

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP BY MR MOHAMED TRAORE, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALI TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 146: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, AT THE FIRST PART OF THE RESUMED 75TH SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(New York, 1st March 2021)

Mr. Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group on agenda item 146 entitled "Human Resources Management".
2. The African Group aligns itself with the statement made by the delegation of Guinea on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
3. The Group expresses its appreciation to Ms. Martha Helena Lopez, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, as well as Mr. Abdallah Bachar Bong, the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing their respective reports.

4. The Group believes that Human Resources Management is of utmost importance for the Organization. We wish the work of the Committee in this session will be successful by adopting a resolution on this important agenda item. Our group is completely committed to make all necessary efforts towards achieving this goal.

5. The Group takes note of the Secretary-General's global human resources management strategy beyond 2021 and his efforts to keep Member States abreast of the progress of his human resources initiatives.

6. As enshrined in Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, the Group believes that due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible. The Group further recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 71/263 called for the attainment of equitable geographical distribution in the Secretariat, with the view to reflecting the multi-cultural and geographically broad membership.

8. The Group reiterates that there is an urgent need to develop a comprehensive strategy to improve geographical representation, including concrete actions, benchmarks and timelines that should form part of the overall refined human resources strategy. The implementation of the equitable geographical representation in line with UN Charter is a long-due measure that is of paramount importance to the Group.

9. We regret the persistent lack of concrete proposals containing appropriate measures to achieve equitable geographical representation in the United to be presented before this Committee. The Group notes with concern that senior managers of Secretariat departments and offices are far away from achieving the target of appointing at least 50 per cent of staff from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States to posts subject to geographical distribution, as stipulated in their compacts. We therefore and once again strongly underscore the need to fast track the increase of the representation of developing countries, at all levels and in particular at senior levels, in order for the United Nations to adequately reflect the diversity of its Member States, a condition necessary for the United Nations to be able to deal with the more complex global challenges that transcend and recognize no borders.

10. The African Group is concerned about the vacancy of posts subject to geographical status and the temporary occupancy of those posts by staff without geographical status. This situation negatively affects an already low number of posts with geographical status, pursuant to paragraph 66 of General Assembly resolution 65/247.

11. On the gender balance, the Group notes that the ratio of female staff in field operations remains relatively low. We are of the view that further efforts to attract and retain more female staff, particularly from the African Continent to work in field operations, are indeed needed.

Mr Chair,

12. The African Group initiated in January 2021 a **“Position Declaration Statement: Standing together to combat racism and racial discrimination and all other forms of intolerance at the United Nations”**. We wish to thank delegations that cosponsored this declaration. While the African Group recognizes Secretary-General’s internal administrative instructions and other guidance materials aimed at sensitizing all UN staff on the importance of combating discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment) and abuse of authority, we emphasize the need to build upon progress achieved so far and intensify the organizational efforts to rigorously and decisively implement all necessary measures to detect, deter and eliminate any room for racism and racial discrimination, as well as any other forms of intolerance, across the UN system organizations.

13. The Group wishes also to underline the paramount importance of the equality of the six official languages of the United Nations and the importance of multilingualism in the activities of the United Nations, and reaffirms the need to respect the equality of the two working languages of the Secretariat.

14. In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that Human Resources Management remains a priority for the African Group and we would like to reaffirm our commitment to engage in a constructive debate to foster

substantive progress on this issue.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.