of reflecting the current pay freeze in the comparator civil service in the administration of the post adjustment system. Given the extraordinary economic circumstances, we call on all Member States, in conjunction with the Commission, to explore possible temporary measures to address this issue without compromising the integrity of the current post adjustment system.

Mr. Chairman,

CANZ delegations have taken note of the information provided by the Commission in its report on the financial implications of the switch from hazard pay to danger pay. We will continue to monitor the operation of this new system closely, with a view to ensuring it is achieving its intended objectives. However, given that this change took place as recently as 1 April of this year, we deem it premature to make an accurate assessment of the new system at this time.

Mr. Chairman,

CANZ welcomes the valuable work undertaken by the Commission to enhance harmonization of conditions of service across the United Nations Common System and takes note of the decision to defer consideration of the accommodation portion of rest and recuperation travel in light of the request for further information on cost and utilization rates. We also welcome the revised standards of conduct for the international civil service and hope that they will be widely disseminated throughout the international civil service and the organisations of the United Nations system.

We look forward to engaging further on these and other issues raised in the Commission's report over the coming days.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.