

Introductory remarks to the Fifth Committee

SG comments (A/66/380/add.1) on the JIU report on "Transparency in the selection and appointment of senior managers in the United Nations Secretariat" (JIU/REP/2011/2).

3pm, Tuesday, 13 March 2012

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates,

Good afternoon, I make these remarks on behalf of the Chef de Cabinet.

Thank you for the opportunity to come and introduce to you the Secretary-General's comments on the JIU report entitled "Transparency in the selection and appointment of senior managers in the United Nations Secretariat" (JIU/REP/2011/2).

The Secretary-General wishes to extend his appreciation to the JIU representatives for the constructive exchange of views that we have had. This conversation will contribute to our on-going efforts to build upon the improvements we continue to make and lead to a stronger senior appointments process.

The Secretary-General's comprehensive comments on the JIU report and his views on the manner in which he exercises his discretionary authority is contained in his report A/66/380/add.1 in front of you. It is also recalled that in his report to the General Assembly entitled "Towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat", the Secretary-General outlined the process for the selection and appointment of senior managers and stated that he had voluntarily exercised the discretionary authority entrusted to him with great care to ensure transparency and maintain the institutional safeguards of the process, while protecting the privacy of the applicants (see A/64/640, para. 42).

The selection and appointment of senior managers is a complex process. It should be noted that while there is consistency of purpose,

each Secretary-General may have a different approach to implementing the process. The Secretary-General requires a measure of flexibility and discretion to be able to select a cohesive senior management team that works in synergy.

The present report summarizes the objectives of the Secretary-General in selecting his senior leadership team and outlines his approach to the selection and appointment of senior managers in the United Nations Secretariat. The core principle is merit. In the search for the most suitable person for a particular position, the Secretary-General ensures the fairness and transparency of the process while protecting the privacy of the candidates and panel members.

The objective of the Secretary-General is to have an effective senior leadership team with the highest standards of efficiency, competence, integrity and accountability that is capable of driving the Organization in response to evolving organizational needs and meets the expectations of Member States and other stakeholders.

The ability and authority of the Secretary-General to achieve this objective and effectively manage the Organization as its "Chief Administrative Officer" is in accordance with Article 97 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General attaches great importance to the following elements in the selection and appointment of senior managers in the Secretariat.

In accordance with the Charter (Article 101 (3)), the Secretary-General believes that the core principle in the recruitment of senior staff is merit. In considering finalists who have proved that they meet the core requirements of a post, the Secretary-General must also take into consideration other important elements to ensure that the selected candidate is a good fit within the senior management team and that the selection decision enhances the Organization's objectives.

In this regard, when the Secretary-General makes a selection decision, he is committed to the overall need to ensure equitable geographical distribution and gender representation in his senior

management team. This represents a snapshot of his senior team, which is constantly changing as a result of ongoing recruitment and the expiration of appointments. The selection and appointment process must therefore be equally responsive.

While the issue of the appropriate level of transparency in the appointment process can be highly subjective, the Secretary-General is mindful of the need to share information with Member States while protecting the confidentiality of the process and the privacy of the candidates.

Having benefitted from the interaction with the JIU representatives and building upon the on-going improvements, it may be helpful to look forward and say a few words about the Secretary-General's upcoming activities on senior appointments.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

As the Secretary-General embarks on his second term, he is keen to ensure the right mix of change and continuity in his senior leadership team and intends to build a new team that is strong on substantive issues and diverse in composition and whose members complement one another.

In so doing, the Secretary-General will also be guided by the following overarching considerations:

- The five-year rule will be applied across the board, as it was five years ago when the Secretary-General first assumed office. This is to demonstrate the Secretary-General's firm commitment to mobility and to leading by example by providing a top-down push to the ongoing human resources management reform, which includes mobility schemes.
- The Secretary-General intends to balance the need to bring a fresh perspective in addressing major challenges with the need to maintain continuity of purpose and priorities;

Against this backdrop, as you are aware, the Secretary-General has decided to seek nominations for the first batch of eight positions at the level of Under-Secretary-General for the departments and offices listed below. We have also posted the advertisement on the SG's

webpage, the Delegates webpage and have advertised many of these positions in publications such as the Economist, Le Monde & Jeune Afrique.

These changes have been announced in advance in order to provide ample time for receiving and reviewing nominations and to ensure a smooth transition between incumbents. This effort will supplement the Secretary-General's own search and consultations and demonstrates his commitment to having an inclusive and objective selection process for the appointment of senior managers.

The 8 entities involved are the following: (DGACM, DPI, DPA, DESA, ODA, OSAA, ECA & ECE)

The Secretary-General has also sought nominations for the second batch of 2 USG positions as follows:

(DM) Department of Management
(DFS) Department for Field Support

He would welcome nominations from the Member States.

As communicated by the Secretary-General, of the 10 positions listed, following a competitive process, 3 have already been filled (ODA, ECE & OSAA). As you are also aware, he has also appointed the DSG and CdC.

The SG intends to make additional announcements in the coming weeks on other senior positions as the relevant selection processes are being completed.

Finally, I am pleased to convey that we look forward to having a productive and stimulating conversation with the distinguished members of the Committee and we are here to help in anyway we can.

Thank you