



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. KARIM ISMAIL, FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF EGYPT TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 141: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE SEVENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 12 October 2018)

Madam Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 141 entitled "Human Resources Management".
 2. The Group expresses its appreciation to Ms. Elia Yi Armstrong, Director of the Ethics Office, and Ms. Aruna Thanabalasingam, Officer-in-Charge, Office of Human Resources Management and Director, Strategic Planning and Staffing Division, as well as Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing their respective reports. The Group would also like to thank you, Madam Chair, for drawing the Committee's attention to the related report of the Joint Inspection Unit and the notes by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination on that report.
- Madam Chair,
3. The Group of 77 and China support the Secretary-General's efforts to improve human resources management. We acknowledge that the appropriate delivery of UN mandates depends on the quality of its staff and the availability of resources. We therefore support reforms which contribute to a highly motivated, diverse and dynamic workforce for our Organization, with a view to making it more representative, fair, transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs of its Member States.
 4. The report on the practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and cases of possible criminal behavior, covering the six-month period from 1 July to 31 December 2017, was submitted to inform Member States about the administrative process in disciplinary matters; cases in which the Secretary-General imposed one or more disciplinary measures during the reporting period; comparative data on the disposition of cases, appeals of disciplinary measures and cases received by the Office of Human Resources Management; and information on the practice of the Secretary-General in cases of possible criminal behaviour. The Group attaches high importance to these matters and requests the Secretary-General to continue to inform Member States on an annual basis.
 5. With regard to the activities of the Ethics Office, the Group welcomes the steps taken by the Secretary-General and the Ethics Office to implement a regular vetting process and ensure that conflicts of interest are managed and mitigated at the senior management levels in the interests of the Organization. The Group also takes note that the number of requests for the Office's services increased by more than 32% during 2017, compared to the previous 12-month reporting period from August 2015 to July 2016. We would like to better understand the drivers for this increase, its impact on the work of the Office, and how the Office is responding to the increasing workload, in the coming informal consultations.

6. At the same time, the Group takes note of the measures proposed by the Secretary-General for strengthening the independence of the Ethics Office as contained in paragraph 94 of his report. The Group will seek further clarifications regarding the matters raised in that paragraph as recommended by the Advisory Committee. Taking into consideration the very important role of the Ethics Office, the Group is of the view that revisions to its stature, reporting line and governance structure would have significant consequences for the Organization as a whole. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of all related aspects of the proposal, as well as other applicable experiences would facilitate the examination of the issue by the General Assembly.

Madam Chair,

7. The Group of 77 and China take note of the review conducted by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on the mechanisms and policies addressing conflict of interest in the United Nations system. Prior to that report, the Unit had examined conflict of interest only partially, in the context of its reviews on oversight, ethics, accountability, procurement and fraud. Therefore, we welcome the system-wide review of existing regulatory frameworks for addressing conflicts of interest.

8. In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that Human Resources Management remains a priority for the Group. We reaffirm our commitment to engage in a constructive debate to foster substantive progress on this issue.

I thank you, Madam Chair.