

Statement by the Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China before the Fifth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly on agenda item 119: Human Resources Management of the United Nations

New York, 13 November 1998

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on the agenda item 119, Human Resources Management of the United Nations.
2. The Group of 77 and China would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for introducing the report on the Human Resource Management Reform of the United Nations on 28 October 1998. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China would like to emphasize that any proposals to reform the human resources management of the United Nations must be in conformity with the Charter, rules and regulations and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. We strongly believe that the Member States should be fully involved by providing strategic guidelines in the process of Human Resources Management reform and the implementation of this reform should have the prior approval of the General Assembly.
3. The Group of 77 and China takes note of the commitment expressed by the Secretary-General in paragraph 5 as well as the 10 key elements outlined in paragraph 9 of document A/53/414. We look forward to discussing this issue in the context of our consideration of document A/53/414 as a whole. In this regard, we also look forward to the comments and recommendations of the ACABQ on this important report.
4. We also would like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, Mrs. Rafiah Salim for introducing the other relevant reports of the Secretary-General on this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

5. The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to the issue pertaining to human resources management in the UN, and emphasizes the need to improve it. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China welcomes the Secretary-General's assurances that the Human Resources Management reform process is not an exercise in budget reduction, staff cutting or a means to fund the Development Account.
6. The Group of 77 and China notes that the delegation of authority is one of the key elements of the whole reform process of the Human Resources Management of the United Nations. Before delegating such authority, we believe that appropriate and effective mechanisms of accountability, including the necessity of having internal monitoring and control procedures, as well as an effective internal justice system need to be put in place. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China also believes that this issue should be considered in-depth by all Member States. We look forward to receiving more information from the Secretariat, including the potential constraint in the implementation of the human resources management reform of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Taking into account the importance that the Group of 77 and China attaches to the agenda item and due to the late issuance of some reports as well as the non-availability of the reports of the ACABQ, we propose that the general discussion on this agenda item be concluded only after sufficient time has been given to Member States for thorough consideration.

8. The Group of 77 and China is of the view that the Office of Human Resources Management of the United Nations should remain as the central policy authority which will ensure that the interpretation of the rules and regulations and the enforcement of their application will maintain equality for all staff.

9. The introduction of the new concept of accountability is a major change, which provides challenges and opportunities to the human resources management of the organization. The Group of 77 and China is of the view that while Performance Appraisal System could be an essential device for monitoring the accountability, a system of sanctions and penalties for the failure in meeting the responsibilities of the staff as well as the managers, should also be put in place as an integral part of the system. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China will address this issue in the context of the consideration of report A/53/226.

Mr. Chairman,

10. The developing countries comprise 74 percent of the total membership of the United Nations. However, the percentage of the staff representation from developing countries at the senior and policy-making levels in the Secretariat is rather low. We note that from 1998 to the year 2002, there will be a number of senior staff retiring including those from the developing countries. In this regard, we urge the Secretary-General to appoint senior level staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible, taking into account the low level of representation from developing countries.

11. The General Assembly in its resolution 49/222 requests the Secretary-General to increase his effort in improving the composition of the Secretariat by ensuring a wide and equitable geographical distribution of staff in all departments. The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to this decision and in this regard, requests the Secretary-General to provide additional information showing the way it has been implemented.

12. We take note of the information contained in documents A/53/375 and A/53/376 concerning the progress made in improving the representation of women in the Secretariat. We urge the Secretary-General to exert greater efforts in increasing the representation of women from the developing countries, in particular at the senior level posts.

13. The Group of 77 and China also notes with concern the increase in the number of resignations of the staff of the UN. In this context, we would like to request a comprehensive report from the Secretariat including the possible steps taken by the Secretariat to prevent this trend from continuing.

Mr. Chairman,

14. As regards the use of consultants at the United Nations, the Group of 77 and China attaches high importance to this question. We are concerned at the content of the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the OIOS on the audit of the use of consultants, in document A/52/814, which highlights, among others, the continuing weakness in the internal control of the organization in engaging the service of consultants.

15. The Group would like to emphasize that the selection of consultants should be on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. The Group is concerned that about 30 percent of consultants came from four developed countries. In this connection, we believe that the recommendations contained in document A/53/372 on the comprehensive guidelines for the use of consultants in the Secretariat should be thoroughly examined.

16. The Group of 77 and China stands ready to engage in constructive dialogue on this agenda item.

Thank you.

