

Statement by Ms. Alicia Barcena
Under-Secretary-General for Management
to the Fifth Committee, 4 March 2008
Item 133: Human Resources

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee,

I have the honour to introduce the reports of the Secretary-General under item 133 "Human Resources". These reports relate to streamlining of contractual arrangements and harmonization of conditions of service.

The 2005 World Summit requested the Secretary-General to make proposals to the General Assembly on the conditions and measures necessary for him to carry out his managerial responsibilities effectively, including in the area of human resources. In response, the Secretary-General presented a new human resources framework in his report "Investing in People" (A/61/255), which included proposals on recruitment, mobility, staff development and career development, streamlined contractual arrangements and harmonized conditions of service.

These proposals are aimed at strengthening the current and future human capital, and to better align the human resources framework to the needs of the Organization. They provide an integrated approach to human resources management in order to meet operational needs, and preserve core values, while ensuring consistency in the application of organizational standards, policies and procedures. The desired end result is to create an international civil service with the highest standards of performance and accountability; a work force which is multiskilled, versatile and mobile; and which displays a culture of continuous learning, managerial excellence and respect for diversity.

The Secretariat of today faces new realities. **We have over 38,000 civilian staff.** Over half serve in the field, including in peacekeeping, humanitarian emergencies, human rights, elections, and the battle against drugs and crime. The number continues to grow.

With the growing demand for peacekeeping and other field operations, human resources structures must be adapted to facilitate rapid deployment and mobility, attract

and retain high quality personnel, provide for predictable career development and adequately compensate staff for serving in difficult and hardship conditions. My colleague Ms. Jane Holl Lute, Officer-in-Charge of the Department of Field Support, will be elaborating on this later.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee,

Let me turn to the documents on the proposals for streamlining contractual arrangements A/61/732 and A/62/274. This subject has been under discussion for several years now and it was an integral part of the proposal contained in the report "Investing in People". The proposal aims to introduce one set of staff rules with three types of contract duration: temporary, fixed-term and continuing. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution A/61/244, the Secretary-General has addressed the issues raised by the ACABQ in its report A/61/537, and presented a detailed road map on implementation of the proposal on contractual arrangements.

The International Civil Service Commission at its March 2007 session offered a general endorsement of the Secretary-General's proposals to create one UN staff contract and create a core cadre of career civilian peacekeepers, but made a number of observations (A/61/30/Add 1). As the observations by the ICSC required more staff consultation, SMCC-XXVIII discussed them in 2007 and made recommendations, which were accepted by the Secretary-General and reflected in A/62/274.

In the fall of 2007, the ACABQ considered the same report, and in its report A/62/7/Add.14, supported the streamlining of contractual arrangements. The Committee further stressed that the streamlining is critical for

- building an integrated Secretariat that meets operational needs;
- promoting equity and transparency;
- making contractual arrangements more transparent and easier to administer;
and
- strengthening our ability to recruit and retain staff which is increasingly becoming a challenge, particularly in the field.

Until contractual arrangements are streamlined, it will be necessary for staff members who have the 4-year maximum under a 300 series appointment to be considered for re-appointment under the 100 series, in accordance with criteria provided by the General Assembly. Report A/61/732 provides details on the subject.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee,

Let me now introduce the Secretary-General's report on harmonization of conditions of service (A/61/861), which is a related key element of the Secretary-General's human resources reform. This report responds to the General Assembly's request for a comprehensive account of the Secretary-General's proposal to improve conditions of service in the field and addresses the observations of the International Civil Service Commission in this respect. The proposals on harmonization of conditions of service include designating missions as family or non-family based on the security phase in effect; introducing the special operations approach for non-family duty stations (replacing the current "special" or "established" mission designation), where appropriate; and revising the scheme for rest breaks.

The proposals are in line with the recommendations of the ICSC, and aim to remedy the existing significant differences between the conditions of service of the Secretariat staff in the field and staff of Funds and Programmes in the same locations.

In its report A/62/7/Add.14, the ACABQ supported the proposals to designate missions as family or non-family duty stations against the same criteria used by the UN common system of organizations, and to replace Occasional Recuperation Break (ORB) with paid rest and recuperation travel, and recommended the elimination of mission-specific appointments.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee,

Before I conclude, allow me to present a few slides which highlight the rationale for the proposals. Ms. Jane Holl Lute will then speak to you about developments in the field and the potential operational impact of the Secretary-General's human resources management reforms.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee,

We look forward to discussing these issues with the members of the Committee in order to achieve our common goal of moving forward with the Secretary-General's human resources management reform programme.

Now I would like to invite Ms. Jane Holl Lute to take the floor.