

Item 141: Human resources management

Statement by Martha Helena Lopez- Thursday 15 November 2018

A/73/372 Report of the Secretary-General on the global human resources strategy 2019-2021: building a more effective, transparent and accountable United Nations

A/73/372/Add.1 Report of the Secretary-General on the overview of human resources management reform for the period 2017-2018

A/73/79 Report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics

A/73/79/ Add.1 Report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: gratis personnel, retire staff and consultants and individual contractors

A/73/372/ Add.3 Report of the Secretary-General on the assessment of the system of desirable ranges

Madam Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to introduce several Human Resources Reports of the Secretary-General to this committee.

The overarching Global Human Resources Strategy as presented in A/73/372 sets out a series of bold objectives and strategic actions to transform human resources management in the Secretariat.

Further to the adoption of the General Assembly resolution on management reform, we are now entering a time of major change as we re-engineer how the human resources function supports the programme delivery and mandate implementation of the Organization. Prior human resources management reforms have improved the overall HR culture in the organization in areas such as staff development and performance

management, workforce planning and recruitment. However, the strategic human resources function in the Secretariat must be further transformed and modernized in order to meet the SG's vision for a stronger, more effective and more agile Organization. As with any organization, there must be a continuous effort to improve and perfect our HR systems.

The Secretary-General envisions an Organization that is more efficient and effective in terms of its operational support and functioning. We have listened to the concerns of Member States with respect to the effectiveness of our recruitment processes and performance management systems. This Strategy provides a refined road map and tools intended to ensure that the Organization is able to attract, retain and deploy staff with the skill sets and dynamism required to meet new and emerging challenges.

The overall objective of this Strategy is to nurture a mobile, dynamic and multitalented international civil service. It aims to create an enabling policy environment for people management, catalyse proactive talent acquisition and management, and, contribute to a transformed organizational culture. The components of this strategy provide specific goals and actions to transform the human management policies and practices across the Secretariat, to ensure that we meet the Member's states vision for this global organization.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires a transformed United Nations system that can foster integration on all fronts. The complexity and changing nature of global challenges demands systematic workforce planning, talent management and organizational development. To meet the future challenges the United Nations will require a highly skilled, diverse, geographically and gender-balanced workforce that is representative of all the peoples the Organization serves.

The Strategy presents an integrated human resources framework that will guide the Secretariat's work in updating the business model and building a more effective, transparent and accountable organization.

I also have the honour to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on the Overview of the human resources management reform: 2017-2018, in which we seek support of

the committee in three specific issues/recommendations. Firstly, we ask the Committee to support the SG by eliminating the current barrier for our general service staff in applying to international professional positions. This recommendation would bring the UN into line with other organizations of the system and enable all qualified staff members to apply for vacant positions. We consider this an issue of basic fairness and in the overall interests of the Organization

Secondly, the SG proposes to reduce the posting period for position specific job-openings from 45 to 30 days as part of our efforts to speed up recruitment. This proposal is supported by results of a pilot which are contained in the report. The report further demonstrates the usefulness of being able to access highly experienced former staff members for specific tasks and accordingly the report recommends increasing the maximum earning limit for retirees. Again, this would bring the Secretariat in line with other organizations of the system. Lastly, the report recommends that abolition of the requirement for a staff member to renounce their permanent residence in a country other than own.

The report also describes the progress and achievements in modernizing and streamlining the Organization's human resources functions since the Seventy-first session, in response to General Assembly resolution 65/247 and 71/263.

The report contains an update on talent management initiatives, including workforce planning, performance management processes, and learning opportunities. The report also includes issues relating to staff health and wellbeing, both in field and non-field duty stations.

The engagement of youth in the Organization's activities is another high priority of the Secretary-General. Since the introduction of the YPP in 2011, considerable progress has been made in streamlining and professionalizing the recruitment of young talent. On-line examinations have resulted in higher and greater diversity of participants. In 2016 and 2017, respectively 60 and 69 successful YPP candidates were appointed to P-2 positions

across the Organization. In addition to the YPP, the Secretariat's internship programme, ongoing cooperation with universities, and increased use of social media reinforced the outreach to young professional worldwide.

The Secretariat relies on a geographically diverse workforce to fulfil its mandate and must continue to reflect the world they represent. Outreach activities to attract and invite applicants from unrepresented and underrepresented Members States are ongoing and have been strengthened.

Staff health and well-being is also a top priority of the Secretary-General. A number of systemic, comprehensive and evidence-based initiatives to improve the health and access to care by all UN personnel were implemented. Among those, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, a UN system-wide mental health strategy was recently launched to support staff members living with mental health conditions. Furthermore, in the area of occupational safety and health, tools were developed to prevent staff from being exposed to public health emergencies diseases.

Thank you also for the opportunity to introduce the reports on the Composition of the Secretariat, the report on gratis personnel, retired staff, consultants and individual contractors and the report of the Secretary-General on the assessment of the system of desirable ranges.

The Secretary-General presents a review of the current system of desirable ranges pursuant to paragraph 32 of the General Assembly 71/263 and requests the General Assembly to approve the recommended changes and give further guidance, as appropriate (A/73/372/Add.1).

This last report includes proposals to retain or widen the current base number of professional posts with a view to establish a more effective tool for ensuring greater geographical distribution in the Secretariat.

In conclusion, I wish to convey our appreciation for the strong and continued support received from Member States over the past two years on the reform agenda. Your continued support will enable us to continue our efforts to transform the in a more response and effective Organisation.

I thank you, Madam Chair.