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Chair: Mr. Tawana (Vice-Chair) (South Africa)
*Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Kelapile

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Agenda item 136: United Nations common system

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In the absence of Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala), Mr. Tawana (South Africa), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 136: United Nations common system
(A/65/30, A/65/493 and A/65/532)

1. **Mr. Rhodes** (Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC)), introducing the Commission's report for 2010 (A/65/30), said that the organizations of the United Nations common system were operating in an ever more complex political environment and their staff were increasingly working in unsafe, even dangerous conditions. Some organizations had responded pragmatically to the threats to staff security and safety, resulting in a diverse array of arrangements that challenged the very concept of a unified international civil service. It was the Commission's *raison d'être* to ensure a common system that precluded unnecessary competition among organizations. He would therefore focus on recommendations that harmonized the conditions of service for staff serving in non-family duty stations and proposals for a system-wide performance management framework.

2. The most pressing issue in the current report was the need to harmonize compensation practices for the additional cost of supporting the dual households of staff serving in non-family duty stations. Prior to the 2009 contractual reform, the remuneration of staff in peacekeeping operations had differed significantly from that of other common system staff. Even after the conversion of the former to regular staff status, peacekeeping appointees remained the sole group to receive no compensation for their assignment to duty stations designated "non-family". Lack of consistency in organizations' designation of "family" and "non-family" duty stations exacerbated the inequality in pay between staff of the United Nations Secretariat and staff of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. All organizations that had agreed to adhere to shared norms and standards must now accept a common approach to remunerating the services of staff assigned to non-family duty stations. As it had done in 2006 and 2008, ICSC again recommended that the United Nations and common system organizations should harmonize their field arrangements and that the United Nations should designate non-family duty stations based solely on security assessments.

3. The aim of harmonization was to ensure a fair compensation package as part of a human resource strategy that would promote consistent programme delivery by improving performance, efficiency and accountability. The Commission's recommendations would bring compensation packages into alignment and thereby eliminate competition for common system staff serving at the same duty station. Annex XIII to the report set out the recommendations on the phased implementation of the arrangements leading to full harmonization over a five-year period and annex XI contained a framework for harmonized rest and recuperation arrangements.

4. To address the issue of separate households, ICSC recommended that the United Nations should introduce an additional hardship element for staff serving in non-family duty stations and that the agencies, funds and programmes should replace their current, more generous, packages with that hardship element. The proposal had the virtue of building on existing allowances rather than creating a new one; it was also largely comparable with the "separate maintenance allowance" of the non-diplomatic civil service of the United States, which was the United Nations comparator. The Commission's recommendations would naturally entail additional costs for the United Nations; without them, the compensation gap would remain and the inequity would continue. All other organizations, on the other hand, would reap savings over time. Staff of those organizations who were already serving and remained at their current non-family duty stations would experience no monetary loss or gain for a transition period of five years and would feel an impact only upon their reassignment to another such station. During the first two years, there would be no significant difference between the amounts received under the previous special operations living allowance arrangements and under the new scheme; beginning in the third year, some staff would receive more and others less than before, a natural consequence of any harmonization measure.

5. The Commission had arrived at its recommendations after intensive review of a number of options and discussions with the representatives of organizations and staff bodies. In its view, the recommended arrangement was the most cost-effective, transparent and administratively simple, and would best support recruitment and retention at non-family

duty stations. It would eliminate the unequal treatment of staff, encourage productivity in the most difficult duty stations and support the goal of “delivering as one”.

6. Performance management continued to be a daunting challenge: organizations and their staff were concerned about the lack of effectiveness of performance appraisal systems, which had failed to establish a link between performance and career progression by rewarding staff for excellent performance and imposing sanctions for poor performance. The revised performance management framework had improved on previous efforts but was still a work in progress. ICSC would therefore report to the General Assembly on the revised framework at its sixty-sixth session, with recommendations on rewards and sanctions, including the use of merit steps. Good governance — including strong commitment and leadership from executive management — was crucial to a viable performance management system. The Commission therefore considered that executive heads should discuss performance management and should enlist the High-level Committee on Management to make it a priority on the agenda of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. Without the personal commitment of executive heads, performance guidelines — no matter how well conceived — would continue to disappoint.

7. With respect to the problem of inter-agency mobility, a satisfactory solution had not yet been found. The ICSC secretariat would conduct a study in 2010 of the barriers to mobility and identify areas for action. The findings would be submitted to the Assembly at its sixty-seventh session.

8. The Commission had reviewed termination indemnity payments for 2007 through 2009 and had found no inappropriate application of the scheme. The trends in termination indemnity-based separation appeared to be driven by the operational needs of organizations.

9. On contractual arrangements, ICSC reiterated its recommendation that appointments of limited duration should be abolished effective 31 December 2010 in order to eliminate differences in compensation and benefits for staff serving in the field. It continued to hold the view that continuing contracts would help organizations maintain programme continuity and would facilitate strategic management of human

resources to achieve organizational objectives. The type of contract awarded to a staff member should be determined strictly by organizational needs rather than by individual performance, however satisfactory.

10. With regard to gender balance in the United Nations, many of the problems that had been identified as early as 1985, when the topic had first been placed on the Commission's agenda, still persisted. There had been no dearth of ideas, policies and measures to correct the gender imbalance — including the underrepresentation of women at senior levels — but in the absence of proper accountability mechanisms, the results were inadequate. Gender equality must remain the goal of all United Nations system organizations: the Commission had once again made a series of recommendations to address the issue.

11. The Commission recommended an increase in the education grant levels in 11 country/currency zones and the flat rates for boarding in 13 zones. It also recommended that special measures should be maintained for China, Hungary, Indonesia, Romania, and the Russian Federation and for eight schools in France where education-related expenses were far higher than the established maximums. A review of the education grant methodology had revealed that practices were by and large uniform across the common system. ICSC nevertheless recommended full harmonization of the eligibility criteria. It further recommended that children's and secondary dependant's allowances, which were reviewed biennially, should be revised to \$2,929 and \$1,025, respectively, as of 1 January 2011.

12. An increase of 1.37 per cent in the base/floor salary scale was recommended, with the standard consolidation procedures to apply. The financial implications of the adjustment would thus be limited to increases in separation payments. The Commission continued to monitor the margin between the net remuneration of United Nations staff in the Professional and higher categories in New York and their counterparts in the comparator civil service; the margin was currently estimated at 113.3. All the elements were in place for the review of the levels of pensionable remuneration to be carried out in 2011. A review of the salary survey methodologies for the General Service and other locally recruited categories which had begun in 2008 was also expected to be completed in 2011.

13. A summary of the recommendations requiring action by the Committee and of their financial implications was set out at the beginning of the report. The results of ICSC deliberations on National Professional Officers, grade equivalencies between the United States federal civil service and the United Nations common system, and General Service job evaluation standards were also contained in the report.

14. **Ms. Van Buerle** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the administrative and financial implications of the decisions and recommendations contained in the report of ICSC for 2010 (A/65/493), said that financial implications would arise from the Commission's recommendations regarding the level of the education grant, the base/floor salary scale, children's and secondary dependant's allowances, conditions of service in the field and harmonization of the conditions of service for staff serving in non-family duty stations with respect to the designation of non-family duty stations, additional hardship allowance and rest and recuperation travel.

15. The total financial implications for the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 and for the budgets of peacekeeping operations and the support account for peacekeeping for the 2010/2011 financial period were estimated at \$10,111,500, \$203,600 and \$32,500, respectively, as summarized in tables 4 and 5 of the statement.

16. Requirements under the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 would be considered in the context of the performance reports for that biennium and requirements for the biennium 2012-2013 would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for that biennium. Similarly, requirements under the peacekeeping budgets and the support account would be reflected in the performance reports relating to the budgets for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 and in the context of the proposed budgets for the subsequent financial period.

17. **Mr. Kelapile** (Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/65/532), said that the Advisory Committee had confined its consideration to the

financial implications of the ICSC recommendations on the harmonization of the conditions of service for staff serving in non-family duty stations; its substantive views on the matter were contained in its report on human resources management (A/65/537).

18. ICSC had estimated that implementation of the recommendation on an additional hardship allowance for service in non-family duty stations would yield cost savings of \$24.9 million annually for the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. It should be noted, however, that those savings would be achieved progressively over the five-year period of the proposed implementation plan.

19. The Advisory Committee had no objection to the approach outlined by the Secretary-General for the consideration of the related requirements under the programme budget, the peacekeeping budgets and the support account.

20. **Mr. Pace** (President of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA)) said that FICSA was aware that no civil service was immune to the effects of the precarious state of the world economy. Given the challenges facing the organizations of the United Nations system, constant, substantive and open communication among staff, management and the Member States was crucial. Unfortunately, efforts by staff to establish effective dialogue with managers had too often been rebuffed; the failure to value staff participation represented a great loss for management and for organizations as a whole. He hoped that the Committee would approve measures to strengthen staff-management relations within the human resources management framework to be considered by ICSC and inter-agency bodies in 2011.

21. The harmonization of the conditions of service of staff serving in non-family duty stations had been a contentious issue that had all but monopolized the ICSC discussions. Since the ICSC secretariat and the Commission had previously lauded the success of the special operations approach and had supported its maintenance alongside the mission subsistence regime, the Commission's current recommendation constituted a radically new approach that had been decided upon without an adequate evaluation of its potential impact on the operations of the specialized agencies, funds and programmes. FICSA understood the need for the United Nations to implement a second household maintenance benefit but regretted the potential loss of

the special operations approach. Many staff members would suffer a financial loss as a result; there would be legal challenges to any decision to diminish or eliminate the benefit, which many considered an acquired right. FICSA was also concerned that, if approved, the recommendation would diminish the effectiveness of programmes in locations where United Nations action was most urgently needed. He therefore implored the Committee not to endorse the ICSC recommendation and instead to request the Commission to gather the necessary data and develop a new proposal that would be acceptable to all stakeholders.

22. With respect to the ICSC programme of work for 2011-2012, he noted that conducting a total compensation comparison under the Noblemaire principle would require considerable time and human resources. When previous studies by the ICSC secretariat had shown that Germany had the highest paid civil service, the Commission had concluded that the conditions for changing the comparator were not in place. FICSA wondered whether the conditions to adopt a new comparator — should one emerge from the study — now existed and, if not, whether the exercise had any value. It also wondered why common system staff were compared with national civil services rather than with foreign services and why other international civil services were used merely as a “reference check”. An updated interpretation of the Noblemaire principle was required if the United Nations was to remain competitive with the best paid international civil services. The alternative would be a frustrating exercise whose outcome would be affected by the exclusion of essential comparators.

23. A review of the ICSC methodologies for conducting salary surveys for General Service and other locally recruited categories would soon enter its final stages. Major issues remained to be resolved concerning the transparency of the survey process, the ability to source quality data from competitive comparators in local labour markets and the need to establish accurate local salary scales. He hoped that the opportunity at hand to achieve the required level of transparency and fairness would not be lost.

24. The review of pensionable remuneration to be conducted in 2011 would be of great interest to staff. FICSA had been surprised to note that ICSC discussions of the mandatory age of separation — a matter of great interest to the Fifth Committee that had

obvious implications for the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund — had been postponed until 2012.

25. Lastly, he acknowledged the vast efforts that had been made to improve staff safety and security. Nevertheless, FICSA remained concerned about the need to improve and harmonize security measures for locally recruited staff.

26. **Ms. Wallace** (President of the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA)), said that, with regard to the harmonization of the conditions of service for staff serving in non-family duty stations, the three staff federations supported a second household allowance for peacekeeping staff. They also agreed, in principle, with ICSC that there should be no gaps in the compensation packages of staff assigned to non-family duty stations across the common system. However, CCISUA feared that closing those gaps could adversely affect the work of the funds and programmes.

27. CCISUA shared the Secretary-General’s concern that some of the proposals for harmonizing conditions of service in non-family duty stations would have severe repercussions on programme delivery and eliminate the critical support the current system provided to organizations that used the special operations approach. The great advantage of the special operations approach was that it encouraged staff members to seek or accept assignments in non-family duty stations by allowing them to maintain a home base in a nearby location. That approach also offered logistical advantages: organizations could more easily move staff members from location to location when they were based in a single administrative place of assignment.

28. The Commission’s proposal would fundamentally alter the special operations approach model and contradicted the aim of harmonizing all practices in the most cost-effective manner while meeting the needs of the organizations of the common system. The Commission’s review had been perfunctory and rushed, and had not taken into account the potential impact on all organizations and the programmes being delivered at non-family duty stations. Until a thorough review had been conducted, organizations should have the option to continue using the special operations approach. In the meanwhile, staff and management should continue their efforts to resolve that issue.

29. With regard to contractual arrangements, the ICSC report indicated that most common system organizations had adopted the contractual framework endorsed by the General Assembly and were eliminating appointments of limited duration. Unfortunately, organizations were unable to implement completely that framework because the Assembly had not yet approved the criteria for awarding continuing contracts.

30. The uncertainty surrounding contractual arrangements affected the organizations' ability to attract and retain staff, as qualified candidates refused appointments because they were being offered contracts that did not support their career aspirations. On the other hand, internal staff were being asked to serve in conflict areas or locations where United Nations officials were being targeted with impunity. It was not surprising that staff preferred to remain at a headquarters duty station, where they were assured of safety, rather than serve in the field. CCISUA therefore urged the General Assembly to approve a modality whereby common system organizations could grant continuing contracts.

31. CCISUA supported the Commission's proposals in respect of the education grant and looked forward to reviewing the proposed methodology. With regard to the conditions of service of the General Service and other locally recruited categories of staff, CCISUA supported the development of an organizational policy framework on the employment of National Professional Officers. It would nonetheless welcome an in-depth review of the entire category, including an assessment of whether the continued existence of the category was justified in the twenty-first century.

32. CCISUA had participated in the Commission's review of the General Service job evaluation standards and continued to participate in the ongoing review of the General Service salary methodologies with a view to remedying the inequities facing national staff.

33. **Mr. Samaras** (President of the United Nations International Civil Servants Federation (UNISERV)) said cronyism was an unfortunate aspect of inter-agency mobility that cast a shadow on the recruitment process. After taking up a post at a new organization, managers would actively seek to attract or recruit friends and former associates to their new organization. Another deterrent to mobility was the fact that promotions obtained in common system

organizations were not recognized by the parent organization. In fact, one organization required staff members recruited from another organization to resign their former post and relinquish all entitlements, including seniority, prior to joining.

34. Some 16 years after its introduction, the performance management framework had yet to produce the desired results because organizations lacked the will and the courage to implement an effective performance management system. The framework established mechanisms for responsibility without establishing commensurate mechanisms for accountability. Many so-called managers viewed their responsibilities as a burden because they were competent specialists who had been promoted into unwilling or incompetent managers.

35. Despite the success of a few common system organizations in achieving gender balance, the majority of the organizations had yet to attain that goal. Although women made up more than half of the workforce at the P-1 to P-3 levels, they remained underrepresented at the senior levels. UNISERV believed that achieving gender balance should have been one of the goals of strategic workforce planning. Achieving gender balance required the common system organizations to develop a coordinated and harmonized approach. They must also consider why they failed to attract qualified women. In that connection, addressing the question of work/life balance was crucial to attracting and retaining competent staff members, both men and women.

36. With regard to the evolution of the United Nations/United States net remuneration margin, he noted that, in 2010, the margin had remained below the desirable level of 115, having declined to an estimated 112.8. The margin should be harmonized at a single level of at least 114.8 for staff at all grades, with a viewing to attaining a margin of 115.

37. There had been an increasing tendency to use National Professional Officers as cheap labour, as was illustrated by the Food and Agriculture Organization's response to cuts in its budget. The use of National Professional Officers by common system organizations to replace international staff further eroded the international civil service. UNISERV would welcome a re-evaluation of the National Professional Officer programme by the Committee.

38. UNISERV welcomed efforts to harmonize conditions of service for staff serving in non-family duty stations. The abnormally high vacancy rate in some field missions reflected an inequity in the compensation of staff, including those paid at the single rate, assigned to non-family duty stations. UNISERV therefore appealed to the General Assembly to apply the same compensation scheme that had been proposed for staff with dependants to staff members paid at the single rate, without the 50 per cent penalty.

39. With regard to the review of pensionable remuneration, he noted with concern that the laws of certain Member States prohibited a surviving spouse from collecting a deceased staff member's pension. UNISERV called on the General Assembly to address that issue in the context of the United Nations Pension Fund.

40. **Mr. Al-Shahari** (Yemen), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, reaffirmed the Group's support for ICSC and stressed that staff across the common system serving under similar conditions should receive equal treatment. The Commission's proposals addressed the inconsistencies of the common system in a balanced manner and should be implemented across the board as a matter of priority. The General Assembly should therefore appropriate adequate resources for the full and immediate implementation of the Commission's proposals concerning the harmonization of conditions of service.

41. **Mr. Lambert** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Iceland; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said the Commission's report contained proposals that could have a significant impact on the daily lives and working conditions of staff. The United Nations was faced with increasingly complex challenges and its staff members were being asked to work in very difficult circumstances. The Organization must therefore remain capable of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity when employing staff. That idea was at the core of General Assembly resolution 63/250 and should inform the Committee's discussion of the Commission's proposals.

42. The European Union was a staunch defender of the common system and believed that the development

of harmonized human resources practices was in line with the concept of "delivering as one". Allowing staff to move more easily from one organization to another would enhance productivity and creativity, thereby creating a more efficient common system.

43. Harmonization required concessions from both organizations and staff. Reform of the human resources system could not be achieved overnight and the effects of past reforms had yet to be completely assessed. The merits of each reform proposal would also have to be weighed against its budgetary implications. It was therefore imperative to scrutinize each proposal with a view to balancing the organizations' needs against current international fiscal conditions.

44. **Mr. Lieberman** (United States of America) said that his delegation was concerned by the existence of significant disparities between the conditions of service for Secretariat staff and those for the staff of the agencies, funds and programmes. One of those discrepancies was the result of General Assembly resolution 63/250, in which the Assembly had decided to designate established missions as family missions and existing special missions as non-family missions. In order to address that anomaly, his delegation supported the Commission's proposal that the United Nations should harmonize the designation of non-family duty stations on the basis of a security assessment, as currently applied by the rest of the common system.

45. Another disparity stemmed from the different methods utilized by common system organizations to compensate staff for maintaining a second household when assigned to non-family duty stations. Although the agencies, funds and programmes provided their staff with an allowance to defray the cost of maintaining a second household, Secretariat staff received no such allowance, even when they served at the same locations and performed the same functions as their counterparts.

46. Recalling that recruitment and retention were issues of concern to all the organizations, he said that a strong common system was necessary in order to enable the organizations to respond to contemporary challenges in a coordinated manner. Harmonization of conditions of service should be mandated by a General Assembly resolution and achieved in a fair and logical manner. Staff currently serving in dangerous locations should not be asked to endure a sharp decline in their

conditions of service because that might harm organizations' ability to retain qualified staff. On the other hand, Member States must bear in mind the prevailing climate of fiscal austerity when taking action on the proposal before the Committee.

47. **Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) said that ICSC played a central role in ensuring the integrity, development and harmonization of the common system of salary, allowances and conditions of service for staff in the United Nations common system. In addition to ensuring that staff received fair and equitable pay, Member States wished to see to it that organizations functioned economically and did not compete among themselves for staff. His delegation was prepared to examine possible solutions to the serious problem of vacancies in field missions without losing sight of the financial implications. However, the effects of the improved benefit packages provided for under General Assembly resolution 63/250 had not yet been thoroughly analysed. He would therefore seek updated information on those effects and on whether the improved pay and allowances had helped solve the problem of recruitment for the most challenging duty stations.

48. The harmonization of conditions of service could be achieved only by considering all of the benefits and allowances under the common system, including, inter alia, the education grant and the mobility and hardship allowance. His delegation also attached great importance to the issue of performance management. The Commission's recommendations on many other issues would provide an excellent basis for the Committee's deliberations.

49. **Mr. Kanamori** (Japan) said that, in considering the Commission's proposals on harmonizing conditions of service, it was important to understand the differences and similarities in the conditions of service for staff members assigned to non-family duty stations as part of a peacekeeping or special political mission and the conditions of service of those who worked for the funds, programmes and agencies. His delegation believed that, in addition to differences in their mandates, the Secretariat and the funds and programmes had different staff mobility policies.

50. His delegation would be interested to learn whether the Secretariat and the funds, programmes and agencies competed against each other for staff. It specifically wished to learn how many staff members

had transferred from peacekeeping operations or special political missions to the funds, programmes or specialized agencies since the abolition, in 2009, of the mission subsistence allowance for staff serving in peacekeeping operations and special political missions.

51. His delegation doubted whether monetary incentives could persuade staff to accept assignments at non-family duty stations. It therefore wished to know whether there had been any change in the vacancy rates at the non-family duty stations of the funds and programmes after the introduction of the special operations approach. His delegation would scrutinize the Commission's recommendation that staff assigned to non-family duty stations should receive an additional hardship allowance, taking into account the existing common system arrangement whereby staff serving in a non-family duty station could receive a hardship allowance, a mobility allowance and, where applicable, hazard pay.

52. With regard to the Commission's proposal concerning the harmonization of rest and recuperation, his delegation noted that the duration of the rest and recuperation cycle varied from one duty station to another. It wondered how the duration of the various rest and recuperation cycles had been determined and whether there was adequate justification for the current cycles.

53. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Mexico) said his delegation hoped that the General Assembly would adopt a resolution in which it decided that non-family duty stations should be designated solely on the basis of security assessments conducted by the Department of Safety and Security. The Assembly should adopt such a resolution regardless of the decision it took in respect of harmonizing the conditions of service for staff serving in non-family duty stations.

54. The ICSC proposal on harmonizing conditions of service would ensure that staff serving under similar conditions would receive equal treatment, thereby leading to more effective programme delivery. It would also promote inter-agency mobility by eliminating disparities in compensation. However, Member States should carefully consider the financial implications of the proposal in view of the difficult economic conditions. The proposed measures should therefore be funded through savings made in other areas.

55. It was imperative to strengthen the Commission's position as the sole body responsible for reviewing the

conditions of service for all United Nations staff. That role took on added importance because certain common system organizations that did not report to the General Assembly had not yet performed a thorough review of their human resources policies. He trusted that the Secretary-General would take the necessary measures to ensure that all common system organizations implemented the Commission's recommendations.

56. The General Assembly should defer consideration of the Commission's proposal for the introduction of a rest and recuperation framework that included payment of travel expenses. Nonetheless, his delegation stood ready to work with other Member States, in a gradual and responsible manner, on other priorities related to harmonization of conditions of service, bearing in mind the current financial situation.

57. With regard to the criteria used to determine eligibility for education grants, in particular the minimum and maximum age, his delegation believed that the maximum age ICSC proposed was too high and called on it to conduct an expanded review of the methodology for determining the education grant.

58. The Commission would review conditions of service of the General Service and other locally recruited categories of staff at its seventy-second session in 2011. Given that the staff of the United Nations were civil servants, the Commission should take into account public-sector salaries when conducting that important review.

59. **Ms. He Yi** (China) said that her delegation was pleased with the Commission's efforts in respect of the performance management framework. The Commission should continue to work towards the successful implementation of the framework, which was an important strategic goal, and to strengthen its cooperation with Member States and the Secretariat in order to achieve that goal, thereby facilitating human resources management across the common system.

60. The conditions of service for staff assigned to non-family duty stations were not only relevant to the Organization's efforts to recruit and retain qualified staff, but also to the interests of staff serving in the field and the implementation of inter-agency mobility. Her delegation commended the Commission's efforts to develop a solution to the issue, which required Member States to balance staff members' interests

against the need for management control and fiscal prudence.

61. Although all common system organizations had set clear goals with regard to gender equality, progress in achieving those goals, regrettably, still fell short of the ideal. Her delegation reiterated that, through effective performance evaluation and the establishment of improved accountability and monitoring mechanisms throughout the common system, managers could be encouraged to take a more proactive role in achieving gender equality.

62. Her delegation welcomed the Commission's efforts in recent years to enhance communications and exchange of information among common system organizations, Member States and other stakeholders. It also welcomed the studies that ICSC had conducted with a view to strengthening its role and enhancing its strategic planning.

63. Lastly, her delegation believed that the Commission should continue to fulfil its role as an independent expert body of the General Assembly in regulating and coordinating the conditions of service for staff in the United Nations common system.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.