

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS BY MR DANIEL WANG, DELEGATE TO THE 72ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ON AGENDA ITEM 141: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AT THE MAIN PART OF THE SEVENTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(New York, 31 October 2017)

Thank you Mr Chairman. It is my honour to speak on behalf of the 10 ASEAN member states, on agenda item 141: Human Resources Management (HRM). ASEAN fully aligns itself with the statement made by Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2 At the outset, ASEAN thanks Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, Ms Martha Helena Lopez, for introducing the relevant reports of the Secretary-General on HRM. We would also like to thank Mr Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chairman of the ACABQ, for introducing his report.

Mr Chairman,

3 ASEAN firmly believes that human resources are our greatest asset. The development of human talent is key to the success of any country, institution, or organisation. As such, ASEAN strongly encourages the Secretary-General to accord human resources development the importance and priority it deserves. The UN operates today in a complex and fluid global environment. A dynamic and motivated UN workforce is crucial in ensuring that the Organization can deal effectively with today's challenges. We note the Secretary-General's ongoing efforts to reform the UN's management and human resources system. There are, however, a few key issues we would like to draw his attention to.

4 First, ASEAN acknowledges that the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity are paramount in the recruitment and performance of international civil servants. However, we have also consistently emphasised the need for more balanced gender and geographical representation in the UN. At its core, the UN is diverse and international. As such, the composition of the UN

workforce should embody the diversity that the Organization represents. While we acknowledge the efforts made by the Office of Human Resources in bridging current gaps, there remains room for improvement.

5 ASEAN is particularly concerned about the continued lack of equitable gender and geographical representation in the Secretariat, especially at the senior levels. The Secretary-General's commitment to gender parity is admirable. But gender parity should not come at the cost of geographical representation. Both principles must advance together. The report on staff demographics (A/72/123) indicates an increase in staff from the Asia-Pacific Group (APG), from 19.1% in 2015 to 19.6% in 2016.¹ However, if one considers the APG's 55 member states which comprise 28.5% of total UN membership, the APG clearly remains underrepresented in the Secretariat. Past UNGA resolutions on HRM have consistently called upon the Secretary-General to ensure as wide a geographical distribution of staff as possible. Accordingly, we call on the Secretary-General to step up efforts to ensure that under-represented nationalities, especially those from developing countries, are given fair opportunity and consideration for every job opening in the UN, in line with resolution 71/263.

6 Second, ASEAN encourages the Secretary-General to further intensify his efforts to ensure that a more refined performance management system is implemented throughout the UN, particularly at the managerial and senior levels. These changes should be continuously assessed, to evaluate their impact and ensure that these systems remain transparent, credible and fair. We are pleased that the Secretary-General's reform proposals indicate his intention to begin 360 review at the USG and ASG levels.

7 We also note the JIU report on knowledge management (A/72/325) in the UN system. The report calls for knowledge management to be recognised as a strategic priority in all UN organizations. We share the JIU's view that knowledge is a core asset of UN organizations. Only then can we build a culture of learning and ensure that the UN becomes a learning organization, capable of adaptation and change. ASEAN encourages the Secretary-General to work with various UN system organizations to develop knowledge management strategies

¹ From Table 4 of A/72/123.

and policies aligned with their respective mandates, goals and objectives. This complements our common goal of a more coordinated and integrated UN system.

8 Third, ASEAN notes that the Secretary-General's report (A/72/209) outlines 123 cases of staff misconduct. These include cases of abuse of authority, sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as theft and misappropriation. We urge the Secretary-General to ensure that these cases are dealt with timely, and that the appropriate action be taken on those proven guilty. We also encourage the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to promote high standards of integrity and personal accountability. This will ensure a strong culture of ethics and professionalism within the UN, and that senior managers lead by example.

Mr Chairman,

9 Human resources management remains a priority for ASEAN, and we will pay close attention to the discussion on all HRM issues in this Session. We look forward to a constructive debate.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.