



**Statement on behalf of ASEAN by
H.E. Ambassador Libran N. Cabactulan
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations
Agenda Item 139: Human Resources Management
9th Formal Meeting of the Fifth Committee
17 October 2011, UN Headquarters, New York**

Please check against delivery.

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the 10 Member-States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

But before I deliver ASEAN's joint statement I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Fifth Committee for the 66th session of the General Assembly. Rest assured of our full support and cooperation as we look forward to working closely with you in the days and months ahead.

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset ASEAN expresses its appreciation to the Secretariat for its timely provision of pertinent reports by the Secretary General on Human Resources Management, in particular to Ms. Ruth de Miranda, Chief of the Human Resources Policy Service of the Office of Human Resources Management, and Ms. Joan Elise Dubinsky, Director of the Ethics Office.

We likewise thank Mr. Collen Kelapile, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and Mr. Mounir M. Zahran, Chairman of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), for their complementary reports on this item.

ASEAN fully subscribes to the statement delivered earlier by the distinguished representative of Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China but at the same time would like to stress some salient points.

Mr. Chairman,

Human resources are the greatest assets of the United Nations or any organization or institution. ASEAN therefore maintains that human resources

management in the UN should always be given the importance and priority that it deserves.

At the same time ASEAN supports the Secretary General's efforts to address the concerns and needs of UN personnel. We are encouraged by the commitment of the Ethics Office to administer the Financial Disclosure Programme (FDP) with the aim of identifying, managing and mitigating conflict of interest risks in order to strengthen public trust in the integrity of the Organization. We do commend the outreach efforts of the Ethics Office and we note the 78% increase this year for ethics-related advice. ASEAN also welcomes the Ethics Office's promotion of a "culture of ethics" aimed at senior management and notes the ACABQ's recommendation to make this practice mandatory.

We also note that 123 cases of misconduct and probable criminal behavior have been listed in the SG's report (A/66/135). Any criminal acts or activities must never be tolerated. We urge the SG to impose appropriate disciplinary action to those proven guilty of wrongdoing. However, while we expect that expeditious action against the culprits is based on existing or established practices, we agree with the ACABQ's recommendation that the measures to be taken against erring UN staff should be consistent with and in proportion to the type and seriousness of the wrongdoing committed.

Mr. Chairman,

ASEAN appreciates receiving the report of the SG (A/66/347) on the statistical information that also contains useful demographic and mobility data. We note, however, that it lacks substantive analysis of the data presented. We therefore urge the Secretariat to provide more verbal analysis and explanations of the statistical data for the benefit of Member States.

We also welcome the launching of the "HR Insight" in August 2011 and commend the Secretariat for its commitment to update the information contained therein on a monthly basis. Undoubtedly, Member States will find this online reporting tool very useful.

Mr. Chairman,

ASEAN is of the view that Member States should continue to play a more active role in Human Resources Management reforms and not to be mere spectators in this vital process. Our collective efforts have so far contributed to improving the conditions in the Organization and they will help ensure that the United Nations become a more efficient, democratic, effective and representative body.

To make the UN more representative, ASEAN believes that efforts and means must be exhausted in order to allow the recruitment and participation of all the nationals of the countries represented in the United Nations, especially from

developing countries which are underrepresented or unrepresented in the roster of UN staff. We maintain our position that staffing of the Secretariat should be strictly carried out based on equitable geographic distribution and gender-balance without sacrificing quality and competence.

With regards to gender-balance, there is still plenty of room for improvement in this area. The data contained in the SG's report reveal that gender parity in the Organization remains elusive. Thus far, women only comprise 33% of staff positions and only 40% of professional posts. ASEAN agrees with the recommendation of the ACABQ that greater efforts should be exerted to ensure that more women be recruited, especially in senior or high-level positions.

To make the UN more effective, we wish to stress the view that streamlining and harmonization of the types of contracts and conditions of service of UN personnel, particularly in field missions, should be realized and implemented. This will go a long way to uplifting the staff morale and will assist in the retention of more experienced and dedicated staff members.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, ASEAN believes that the reform in the complex area of human resources management must be carried out with urgency. The UN today faces more challenges and problems inside and outside the Organization, yet it is expected to deliver more complex and difficult mandates in all fields. No doubt, the efficient and effective delivery of these mandates fundamentally hinges on the quality of its staff – its greatest and most effective assets. To this end, ensuring the well-being of UN personnel is of utmost importance and we all have a stake in supporting all reforms and measures aimed at developing a competent, vibrant and dynamic workforce.

To this end, ASEAN is committed to working with all our partners to help the United Nations take effective measures to deal with the shortcomings and challenges of human resources management.

Thank you.