



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. MISHAL MOHAMMED AL-ANSARI, STATE OF QATAR, AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON AGENDA ITEM 114: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (New York, 28 October 2004)**

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to human resources of the Organization. Human resources are a vital component of the Secretariat necessary for the fulfillment of the Organization's mandated programmes and activities. The staff of the Organization has a fundamental role in the efficient and effective functioning of the United Nations.

In this regard, the Group expresses its concern over the late submission of documentation for this item especially in the personnel year when the human resources issues will be examined comprehensively. This will most certainly have an adverse impact on the ability of the Committee to effectively review the different aspects of the issue of human resources management.

The Group has deep concern over the continuous failure of the Secretariat to submit documentation on time for this item. The Group requests the rectification of this failure and to ensure that accountability measures are in place to prevent this from occurring in the future.

The Group deems it necessary for the Committee to fully take stock of the level of implementation of the various provisions contained in Resolutions 55/258 as well as 57/305.

The Group reiterates its views concerning the different aspects of human resources management, as follows:

- " The need for a comprehensive, fair and transparent system of recruitment, placement, and promotion;
- " The strict implementation of the principle of equitable geographical distribution throughout the UN Secretariat, as well as the adherence to equitable geographical representation in the secretariats of the UN system;
- " The need to ensure better communication between the management and the staff. The Group is concerned over the impression of the ACABQ that the staff-management relations had, to some degree, broken down over the issue of human resources management reform, leading to frustration and confrontation. The Group supports the view of the ACABQ that the Secretary-General and the OHRM should involve staff meaningfully so as to take into account their concerns in implementing reform and to ensure that staff members take ownership of this process;
- " The necessity of developing and implementing a proper system of accountability as repeatedly called for by the Group;
- " The need to ensure that gender balance is applied with full respect of the principle of equitable geographical representation, as well as the adequate female representation of developing countries at senior management levels. Regrettably, recent published statistics on gender recruitment show that 86 women were hired between July 2003 and June 2004, of them only 21 were from developing countries, a mere 24 per cent despite the fact that developing countries constitute two-thirds of the membership;
- " The need to ensure adequate representation of developing countries at the senior level in the Secretariat, in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. Statistics show a decline in the representation of developing countries during the last four years.
- " The need for a reliable, transparent and effective system of the administration of justice;
- " The need for a fair, equitable and well-managed system of mobility in accordance with a clearly established criteria called for by the General Assembly;
- " Addressing the chronic high level of vacancies in certain duty stations;

Four years after the introduction of the reform package, the Group deems it imperative to evaluate and assess the impact of the reform measures. It would be important for the General Assembly to know whether the reform package has yielded the desired results and contributed to realizing the vision set out by the General Assembly. In this context, the Group looks forward to the introduction and discussions pertaining to the question of the administration of justice as a vital component of the reform package.

The Group would like to examine the relevant reports under this item within the broad policy parameters including the ones I have outlined above. The Group shares the concern raised by the ACABQ that the report of the Secretary-General on human resources management reform is general and lacks analysis with regard to progress achieved in

implementation, problems encountered and measures planned to redress them. This coupled with the non-implementation of several provisions of resolutions 55/258 and 57/305, constitutes an impediment to a comprehensive consideration of the issue.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China has always emphasized that delegation of authority must be accompanied by well-designed systems and clear lines of accountability. The Group notes with concern that the report of the Secretary-General responding to the General Assembly's request in resolution 55/258 and reiterated in resolution 57/305 to improve accountability and responsibility, does not provide concrete information regarding measures taken in this regard.

The Group recalls that the Assembly had called for the establishment of a robust monitoring system in the OHRM for the monitoring of all relevant activities to ensure compliance with recruitment, placement and career development procedures through the Secretariat regardless of the source of funding. The Group expresses its concern over the observation of the ACABQ that enough attention has not been given to setting criteria to monitor the quality of decisions made by programme managers rather than merely quantifying mechanical adherence to procedures as measured by raw statistics.

The Group notes that effective 1 May 2002, mechanisms to implement the mobility policy were integrated into the new staffing selection system. The Group also notes that the first expiration of post occupancy limits in 2007/08 is fast approaching and is concerned that many issues are still unresolved, including the absence of a clearly defined strategic plan with indicators, benchmarks and timelines, as well as clear established criteria for mobility.

The Group stresses the strict adherence to the requirements contained in paragraph 49 of resolution 57/305 in implementing mobility policies.

The Group would like to emphasize the General Assembly resolutions on the need to take steps to ensure that mobility will not be used as an instrument of coercion against staff, the need to recognize the difference between movement within a duty station and mobility across duty stations, and the need to ensure that lateral mobility does not negatively affect the continuity and quality of the services required for the implementation of mandated programme and activities. In this regard, the Group is concerned about the outward mobility from UNON.

The Group welcomes the progress in reducing the average time period for selection of staff from 275 days in 1999 to 175 days at present and calls for the further reduction of the process to 120 days in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/305. Yet information needs to be provided on the time period and measures followed by the Secretariat from the selection of candidates to the actual filling of posts.

The Group notes the proposal of the Secretary-General on the recommendation of the OIOS to reduce the number of the days required for advertising a vacancy from 60 to 45 days. The Group emphasizes that there are different factors to the process of selection and recruitment. This proposal addresses only one element of this process while other elements remain neglected. The Group is of the view that this proposal would not substantially contribute to reducing the actual time period for the selection of staff.

The Group remains concerned with the weaknesses regarding staff selection and the utilization of the Galaxy support tool, which has not allowed it to function efficiently. The Group has concerns regarding the issue of transparency and application of predetermined criteria in the selection of candidates through this tool. The Group notes with concern the limited and selective use of generic job profiles and evaluation criteria when selecting applicants. Moreover, Central Review Bodies are not involved in qualitative evaluation of the managers' decisions and unable to monitor their adherence to the principles of equitable geographical distribution and gender balance.

Furthermore, the Group notes that in a number of developing countries it is difficult to participate in the recruitment process through electronic means. Member States should continue to receive paper copies of vacancy announcements in the widest possible time so as to maximize the effort to attract qualified staff from developing countries.

The Group notes the Secretary-General's proposals concerning the contractual arrangements. The Group still needs clarification on the implications of these proposals on the career perspective of the UN staff and the international character of the UN personnel. The Group looks forward to listening to all views including those of the staff members on this issue.

On the issue of the conversion from 300 to 100 series appointments, several concerns have been raised by Member States and ACABQ in its report A/58/396 that deserve detailed consideration by Member States. In addition, the budgetary implication of such proposals needs to be thoroughly examined in order to reach a well-informed decision.

The Group reiterates that human resources management reform should enhance the productivity and the quality of the work of the Organization and should not lead to reduction of staff or budget. It should also not negatively affect the morale and motivation of staff members, and in turn their commitment to the Organization.

The Group notes the report of the Secretary-General on consultants and individual contractors within the Secretariat and the regional commissions. The Group expresses its concern over the finding of the Board of Auditors concerning numerous problem areas associated with the hiring of consultants and individual contractors that could have been addressed since the General Assembly adopted various requirements as well as guidelines to be monitored by the OHRM in hiring consultants. The Group regrets that the Office has not been able to monitor whether consultants are resorted to for areas where expertise is not available within the Organization.

The Group further notes with concern the increasing re-employment of retired staff members. This lack of proper succession planning not only results in providing a distorted picture of the existing human resources environment, but also impacts negatively on the rejuvenation of the organization and attaining core human resources targets

Mr. Chairman,

I would like now to address briefly agenda item 116 concerning the common system. The Group stresses the importance of the independent nature of ICSC. The Group highly values the role and the work of the ICSC as a subsidiary expert body to the General Assembly dealing with the conditions of service in the common system. In this regard, the Group looks forward to constructive discussions on the issue and will express its concrete views on this matter during the upcoming consultations.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China looks forward to the informal consultations on this agenda item and is ready to engage in a constructive dialogue with all our partners on the various issues pertaining to human resources management.

I thank you.

