

Agenda item 141: Human Resources Management

Statement to the Fifth Committee by Mr. Martin Njuhigu, President of United Nations Staff Union in Nairobi, on behalf of staff representatives of the Staff Management Committee

Members of the Fifth Committee,
Distinguished guests,
My Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to speak to you today from the only United Nations Headquarters duty station in the global south, Nairobi, Kenya.

Staff representatives - globally – continue to be passionate about the invaluable work that we collectively deliver for the System and in particular, for our Staff. Equally so, we are proud to contribute to the organizational mandate of the United Nations system, and continue to work hard to be change agents, at a time when the global community mandates that the United Nations reforms itself to be of relevance during a period of global strife and conflict.

I would like to assure you of our commitment to the strategic goals of the Secretary-General; specifically, the Global Human Resources Strategy 2019 – 2021 and the Secretary-General's System-wide Gender Parity and efforts aimed at 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this agenda affects the life line of this organization, the bearers of the burden and the carriers of the organization to future generations; these are the staff members. We have said over the years and continue to say that our staff are our most important asset.

We would like to share the following concerns briefly. We remain at your disposal for further engagement;

1. Global Human Resources Strategy 2019 - 2021;

We all agree that every organization must transform its investment in human capital from time to time; the United Nations is not exempted. We support the agenda. We would like the following concerns to be addressed for effective transformation;

- a) regional and gender diversity should not compromise competence and suitability of candidates.
- b) flexible measures to allow staff members to move across agencies before considering external candidates.

- c) benchmarking with other organization on ways they motivate staff members through career development, fair and transparent recruitment processes and upholding a robust performance management system.
- d) strengthen training and development portfolio with professional bodies such as those relating to medical, accountants, engineers, economists etc.
- e) orientation from top to bottom to improve respect for processes and the UN Rules and Regulations.
- f) consideration to eliminate off the 6-month waiting period for consultants and interns and 7 days break for staff members moving from general service to national posts or professional category.
- g) elimination of G to P exam barriers so that General Service and Field Service staff may apply for Professional positions to allow staff members who have gathered vast experience and expertise to be recognized for their exemplary service delivery in line with the Global Human Resources Strategy 2019 – 2021.

2. Global Service Delivery Model (GSDM);

There is no doubt that this agenda underpins all other major strategic decisions that have been proposed. It is in line with the modern best business practice.

- h) we look forward to an objective staff-management engagement
- i) our Organization should take advantage of retirements, functional and geographical mobility as well as voluntary separations to address any possible job loss
- j) adopt cost saving measures such as reduced travel expenditure, use of available infrastructure and saving on recruitment costs to meet the budget requirements
- k) the Organization should consider proactive measures of dealing with any psychological effects.

3. Mobility;

The report that was submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/265 by the Secretary-General on mobility strategy is important to all staff. However;

- l) the credibility of the job network assessment tests has recently raised doubt among participants

m) we welcome a geographical mobility strategy that will provide candidates with a wide range of career opportunities

4. **Accountability for strategic success;**

n) measures should be put in place protecting organization resources from mismanagement by anyone who acts with impunity. We should ensure that it is possible to recover organization assets after separation if anyone is found culpable during tenure. More importantly, recovery should be made within a reasonable time of the contractual period of the culprit.

o) there is need to address lacuna in present procedures for reporting cases of retaliation involving the justice system, which is not presently considered a protected activity by the Organization. This has resulted in a reluctance on the part of some staff to seek redress and for witnesses to come forward for fear of possible repercussions.

5. **General concerns that affect reforms;**

p) **Central review bodies** need strengthening in terms of awarding official time to perform their duties as well as recognition in performance appraisal.

q) **Consultants** hired beyond reasonable time have eroded the organizational governance of the human resource portfolio.

r) We ask for your support in our engagement with institutions that deal with conditions of service to ensure staff members are provided desirable terms of service.

s) It is important to allocated adequate resources to the Office of Staff Legal Affairs and the United Nations Tribunal. These institutions are part of the organization checks and balance and for staff members, particularly in addressing ST/SGB/2008/5.

In conclusion, we reiterate our commitment to serve this great organization. We assure you of our sincere dedication to service, most of all, by all staff members we represent. We understand the importance of objective and sincere engagement.

Thank you for your attention.