

STATEMENT OF BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP BY MR. ABDALLAH BACHAR BONG, COUNSELLOR AT THE PERMANENT MISSION OF CHAD TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON AGENDA ITEM 139: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE SEVENTY FIRST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 28 OCTOBER 2016

Madame Chair,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group on agenda item 139, entitled "Human Resources Management".

The African Group aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the distinguished representative of the Kingdom of Thailand on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Madame Chair,

The Group expresses its appreciation for **Mr. Yukio Takasu**, Under-Secretary-General for Management for introducing the Secretary-General's reports on HRM; and thanks **Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu**, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), for presenting the key findings.

The Group also thanks **Mr. Rajab Sukayri**, Inspector of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and **Mr. Kenneth Herman**, Senior Adviser on Information Management and Policy Coordination, for presenting the relevant reports; as well as **Ms. Elia Yi Armstrong**, Director of the Ethics Office for Presenting the report on the office activities.

We welcome also **Mr. Ian Richards**, designated representative of the staff union of the United Nations and thank him for his statement.

Madame Chair,

Allow me first, On the occasion of the celebration of the UN Staff Member day, on October 25, on behalf of the Group, to joins the Secretary General, by expressing our recognition for the exemplary and dedicate work done by the UN Staff Members, and to pay a tribute to those who have lost their lives on duty.

Madame Chair,

As indicated in our opening statement, the Group attaches great importance to the HRM of the United Nations and believes that more efforts are needed to valorize this asset.

We note so far, that the reports of the Secretary General contain most of the proposals already considered by the Committee at the 69th and 70th sessions, while we note also that some new or revised proposals are included, among others, the performance management reforms, the changes to the young professionals programme examination, the reduction of vacancy posting period, the career opportunities for General service staff, the amendments to the recruitment restrictions imposed by the GA resolution 51/226, as well as efforts to improve workforce planning, and a new strategy to achieve gender equality among professional levels by 2030.

Madame Chair,

Our first priority should be to dedicate our time to address the geographical representation.

The African Group strongly believes that the current unfair desirable ranges system must be revised, first, by addressing the formula itself with new parameters, or replace it with an entirely new formula entitled **'equitable geographical desirable formula'** accompanied by broadened sub elements (Membership, Population, contribution), to incorporate the

Troop Contributing Counties, with a widened number of posts, including technical and extra budgetary positions.

Therefore, the Group suggests a division of certain category of posts equally among the regions, and the limitation of the recruitment of the posts, subject to the quota system, to be filled only by nationals of UN Member States belonging to that region. In this regard, it will be important for the Secretariat to present statistical data's in order to better assess the situation and measure future improvement on the matter.

Madame Chair, distinguished delegates,

True reforms are painful BUT successful, unless we want to remain with this famous quote "I have no desire whatever to reform myself. My only desire is to reform people who try to reform me".

The African Group believe that the time has arrived for us to address seriously the current UN-desirable ranges system, established in 1960 to measure progress towards equitable geographical distribution, when some of our countries just got their independence.

This is the challenge that must be carried by member states, if we want to preserve a well functioning United Nations Secretariat and system.

Madame Chair,

The Group is also concerned, despite the 120 days guidance provided by the General Assembly, that vacant posts are not being filled in a timely manner, and we believe that due attention must be given in order to improve, in short term, all steps in the staff selection process.

In this regards, the Group will pay close attention to the selection processes for staff members at the level of P-5 and above, including those for Assistant Secretary-General and

Under-Secretary-General Positions in order to understand and address the geographical representation and gender balance, and we invite the Secretary General designate to closely monitor and address the gaps.

The Group is also particularly concerned that out of **11,085** total job opportunities available from January 2011 to 31 December 2015, only **3,408** external candidates were appointed, giving the impression of prioritization of internal mobility, depriving the organization from new skills and qualified external candidates.

The Group while welcomes the need for further opportunities for the qualified staff members in the General Service and Related categories to growth their careers and progress in the professional category, based on the principle of equal treatment, will be interested to learn further the implications of the proposed elimination of the examination requirement.

Madame Chair,

The Group is also interested to learn more about the review of continuing appointments, particularly for the professional and higher categories and the Field Service category and General Service and related categories.

With regards to the test of pilot projects, while we recognize the importance of such mechanisms, if successful, for a wider introduction in the organization, the Group is of the view that they must be accompanied by policy guidance or basic governance structure, endorsed by the General Assembly, so as to determine a costs benefits analysis, and the assessment of impacts in a full and transparent manner.

The Group is also concerned, among others, about the relatively high average age of the Secretariat staff members; the low replacement rate of retirees; the trend of juvenilization of the organization; the deployment of junior professional officers; the limits of the young professional programme; and

the challenges in providing accurate and consistent baseline data on the number of moves in the implementation of the new staff selection and mobility system.

The Group will be interested to learn in details all the elements related to these issues, as well as information's related to the ongoing elaboration of the new administrative instruction on investigations and disciplinary process, and the revised protection against retaliation policy.

The Group will also examine the need for an enhanced and more integrated approach between the implementation of Umoja and the refinement of Inspira.

Madame Chair,

We therefore underline that the Secretary-General should have responded to the repeated requests of the Assembly by submitting concrete proposals to serve as a basis for the Assembly's deliberations on these issues.

Lastly, the Group stands ready to engage constructively on this important agenda item with an expectation of fruitful deliberations during the informal negotiations.

I thank you!