Statement on Agenda Item: 121

Human Resources Management

30 October 2006

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan delegation wishes to thank His Excellency Secretary General Kofi Annan for introducing his reports on Human Resources Management Reform contained in document A/61/228 and Investing in People Report document A/61/255. We also thank the Chairman of ACABQ Mr. Rajhat Saha for introducing the related report.

2. The United Nations is an indispensable instrument for the promotion of humanity's shared goals. The present and emerging challenges of the 21st Century can only be overcome through multilateral cooperation. It has been aptly and repeatedly stated that the United Nations must adapt and be equipped to address these new challenges and circumstances of our times. The reform initiatives of the Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the 2005 Summit decisions, and the implementation process pursued this year, were all guided by this preoccupation.

3. The performance and effectiveness of the United Nations depends on the following crucial factors: (i) the quality of its human resources; (ii) the financial resources provided to support its activities; (iii) the authority vested in the Organization by the Member States; (iv) the political will to support the mandate programme and activities. All efforts for UN Reform must ensure that these pre-requisites are available to our Organization and our new Secretary-General.

4. The well-being and welfare of over 30,000 United Nations staff delivering the mandated programmes and responsibilities often in difficult and perilous circumstances has been a matter of top priority for the Member States and the management. The Secretary General deserves our thanks and applauds for his long standing commitment and efforts to transform the UN to meet the requirements of field oriented organization through efficient use of financial and human resources in conformity with the principles and objectives of the United Nations Charter. An independent international civil service with the highest standards of performance, integrity and accountability is indispensable for promoting effective multilateralism.

5. The UN human resource machinery suffers from some fundamental weaknesses and deficiencies which include:
• A flawed and deficient recruitment and selection system which lacks transparency and fails to address the current and future needs of the organization
• Inadequate strategic HRM planning
• Perpetual under-representation of large number of developing countries at professional and senior levels and lack of opportunity for career development especially for staff from developing countries
• Lack of incentives for mobility across the duty stations
• Absence of a well defined accountability framework and mechanisms to monitor the implementation of GA resolutions and targets identified in the human resource action plans
• Absence of a well defined internal justice system that could complement the accountability framework.
• Inadequate ICT support to the HRM system

6. Human resources action plans should have promoted progress in ten identified key areas including equitable geographic representation. However due to poor monitoring of the implementation of human resources action plan most of the benchmarks have remained unmet. We strongly recommend a robust role of the performance management board for the accountability of programme managers in the areas of delegated authority, implementation of the rules and procedures, and full respect to the competencies and values in the recruitment process.

7. We agree with the need for an equitable, integrated Secretariat and the rational given by the Secretary General in this context. However, the concept would need further deliberations on its structure and other related details.

8. A strong, efficient and effective Human Resources Management System, based on fairness, transparency and qualification based criteria is imperative to recruit the best. Undermining merit in recruitment has harmed the Organization. The use of pre-screened roster of candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented countries and improvement in galaxy system should be optimized. We support the continuation of the existing eligibility criteria for recruitment and selection including relevant qualification experience, skills, and gender and geographic benchmarks. We also appreciate the SG's outreach plan in this context.

9. The Secretary General's proposals on reducing the advertising time and from the current 60 days to 30 days is likely to have negative impact on the prospect of candidates from developing countries. We believe that appointment time can be reduced from 174 days by half through better planning, improved coordination, better utilization of ICT resources.

10. The Secretary General's idea of dedicated unit within the Secretariat to facilitate the programme managers in the field missions for recruitment and selection process would need further deliberations. The questions about its structure, composition, cost benefit analysis and its relations with the Human Resources Management Divisions
need to be clarified. We think that with proper terms of reference it can play a useful role in improving the geographic representation and monitoring of progress on human resource action plans.

11. Staff mobility is essential to meet the emerging needs and priorities of the organization. We wish to reemphasize that staff mobility should be on voluntary basis and take into consideration the interests, and special circumstances of the staff members. Mandatory mobility could entail unforeseen administrative and management implications. We support the ongoing practice of P-2 mobility and would like to see the report on the first phase of mobility of staff from p-3 to G categories. While supporting mobility, it is important to ensure that it would be applied to all categories across the board without discrimination, and not as coercive measure. It should help in placement of professional staff from developing countries in key departments where they have been perennially under represented.

12. Investment in staff development and training programmes is essential to equip the organization to meet the emerging challenges. The training programmes should be tailored to ensure value addition in the skills and competence of the staff. External certification of such training programmes, as well as ensuring cost benefit analysis should be given equal importance in designing training and career path development approaches.

13. The continuous under representation of developing countries especially Islamic countries especially at the USG and ASG level including women have been major disappoints. The number of underrepresented and unrepresented countries has in fact increased over the last one year. To rectify this deficit we should revise the current formula of allocating the geographic posts. We call for rotation in the appointments at USG, ASG levels. We also support the idea that if USG position belongs to developed country, the ASG position should go to developing countries. A parity in appointments at Senior management levels between developing and developed countries should be our immediate goal.

14. Equitable geographic representation is not only a Charter obligation, but is essential to ensure equity in the approaches and view points of all regions and civilizations promoted through UN reports. The recruitment from developing countries particularly in sensitive areas like human rights and import departments such as political affairs, peacekeeping, conference management, General Assembly affairs should substantially increase. We would request a quarterly report on the progress in achieving these targets.

15. The Secretary General's proposals to create a 2500 career peacekeeping positions to meet the organization's rapid deployment requirements needs further deliberation. The ACABQ has raised important questions which must be responded. We would like to emphasize, that if such a dedicated civilian peacekeeping component were to be created, significant share of its staff composition should logically
belong to the troops contributing countries who hold vast pool of experienced professional.

16. We take note of the Secretary General's proposals of staff buy out. We support voluntary staff buy out proposals. Mandatory and compulsory buy out options can be expensive and contrary to applicable rules. We support the ACABQ opinion on this aspect which emphasize the utilization of other means to address the under performance especially strategic recruitment on vacation of large number of posts in 2010.

17. We are concerned about the continuous utilization of the retired and present staff as consultants and individual contractors. We would reiterate our request to entrust the OIOS to monitor the appointment of consultants and individual contractors in the Secretariat at its future sessions. In addition we are concerned that large percentage of the consultants continue to come from a limited number of countries which is against the principle of fairness and denies the opportunity to large number of Member States. We would insist that the guidelines on the hiring period and the fields in which such consultancies require should be fully respected.

18. The harmonization of contracts of different series of staff and service conditions in the UN system are issues that would involve large financial resources and impact on the composition of the Secretariat. The new system raises several questions, that we would strive to clarify during informals. These proposals should be considered along with the the ICSC working group's report on this issue.

19. To enhance efficiency, transparency and fairness a strong accountability framework is crucial. It is indeed regrettable that the Assembly's requests have gone unheeded. A clear framework and mechanism of accountability at all levels, especially at the senior management level with regard to the Human Resources Management policies should not be delayed any more. The absence of a sound internal justice system makes the situation for general staff even more precarious.

20. We would constructively engage in the consultations on this item for concrete progress.

I thank You Mr. Chairman.