

**Introductory remarks by Ms. Martha Helena Lopez,
Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management,
to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly on the Reports of the
Secretary-General on the Composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics
(A/71/123), Disciplinary Matters (A/72/209), and Amendments to the Staff
Regulations and Rules (A/72/129/Rev.1)**

31 October 2017, (10:00AM)

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates

I am pleased to introduce three reports to the Committee:

- the Report of the Secretary-General on the Composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics. This year's report, A/72/123, covers the reporting period 1 July 2016 to 31 December 2016;
- the fifteenth annual Report of the Secretary-General on his practice in disciplinary matters and possible criminal behaviour. This year's report, A/72/209, covers the reporting period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017; and
- the Report of the Secretary-General, document A/72/129/Rev.1, entitled "Amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules".

Composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics

The Report of the Secretary-General on the Composition of the Secretariat contained in document A/72/123 contains a demographic analysis of the composition of the staff of the Secretariat from 1 July 2016 to 31 December 2016.

With the change in the reporting period for the Composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics from "1 July to 30 June" to "1 January to 31 December", the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) has requested (in A/71/557 paragraph 104) that the Secretariat present data for the six-month transitional

period (July to December 2016) in a report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session.

This current report contains a wealth of data for that period; allow me to highlight a few key points.

There has been a very slight decrease of 480 staff (1.2%) in the Secretariat between 30 June 2016 (40,131) and 31 December 2016 (39,651). This number reflects the decrease of staff for UNMIL (331 staff) and 45 other entities (809 staff), while 52 entities either had no change or an increase (660 staff). Over the last five periods (four and a half years), the staff of the Secretariat has decreased by 4%, which is outlined in Table 2. The details for each entity in the current reporting period can be found in Table 6.

As shown in Table 2, the percentage of staff holding a permanent or continuing appointment in relation to total staff has increased from 18% in June 2013 to 25% in December 2016. The percentage of staff holding fixed-term appointments has fallen from 78% in June 2013 to 67% in December 2016. This trend is driven by the two continuing appointment exercises.

Over the last five periods, the ratio of female staff to total staff has slightly increased from 33.9% to 35.1%, and the average age of staff has slightly increased from 43.4 to 44.8 years. The number of Member States “within range” has decreased from 125 to 102 during the same period from June 2013 to December 2016. These trends are presented in Table 2.

While the report of the Secretary-General presents the staff demographic information at the aggregated level across the Secretariat and is produced annually (with the exception of this year’s report which is bridging the shift to the new reporting period), the “HR Insight” online tool presents information mainly at the staff member level and will continue to be available on a monthly basis.

Amendment to the Staff Regulations and Rules

The report on the amendment to the Staff Regulations and Rules address three main areas: (i) increase in the mandatory age of separation, (ii) changes to the education grant scheme, and (iii) other proposed changes for clarification.

Increase to the mandatory age of separation

The General Assembly, in its resolution 70/244 on the United Nations Common System, decided to introduce a number of changes to the compensation package of staff in the Professional and higher categories and to the mandatory age of separation for staff members. This report presents the amendments required to implement the raise of the mandatory age of separation to 65 years for staff members appointed before 1 January 2014, as well as those required to implement the revised education grant scheme approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/244. Other amendments are proposed to provide further clarity or revise provisions based on best practices and the jurisprudence to-date.

The General Assembly, in Section I of its resolution 70/244, decided that the mandatory age of separation for staff recruited before 1 January 2014 should be raised by the organizations of the United Nations common system to 65 years, at the latest by 1 January 2018.

In addition to amending the staff regulation 9.2, which sets the mandatory age of retirement, a new rule 13.13 is being proposed to reflect, where applicable, the staff members' acquired right to separate at their normal retirement age – 60 or 62 – as defined under the Regulations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. In accordance with the mentioned General Assembly resolution, the proposed change will be implemented as of 1 January 2018.

Changes to the education grant scheme

In Section III.7 of its resolution 70/244, the General Assembly further decided to introduce a revised education grant scheme as of the school year in progress on 1 January 2018.

The main changes are as follows:

- a) Admissible expenses are to be reimbursed based on a 7-bracket sliding scale, as opposed to a single reimbursement rate of 75%;
- b) The same maximum amount of grant, set in one single currency (USD) shall be applicable to all countries as opposed to the current scheme based on 15 currency/country zones;
- c) A streamlined list of admissible expenses is to be applied, comprising tuition, tuition in the mother-tongue and enrolment related fees;
- d) Capital assessment fees are to be reimbursed outside the sliding scale;
- e) The grant is to be payable up to the end of the school year in which the child completes four years of post-secondary studies or attains a first post-secondary degree, whichever comes first, subject to the upper age limit of 25 years;
- f) Boarding assistance is to be provided in the form of a USD 5,000 lump sum, outside the global sliding scale, to staff members whose children are boarding to attend school outside the duty station at the primary or secondary level and who are serving at A to E duty stations and in exceptional cases at H duty stations;
- g) Education grant travel is to be payable only to staff members who will be in receipt of boarding assistance;
- h) Additional education grant entitlement – additional boarding assistance and education grant travel – for staff members serving in designated duty stations will be discontinued.

These changes are reflected in the proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules and will be implemented as of the school year in progress on 1 January 2018, i.e. the school year 2017-2018 for the Northern Hemisphere and 2018 for the Southern Hemisphere, in accordance with part III, para 25 of General Assembly resolution 70/244.

Other proposed amendments

In addition, to the changes proposed in the mandatory age of separation and in the education grant scheme the following amendments are being proposed for clarification or updating purposes:

- a) Staff rules 4.14 and 4.16 are being amended to clarify the long-standing policy of the Organisation whereby these rules only apply to recruitment examinations to posts in the Professional category (i.e. Young Professional Programme and examinations for language posts);
- b) Rule 10.4 is being amended to clarify at what point a staff member may be placed on administrative leave. This includes allegations of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse as a specific instance where a staff member may be placed on administrative leave without pay;
- c) Rule 11.5 is being amended to align the deadline for filing an appeal with the deadline indicated in the statute of the United Nations Appeals Tribunal;
- d) Article 2.3 of Appendix D is being amended to extend appendix D coverage when staff members are performing official duties from another authorized location in the context of “telecommuting” or “teleworking”.

Disciplinary Matters

In the fifteenth annual report on the Secretary-General’s practice in disciplinary matters, after an introduction, the first part of the report provides an overview of the legislative framework governing the investigative and disciplinary processes. The second part of the report provides summaries of individual cases where the Secretary-General imposed

one or more disciplinary measures during the reporting period. The third part of the report provides statistics on the numbers and types of cases received by the Office of Human Resources Management during the reporting period, the number of cases completed, and the disposition of the completed cases. The report also includes information on the overall outcome of appeals contesting disciplinary measures imposed since the introduction of the new system of justice in 2009 before the Dispute and Appeals Tribunals. The last part of the report provides information on the cases of proven misconduct and/or criminal behaviour where the Organization informed member states of the matter.

With respect to the summaries of cases, in response to previous requests by the Committee during prior sessions and as has been the case since the tenth annual report, this report provides information in each summary to better explain some of the considerations taken into account by the Secretary-General when deciding the measure or measures to impose in a particular case. This is a delicate task, as it is important that the information provided does not breach the right to confidentiality of the staff members involved.

While equality of treatment and consistency are part of the foundation of considering disciplinary cases, the decision as to which measure to impose in a particular case is informed by the facts specific to each case and by the unique aggravating and mitigating circumstances of the case.

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates,

We look forward to providing additional details on the Reports of the Secretary-General on Human Resources Management before you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.