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**Introductory remarks by USG Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti
Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General
on the
Report of the Secretary-General on the comparative assessment of human resources structures
Monday, 15 October 2018**

Madam Chair,

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on the comparative assessment of the placement of human resources functions.

With the adoption of resolution 72/266B, the General Assembly approved the reorganization of the Department of Management and Department of Field Support into the proposed new Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Department of Operational Support.

The new structure will eliminate duplicative functions, establish clearer division of roles and responsibilities and segregation of duties, and ensure appropriate checks and balances.

The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to present a comparative assessment between placing human resources functions in two departments — as proposed by the Secretary-General—and consolidating them in a single department, with a view to ensuring a unified approach, optimizing the functions and avoiding duplication.

The report before you responds to this request.

Madam Chair,

Human resources management has undergone several reforms over the years.

We have made progress in several areas and will continue to build on those gains.

However, some work remains in order to ensure that our policies and structures better support programmes in the effective delivery of mandates.

The challenges associated with human resources management are well-known; they have been detailed by oversight bodies such as the Board of Auditors and the Office of Internal Oversight Services and have been highlighted in reviews such as the 2015 High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations.

Some of these challenges can be addressed through changes in approach, including those outlined in the reports on human resources management that you will consider later this session.

Other challenges will be addressed by the ongoing efforts to streamline our policies and administrative framework.

However, there are limits to what can be achieved through changes to policy and approach without addressing structural issues that have, up to now, frustrated the full achievement of the aims of previous human resources reform.

Madam Chair,

Many of the challenges that affect the Secretariat stem from one primary fact: human resources structures at Headquarters are currently burdened by the responsibility for both strategic and operational tasks.

This inevitably results in competition between the two sets of functions for both resources and managerial attention, to the detriment of both sets of functions.

Strategy and policy-related functions, for example, usually have a longer-term perspective.

However, in a single structure, it is easy to prioritize operational requirements that are more immediate or routine, therefore diverting the time and attention required to effectively perform strategy and policy functions.

At the same time, a single structure impedes the fostering of a culture of service delivery that is required for effective operationally-focused structures.

Because of the difficulties faced today with structures assigned both policy and operational responsibilities, the Secretary-General is convinced that consolidation of human resources functions within a single structure would handicap the new architecture from its inception.

Madam Chair,

The General Assembly requested that the human resources structure in the new management architecture ensure “a unified approach, optimizing the distribution of functions and avoiding duplication”.

The segregation of functions between DMSPC and DOS meets these criteria, whereas these benefits are not possible in a consolidated model.

A unified approach will be ensured by having two departments with a clear division of responsibilities – but with remits that extend over the entirety of the Secretariat.

In this manner, the proposed structure also ensures that there is no duplication of functions.

It also strengthens accountability and internal control by placing compliance functions and execution functions in separate departments.

Coordination mechanisms will be established to ensure coherence between the departments, as well as creating a feedback loop between them and all the organizational entities in the Secretariat.

Madam Chair,

Management reform provides the rare opportunity to address both the structural and non-structural issues that make human resources management one of the main pain points for the Organization.

The Secretary-General shares the view expressed by many groups and delegations of the importance of effective human resources management in the work of the United Nations.

He believes that the objectives of his global human resources strategy can only be achieved through the segregation of human resources functions between the two new departments.

In conclusion, I wish to convey the appreciation of the Secretary-General for the strong and continued support received from Member States over the past two years for his reform agenda. Your support has enabled us to embark on a process that will culminate in a more responsive and effective Organisation.

I thank you, Madam Chair.