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Introduction of the Reports of the Secretary-General on mobility (A/68/358), placement of United Nations staff members who have been adversely affected by natural disasters, malicious acts and other critical incidents (A/68/483) and seconded active-duty military and police personnel (A/68/495).

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to be here today to present the reports of the Secretary-General on mobility (A/68/358), placement authority (A/68/483) and on seconded active-duty military personnel (A/68/495).

Mobility

In recent years, Member States have implemented a number of changes designed to facilitate the Organization becoming a truly global Secretariat, one best suited to meet the complex challenges that face us. Underpinning these decisions has been our shared goal of better equipping the Organization to deliver more effectively and efficiently on mandates worldwide. There has also been a recognition that such change was necessary.

The development of Umoja is one such initiative and its deployment will significantly enhance our ability to manage globally. The implementation of IPSAS is a further example, one that will improve transparency - and therefore accountability - with respect to our operations. A dynamic, adaptable and mobile workforce is the third pillar of a modern and global Organization. I am therefore pleased to introduce the mobility proposal for internationally-recruited staff and to have the opportunity to underscore how critical this proposal is to our reform efforts.

To date our human resources reforms have primarily focused on contractual reforms and harmonization of conditions of service. The decisions of the Assembly in these areas have helped create a level playing field for all our staff and have put in place the human resources tools we need to effectively administer our global workforce.

Inspira, Umoja and IPSAS are modernizing our business processes and promoting a more standardized approach in administration across all duty stations. A managed mobility policy will help maximize the benefits of these initiatives by enabling a more structured approach to the management and career development of our staff.

In recent years the Secretariat has undertaken more limited measures to encourage mobility. However, after considering some such proposals, the General Assembly requested that a comprehensive mobility and career development proposal be developed and put forward for its consideration. Doing so has involved a long process which included reviewing best practices in other organizations, analyzing workforce data, surveying staff, holding focus groups

and engaging with staff representatives. These efforts resulted in the presentation of a comprehensive career development and mobility proposal to the Assembly last fall.

It is important to emphasize that staff in the Organization are currently mobile. However, when staff move, and where they move to, is not managed or guided by the Organization's strategic needs. Rather, the staffing of each position is considered in isolation and is based solely on the desires of staff members to move and the selection decisions of individual programme managers.

As a result, some staff rarely change positions, others move solely within headquarters duty stations, while many get 'stuck' in more difficult duty stations. As such, the movements that take place are not strategic and therefore the benefits that mobility can bring to the Organization and staff are not fully realized.

For these reasons, the Secretary General believes that the Organization needs a more structured approach to career development and mobility. The position occupancy limits that are being proposed are a critical element, in order to ensure that staff periodically change position and take on new roles and functions.

We have also proposed centralized Job Network Boards to allow for more strategic selection and reassignment of staff. By ensuring that selections fully consider organizational priorities, the Boards should also facilitate progress with respect to goals in the areas of gender and geographic diversity in staffing. They should also lead to a fairer sharing of the burden of service in difficult duties stations.

In its resolution 67/255, the General Assembly welcomed the Secretary-General's commitment to develop a managed mobility policy for internationally-recruited staff and requested additional information and data, a refined version of the original proposal and an alternative approach based on incentives. The report before you responds to those requests

The refined proposal maintains a managed approach to mobility but, at the same time, responds to the priorities and concerns expressed by the General Assembly. In particular, significant changes have been made to the original proposal in relation to external candidates.

In most managed systems, internal staff are firstly considered for positions before competition is opened up to external applicants. That is what we had proposed last year. However, we have noted the concerns of Member States and under the refined proposal we have committed that all vacant positions – that is, all newly-created posts, and all posts that fall vacant due to retirement, or due to staff leaving the organization for any other reason – will be advertised. As such, internal and external applicants would compete equally for these vacant positions, just as they do today.

As is the case today, for every staff member who retires or leaves the Organization, we will still need to bring someone new in from outside. Assuming that the population of posts and the number of staff leaving remains roughly unchanged, we can therefore expect the same number

of externals to join the organization under the refined model each year as under the current system.

Let me now turn to the issue of costs. Implementing a career development and mobility system does require an investment in the Organization. However, we are sensitive to the Member States' concerns about costs and as such, the model that has been developed requires no increase in indirect costs, such as additional staff to run the programme.

It is understood that direct costs do arise when moves occur between duty stations. However, we need to be very clear about what we mean by mobility. For some staff, there will be benefits gained simply by changing position in the same duty station. As such, to meet the objectives we have set out does not require that our staff, overall, make more moves between duty stations.

We must also not forget that geographic moves are already taking place today and these moves do have a cost. What we are proposing is to change the pattern of geographic movements, not to increase their number. We want to ensure that the moves made are more strategic and therefore are more beneficial to the Organization. Member States, the Organization and our staff all stand to gain from an investment in managed mobility.

In the report before you, we have provided a baseline of 1,635 duty station moves that are currently taking place each year. We have developed a scenario which indicates that our mobility targets can, in theory, be achieved without necessarily increasing this current average number of duty station moves. This, and other additional scenarios that have been developed, can be shared with you.

I would also mention that this baseline of 1,635 duty station moves is not the same as the transfers listed in the Composition Report - and which the ACABQ has referred to - which only reflects lateral moves from one department to another. These represent only a small percentage of the moves that take place between duty stations. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources will further explain this difference in the informal consultations.

Mr. Chairman

Last year, in welcoming the Secretary-General's commitment to developing a managed mobility policy, Member States recognized that such a policy could enable us to more effectively manage our most important asset – our staff. The Secretary-General fully shares that view and the managed proposal before you reflects that. Let us be clear, a system based on incentives – a voluntary system - will not bring the same benefits.

As you consider the report before you, an opportunity exists to bring about historical change in the way we manage our workforce, one that will better equip the Secretariat and its staff to serve Member States and deliver on mandates globally. I urge you to take that opportunity.

Placement Authority

It is also my pleasure to introduce today the report on placement authority (A/68/483).

This report responds to a request of the General Assembly to address the needs of United Nations staff who have been adversely affected by natural disasters, malicious acts and other critical incidents. The Assembly is requested to allow the Secretary-General, under exceptional circumstances, to place staff who have been traumatized by a critical incident in their duty station and are unable to continue to perform their functions at that location, but could continue to contribute to the work of the Organization elsewhere. These exceptions would be subject to strict eligibility criteria including medical certification.

Approval of this proposal will better equip the Organization to address the needs of staff who have sacrificed much in their service to the United Nations. Doing so is our duty of care and I know that you will give this report your fullest consideration

Report on seconded active-duty military and police personnel

Finally I would also like to introduce the report on seconded active-duty military and police personnel (A/68/495).

In the context of the Secretary-General's overview report on peacekeeping operations for the 2013/14 budget period (A/67/723), conflicts between the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules and the national legislation of some Member States with respect to active-duty seconded military and police personnel were brought to the attention of the General Assembly.

In its resolution 67/287, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on proposals to address these difficulties. In addition to providing more information on the difficulties currently being encountered, the report before you suggests possible ways forward to address the conflicts that have been noted with respect to these personnel.

Mr. Chairman

My colleagues and I stand ready to engage with you and provide further details on each of these three reports during the information consultations. Thank you.