

**Agenda Item 118 : Human Resources Management.**

**Statement by Hon'ble Mr. Jagmeet Singh Brar, M.P.  
October 28, 2002.**

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Mr. Chairman,

My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary General and his representatives, for their presentation of the reports on Human Resources Management. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Venezuela on behalf of the G-77 on the subject. We would like to address the various reports in a single statement.

Mr. Chairman,

We recognize that the staff of the United Nations has a pivotal role to play in implementing the mandate of the United Nations. For this reason it is necessary to emphasise the importance of a responsive, innovative human resource base within the organization that is driven by an organizational culture and rewards system that promotes excellence. This is fully in accordance with Article 101, paragraph 3 of the Charter, which states that the paramount consideration in the employment of staff shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity. In this regard, we note the emphasis placed on core organizational values and core professional and managerial competencies in the vacancy circulars issued by the Secretariat over the last two years. This must be welcomed.

We recognize that reform of HRM, as in the case of all organisational reform, is an on-going process. As a delegation that has actively participated in deliberations on the subject of HRM reform in the 55<sup>th</sup> UNGA, we are happy to note the progress made so far in all the ten building blocks of HRM resolution A/55/258. Although significant progress has been achieved in recent years in the Organisation, it is necessary to continuously monitor progress and to see that reform processes actually lead to the kind of end results that are envisaged.

My delegation, while endorsing the recommendations of the ACABQ in its Report A/57/469, would in particular, draw attention to para 17 whereby the Committee seeks a comprehensive report from the Secretary General on the achievements of human resources management reform, including the relevant activities of the Secretariat regardless of the source of funding. This report is to be presented to the General Assembly at its 59<sup>th</sup> Session, the next personnel year. We stress this element in the background of the fact that less than a third of the posts funded from the regular budget of the Organisation are subject to geographic distribution. However, the ACABQ Report does not proffer recommendations on all aspects of the SG's Report A/57/293. We presume this is because of the fact that the reform measures have been implemented only as of May 2002 and that the results of their implementation will be available only in time for the next programme budget/personnel year.

In the area of recruitment and placement, we note with satisfaction the introduction of the 'Galaxy' system, which appears to have significantly increased access, transparency and managerial efficiency in the recruitment and placement process. Our thanks are due to the OHRM for the briefing provided to the Fifth Committee earlier this month on the subject. We wonder why, though, this important aspect is not touched upon in the Secretary-General's report A/57/293! Of the various elements of the 'Galaxy' system, we particularly welcome the identification of occupational groups, and the generic job descriptions that have been finalized for each of them. The system has the potential to dramatically reduce the possibility of writing job descriptions to suit individual candidates, and is bound to add to transparency and equity in the recruitment and placement process. We note with great appreciation that even a post at the level of Assistant Secretary General at Headquarters has been advertised recently. The 'Galaxy' system should also enable bringing down of the average recruitment time, making it possible to fill posts eventually within 120 days. We look forward to evidence of this when fuller statistics are available. The system should also result in better preparation and maintenance of rosters of potential candidates against the various occupational groups that will both simplify and make for effective decision-making in the recruitment and placement process, eliminating, over a period of time, the plethora of vagaries that had regrettably crept into the process.

We also recognize the importance of instituting conditions of service that assist in attracting and retaining personnel with a high degree of competence, efficiency and job-commitment. In this regard, adherence to the Noblemaire and Fleming principles should continue to form the bedrock of such a system, and must be fully respected. At the same time, how member States perceive the working of the Organisation, and their perception of whether or not it is meeting its mandates in the most effective and efficient manner, determines to a large extent their attitudes toward improving the conditions of service of the Organisation's staff.

One other step that must be complimented is the availability of the HR Manual online which is bound to assist member States, programme managers in the field as also the staff in the Organisation.

Mr. Chairman,

In this context, rejuvenation of UN staff continues to be an important issue. The average age of staff in the Organisation continues to be undesirably high. We will have to examine whether this is a factor responsible for the Organisation being unable to attract and retain younger personnel in a significant way so as to improve the age profile. We note with disquiet that the average age of staff has increased to 46.1 years as on 30 June 2002, representing an increase of six months over 2001. This, again, is despite the expressed desire of the General Assembly in its resolution A/55/258 to rectify this imbalance. We look forward to discussing the ICSC proposals relating to broad-banding. On performance management, the e-PAS system, and the ICSC proposals relating to performance appraisal deserve close attention.

With respect to mobility, we note from paragraphs 40 to 44 on future activities in the Secretary-General's Report, that managed reassignment exercises are planned to be implemented, that work and life issues will be addressed, and that departmental managers and staff concerned will be consulted. In this context, we wish to be briefed by OHRM on the conclusions of the meeting of the SMCC which was to have been held during September/October 2002.

On Consultants and individual contractors, we agree with the ACABQ recommendation that IMIS-based information on a worldwide basis be presented in a timely manner, and the subject be further studied in the context of the Proposed Programme Budget for 2004-05. We

would have, however, liked to see the use of the phrase “qualified consultants” in the recommendation in paragraph 5 of ACABQ report A/57/469, as stressed in GA resolution 55/258.

On employment of retirees, we concur with the Secretary-General that the maximum limit should be set at 125 working days per year. Programme managers should, however, not use their inability to plan for vacancies and to process applications in a timely manner as an excuse to engage retired personnel. We welcome the strides made in bettering HR planning and development in the area of forecasting vacancies, and their timely placement on the website of the organisation, something that the Galaxy system is attempting to do.

Proposals for improving administration of justice were submitted last year to this Committee. We note with happiness the appointment of an Ombudsman for the Organisation and convey our best wishes to Ambassador Patricia Durrant in her onerous but highly important job of ensuring an improved system of administration of justice in the Organisation.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, Resolution A/55/258, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to undertake a study on the ramifications of changing the relative weights of the population factor from the current level of 5 % in the context of his report on the Composition of the Secretariat. We, in the first instance, wish to thank the Secretary-General for undertaking the above study. This is the first time that such a study has been attempted in the last 15 years since the adoption of resolution A/42/220A that called for a periodic review of the relative weights of the three factors. This is also in line with the resolution adopted by the WHO General Assembly last year. We note that Option C, referred to in paragraph 51 of the Secretary-General’s Report, would appear to be one that does **not** alter the existing member State representation status. We would, therefore, strongly recommend that this alternative be actively pursued during informal negotiations, alongside the other crucial subjects under the agenda item, so as to find consensual solutions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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