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STATEMENT

BY
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ON
AGENDA ITEM 141
“UN COMMON SYSTEM”

AT THE
FIFTH COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK

13 NOVEMBER 2013

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

I am honoured to speak at the 5th Committee today on the important agenda item of UN Common System.

The UN staff is instrumental in realizing the high-ideals envisioned in its founding documents. Common-system matters therefore, are critical to the implementation of the mandates we generate in the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

United Nations embodies mankind's unrelenting faith in the power of multilateralism. This hallowed institution was founded on the ashes of war and has played a pivotal role in keeping world peace since.

Speaking in the UN, I am reminded of the words of the great Indian poet Sahir Ludhianvi, who said: "Jang mashriq mein ho ya maghrib mein, Nasl-e-Adam ka khoon hai aakhir; Is liye aye shareef insaanon, jang talti rahi to behtar hai; Aur hum sabhi ke aangan mein, Shama jalti rahe to behtar hai"

"War, whether it's in the East or the west, it spills the same blood – that of humankind. Therefore, the more we can avoid war the better, the longer we can ensure the light of peace in our homes the better"

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to thank Mr. Kingston Rhodes, Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and his team for the report contained in document A/68/30. I also wish to thank the ACABQ Chair and the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division for the relevant reports.

My delegation would also like to record our appreciation of the ICSC for its commendable work in fulfilling its responsibility as mandated by the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

Commission's work has led to significant HR reforms in the past in harmonizing service-conditions of the staff across the organization. It has also played a significant role in institutionalizing the complex processes of determining base-floor salary, margin-management, and post-adjustment indexation.

ICSC has played an important role in ensuring that the organization continues to attract the best and competitive talent for its workforce and in guaranteeing them remunerative service conditions.

Commission's ongoing comprehensive review of the compensation package for professional and higher staff will, therefore, shape the quality of the organization's workforce in times ahead. We

sincerely hope it also adds much needed diversity to the staff-composition both in terms of geography and gender.

Mr. Chairman,

Holding our decisions in abeyance on common-system matters through repeated deferrals in the past has distorted General Assembly's consideration of this important agenda item. Post-related recosting continues to bedevil the entire budgetary process. The margin-levels are likewise fast approaching the limits of acceptable thresholds.

Given the pay-freeze in the comparator federal civil-service and the uncertainty in this regard beyond December 2013, it is imperative that the measures are put in place to maintain the margins at the desirable level of 115.

My delegation also believes that the post-adjustment system should be allowed to function normally in accordance with the methodology that was agreed by the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

It is imperative that adequate resources are made available to ensure implementation of the ICSC recommendations on UN Common System.

A number of high-level posts have been created in the organization, faster than anytime in the past. It is impossible today to get a consistent-list of USGs and ASGs in the organization. Mandate-creeps across departments and entities have blunted the ability to monitor posts, functions, levels, and finances judiciously. It would therefore, be misplaced to attribute budgetary demands to staff-remunerations alone.

Mr. Chairman,

Before closing, let me assure you of my delegation's constructive engagement in deliberations on this agenda item.

I would like to conclude by quoting one of the most renowned Urdu poets from the Indian sub-continent GHALIB whose words are so very apt in today's context.

Ghalib said:

“हज़ारों ख्वाहिशें ऐसी के हर ख्वाहिश पे दम निकले ; बहुत निकले मेरे अरमान लेकिन फिर भी कम निकले”]

“Such are the thousand ambitions that each of them would consume my life. And yet my desires are not enough for this one lifetime”

I Thank you.