

Fifth Committee
Agenda item 139 – Human Resources Management

Introduced by
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17 October 2011

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my pleasure to present to this Committee various reports of the Secretary-General under agenda item 139- Human Resources Management.

The Secretary-General's report A/66/98 on Personal Conflict of Interest is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/247, by which the Secretary-General was requested to provide to the General Assembly for its consideration at the main part of its sixty-sixth session a comprehensive report on conflict of interest, including a contemporary analysis of what constitutes personal conflict of interest, as well as legal, management and mitigation aspects.

The Report provides comprehensive information on personal conflicts of interests in the following main areas:

- (1) the main types of conflict of interest faced by staff of the Organization,
- (2) the applicable regulatory framework for United Nations staff members, including current definitions;
- (3) the legal implications of personal conflicts of interests; and
- (4) mechanisms established and applied to manage and mitigate existing or potential conflicts of interest.

The Organization has promulgated a number of administrative issuances to address conflict situations commonly faced by staff members as well as to implement the respective staff regulations and rules. The report describes the regulatory framework of these institutionalized schemes, which can be summarized as schemes to govern conflicts relating to general and financial conflicts of interests, conflicts resulting from receipt of gifts, honors, awards, favors or remuneration from governmental and non-governmental sources, conflicts resulting from engaging in outside occupation or employment and other outside activities, and conflicts stemming from personal relations.

The report further elaborates on the possible legal implications of conflicts of interests; for example initiation of disciplinary proceedings where a conflict of interest was not disclosed through appropriate channels; or applicable post-employment restrictions for staff serving in particularly sensitive functions such as procurement.

Concerning the management and mitigation of conflicts of interest, the report describes the steps applied by the Administration in addressing the multifaceted situations staff members are faced with. These include a robust regulatory framework, identification and review of actual or potential conflicts of interests; either following disclosure by a staff member or other means of identifying a conflict situation, followed by an exploration of the most suitable means of mitigation. These means range from recusal and removal from any decision-making role, instruction to a staff member to discard certain interest held, changes in reporting lines or specific non-disclosure agreements relating to confidential information. Where a staff member is not agreeable to the recommended or instructed means of mitigation, a last resort are further administrative or disciplinary measures to appropriate manage a conflict of interest situation.

Mr Chairman,

The Organization frequently receives requests for advice or other information concerning real or potential conflict of interests situations of differing complexity faced by staff members. The Secretary-General is, therefore, continuously reviewing whether the established mechanisms serve the contemporary and evolving needs of the Organization and remains committed that staff are acting impartial and corresponding to their status as international civil servants at all times. In this context, you also have before you a related proposal for an amendment of Staff Regulation 1.2 (m), presented in the Secretary-General's report 65/213. You might recall that you decided last year to defer a decision on this proposal to the current session.

Mr. Chairman,

I am also pleased to introduce two reports on human resources management which are submitted to the General Assembly on a regular basis. Document A/66/135, contains the Secretary-General's report on his practice in disciplinary matters for the period of 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011. This report is in response to the Assembly's request in paragraph 16 of resolution 59/287 that the Assembly be informed, on an annual basis, of actions taken by the Secretary-General in cases of established misconduct and/or criminal behaviour on the part of staff members.

The first part of the report provides an overview of the legislative framework and the current procedures for handling disciplinary matters, including the due process protections accorded to staff.

The second part of the report provides brief summaries of the nature of the established misconduct and/or criminal behaviour, the disciplinary measure imposed in each case, and an indication of whether the measure imposed has been challenged by the staff member before the Dispute Tribunal. Due to the confidential nature of disciplinary matters, the details of the cases, including specific mitigating and aggravating circumstances that were taken into consideration in each case, have been omitted from the report.

During the reporting period, 271 cases were completed. Of these, disciplinary measures were imposed in 117 cases; administrative measures were imposed in 19 cases;

80 were closed with no disciplinary or administrative action; in 38 cases, no disciplinary action was initiated; and in 26 instances, the cases were closed upon separation of the staff member prior to or after the referral of the case to OHRM.

The final part of the report provides information on the action taken by the Secretary-General in cases involving credible allegations of criminal conduct by United Nations officials or experts on mission.

Mr. Chairman,

The report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat, A/66/347, provides demographic analysis on all of the UN Secretariat's 43,747 staff, both at HQs and in the field, including information on the entities in which they are serving, their categories, appointment type, gender and age. This year, as described on page 15 of the report, OHRM has launched the first release of an online reporting tool called HR Insight that is available to all permanent missions to the United Nations. It is based on the human resources data warehouse and retrieves information from other human resources systems, including IMIS and Nucleus.

The first release of the tool is providing permanent missions with reports on desirable ranges and staff demographic information. These online reports can be downloaded, allowing permanent missions convenient instant access to often requested reports from OHRM and reducing the need to print thousands of report pages (for example, the list of staff of the United Nations Secretariat is now only available online on HR Insight).

With the launch of HR Insight, Member States now have access to reports that provide information similar to that contained in the report on the composition of the Secretariat, such as the statistical tables showing desirable ranges.

Mr. Chairman,

I thank you for the opportunity to present these reports to the Committee. Together with my colleagues, we will be happy to take any questions that you or the Committee may have on these reports.

