

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR DAUDI N. MWAKAWAGO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE RESUMED SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE SUBJECT OF LOANED PERSONNEL

New York, 12 March 1997

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the G-77 and China on the subject of loaned personnel. I would like to express our appreciation to the Controller for the presentation of the Secretary-General's report and to Ambassador Mselle for the presentation of the ACABQ report. However, we regret the late submission of the Secretary-General's report.

In the first place, the Group of 77 and China would like to make it clear that the purpose of this intervention is not to question the integrity of the numerous men and women who have offered their services to the United Nations. Nor is it our intention to question the motives of governments which came forward and offered personnel to assist the United Nations.

At this stage it is not against individuals that our attention should be directed. Rather, priority should be directed at the present system. It is a system that has gradually been imposed on the United Nations; a system which, if not corrected quickly, may start, in combination with other developments, a process for dismantling the international character and culture of the United Nations that has been carefully nurtured over the last fifty years. The Group of 77 and China is also concerned about incurring of expenditure from regular budget for the use of gratis personnel without approval of the General Assembly. This is a very serious development.

The Group of 77 and China does not object to the use of the Type I personnel. Here we agree with the Secretariat and with the Advisory Committee that loaned personnel traditionally assigned to technical cooperation and extrabudgetary activities do not appear to have caused much concern. As stated by the Secretariat, "Policies and practices concerning those personnel are well defined and need not be questioned in the context of this report". Here the approach to continue to examine this type of personnel, in the context of reviewing regular and other budgets where such personnel are assigned, as proposed in the report of the ACABQ, should be supported.

The large number of Type II personnel has given rise to a lot of concern. This type of personnel has increased in recent years for the reasons that are indicated in the report of the Secretary General. The reasons for the increase include the need to secure special expertise not available in the Secretariat. Most importantly, however, the increase is due to lack of adequate resources to implement operations that the Security Council and the General Assembly have authorised. Lack of proper operational planning and the haste with which some activities were approved led also to this development.

The issue of resources is critical. It is alarming to read the statement in the report of the Secretariat that unless adequate resources are provided there is no option but to seek gratis personnel. If we as Member States agree on operations whether to be funded on a voluntary or assessed basis, then it is incumbent on all of us to pay in the manner that we have agreed upon. It is really unfortunate to approve mandates without providing adequate resources. Of more concern is the attitude of some countries which are exerting the strongest pressure to reduce resources and programmes of the United Nations and at the same time support recourse to gratis personnel and find little wrong with this system.

The report from the Secretariat, has however confirmed our worst fears. Developing countries have virtually

been shut out from participating in the exercise of offering gratis personnel because the system is set against them. It is a system that implies that those with adequate resources to fund expenses of gratis personnel in New York, for example, can bring whoever they wish to bring. It is ironic that the impression is being given that developing countries which, as a whole, have contributed thousands of troops to peace keeping operations, that are owed millions of dollars by the United Nations, are incapable of producing individuals to perform, for example, such services as investigation and military planning.

Just a few examples. Of the 63 gratis positions for the Yugoslavia and Rwanda Tribunals as shown on page 9 of the report of the Advisory Committee, only a single P-3 comes from one country of the 132 Members of the Group of 77 and China. Of the total of 34 countries providing gratis personnel to the Department of Peace Keeping Operations as shown on page 11 of the report of the Advisory Committee, only thirteen countries come from the 132 Members of the Group of 77 and China. But these thirteen countries offer only 32 positions out of the 125 positions reported and of the 32 positions, only 2 of them have contracts beyond two years.

Mr. Chairman, it is not the fault of those countries that are over represented nor that of those that are under represented. The system must be changed and changed quickly. In order to change it we must level the playing field. To do so, we must consider going the way proposed recently in the Committee on Peace Keeping Operations as referred to in the report of the ACABQ, paragraph 11,—and also along the lines suggested by the Advisory Committee in its current report. The Group of 77 and China strongly believes that the use of gratis personnel must be approved by the General Assembly in all situations.

There are those countries which will object to a system of funding positions now occupied by gratis personnel, but their arguments may not be all that convincing. How can these countries explain the fact that the United Nations at one time budgeted for United Nations troops of more than 70,000 in number. In former Yugoslavia, the United Nations budgeted for slightly less than 60,000 troops and for civilian personnel numbering more than 5,000. In 1997 the projection is for a peace-keeping budget of about 1.2 billion dollars. Is it too much to demand that the cost and the manner of procuring the services of about 443 gratis personnel be more transparent and fair? I do not think so.

The report from the Secretary-General raises the question of accountability of gratis personnel and the need to abide by Charter requirements concerning high standards of integrity in the performance of duties. A legitimate question to be asked is this: why did the Secretariat not insist on the observation of the requirements for accountability? The gratis personnel in question work in the Secretariat and, as indicated in its report, many perform ordinary functions which, but for the lack of adequate resources, should be performed by staff members. And yet we have this peculiar situation of individuals who work under the Secretary-General, are often in charge of Secretariat Units, but are not clearly and fully accountable to the Secretary General.

It is not clear why the Secretariat has not insisted, just as it did on the question of payment of support costs, that each gratis personnel must sign an individual contract with the Secretary General. The behaviour of the Secretariat has contributed to the further erosion of the international character of the Organisation. We have individuals who are working for the Secretariat, a principal organ of the United Nations, but the Secretariat cannot hold them accountable. This is but further evidence of what takes place when senior officials of the Secretariat, perhaps driven by necessity or expediency, have either proposed or taken measures which compromise the unique international character of the Organisation=s civil service.

A side issue is the role given to some gratis personnel in the United Nations Secretariat which the Group of 77 and China finds objectionable. We have instances of some gratis personnel representing the Secretary General and consulting with Member States as if they were ordinary staff members. Now, if they are not accountable to the Secretary General, on what basis are some of these individuals being asked to represent the

Chief Executive in relations with Member States. Indeed some of them do not even know the proper procedures to follow.

More disturbing are instances of giving United Nations employment to those who first came to the United Nations as gratis personnel. Again we see developments, often with the support of certain United Nations officials and the countries of which they are nationals, of subverting the proper recruitment procedures of the United Nations. If these were ordinary times, a few gratis personnel employed as staff members would perhaps cause less concern. But these are not ordinary times.

It is unacceptable to employ gratis personnel as staff members when many staff of the United Nations are being told there is nothing for them to do any more. Some of them have worked with distinguished dedication over the years. It is an injustice for these men and women to be involuntarily separated while pressure is being exerted to take on gratis personnel as staff members.

The Group of 77 and China is deeply concerned with the pressure to reduce considerably the number of personnel with long contracts with the United Nations and replace them with individuals who come for short periods. It surely will lead to a system not much different from that of the present gratis personnel; a system with individuals who owe no allegiance to the United Nations but to their own Governments. There are operations of the United Nations where short term contracting is very suitable and wherever appropriate short term contracts help to enrich the organisation with new talent.

However, the extensive almost indiscriminate out sourcing of United Nations operations advocated by certain quarters will certainly lead to the same kind of unacceptable practices as those of the present gratis personnel system. Such a system is obviously undemocratic for it favours those countries with the capacity to release for a short period of time certain of their citizens for limited service with the United Nations before returning to their home countries to pursue their careers.

Mr. Chairman, before concluding, let me emphasize once again an important point. The Group of 77 and China insists that a fair, equitable, and transparent system must be established so that all countries should have the opportunity to consider participating in the provision of much of the expertise now provided by gratis personnel.

The Group of 77 and China should like to emphasize that the debate on gratis personnel has generated so much concern and intensity because of issues far beyond the mere question of getting 443 personnel on loan. There is deep-concern amongst a large number of Member States regarding what is perceived as an attempt to destroy the unique international character of the Organisation. Suspicion arises and deepens when, for example, decisions of the General Assembly are not implemented in the manner agreed upon after long period of negotiation amongst all Member States. Long standing established procedures adopted by the General Assembly, often by consensus, are ignored or distorted by certain high officials of the Secretariat in a fog of ambiguous explanations simply because powerful countries have pressured these officials to act differently.

Finally, if the present system of gratis personnel is regarded as yet another way to reform the way the United Nations conducts its affairs, then let it be known that this system has no legitimacy and must be changed. It is unacceptable to argue that gratis personnel have been requested by the General Assembly. The request by the General Assembly will not be nullified if a proper system is established to implement that request. The Group of 77 and China will engage actively in the negotiations concerning the question of gratis personnel during the informals.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.