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Chair: Ms. Bird (Australia)
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 141: Human resources management
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Agenda item 142: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*)
([A/73/377](#), [A/73/377/Corr.1](#) and [A/73/377/Add.1](#))

1. **Ms. Lopez** (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the global human resources strategy 2019–2021: building a more effective, transparent and accountable United Nations ([A/73/372](#)), said that the strategy comprised a series of bold objectives and strategic actions to transform human resources management in the Secretariat. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [72/266 B](#), efforts were under way to reshape how the human resources function supported programme delivery and mandate implementation. While previous human resources management reforms had enhanced the United Nations organizational culture in areas such as staff development, performance management, workforce planning and recruitment, the strategic human resources function in the Secretariat must be further transformed and modernized in keeping with the Secretary-General's vision for a stronger, more effective and more agile Organization.

2. The Secretary-General envisaged a United Nations with improved functioning and operational support. Taking into account the concerns of Member States regarding the effectiveness of recruitment processes and performance management systems, the strategy provided a refined road map and tools to ensure that the Organization was able to attract, retain and deploy staff with the skill sets and dynamism required to meet new and emerging challenges. The overall objective was to foster a mobile, dynamic and multitalented international civil service by advancing change under three components: promoting an enabling policy environment for people management; catalysing proactive talent acquisition and management; and contributing to a transformed organizational culture. Specific goals and actions set out under those components would reshape human resources management policies and practices across the Secretariat, reflecting Member States' vision for a reformed United Nations.

3. Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development required an improved United Nations system that was capable of operating in an integrated manner. Systematic workforce planning, talent management and organizational development were needed to respond to complex and evolving global

challenges. A highly skilled and diverse workforce characterized by equitable geographical distribution and gender balance that was representative of all peoples served by the Organization was also needed. The integrated human resources framework provided for by the strategy would guide the Secretariat in updating the Organization's business model and ensuring a more effective, transparent and accountable United Nations.

4. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the overview of human resources management reform for the period 2017–2018 ([A/73/372/Add.1](#)), she said that the Committee was requested to support the elimination of the requirement that General Service staff members wishing to apply for positions in the Professional category pass the young professionals programme examination as "G to P" candidates. That step would bring the Secretariat into line with other United Nations system organizations and enable all qualified staff members to apply for vacant positions. It would thus ensure fairness and advance the Organization's interests.

5. In the interest of accelerating recruitment, the Secretary-General proposed to reduce the standard posting period for position-specific job openings in the Professional and higher categories from 45 to 30 days. The value of that proposal was supported by the results of an initiative, launched in January 2017, to shorten the posting period for such job openings from 60 to 45 days on a pilot basis. The Secretary-General also proposed increasing the maximum earnings limit for retirees, a measure that would bring the Secretariat into line with other United Nations system organizations and would ensure that the Organization had access to highly experienced former staff members to perform specific tasks. In addition, he proposed the abolition of the requirement for staff members to renounce permanent resident status in a country other than their country of nationality.

6. The report described the progress made in modernizing and streamlining the Organization's human resources functions and provided an update on talent management initiatives, including in the areas of workforce planning, performance management processes, and learning opportunities.

7. The Secretary-General attached high priority to the participation of youth in the Organization's activities. Since the launch of the young professionals programme in 2011, considerable progress had been made in streamlining and professionalizing the recruitment process for young people, including by administering examinations online, which had resulted in a higher number and greater diversity of participants.

In 2016 and 2017, respectively, 60 and 69 candidates who had passed young professionals programme examinations had been appointed to P-2 positions in the Organization. In addition, the Secretariat's internship programme, ongoing cooperation with universities and increased use of social media had improved outreach to young professionals worldwide. Given the importance of ensuring a geographically diverse workforce, activities to attract job applicants from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States had been strengthened.

8. In keeping with the Secretary-General's commitment to guaranteeing the health and well-being of staff, a number of initiatives had been implemented to improve the health and access to care of all United Nations personnel. For example, a system-wide strategy to support staff members living with mental health conditions had recently been launched and tools had been developed to prevent staff from being exposed to diseases declared as public health emergencies.

9. She concluded by introducing the reports of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics ([A/73/79](#)); the composition of the Secretariat: gratis personnel, retired staff and consultants and individual contractors ([A/73/79/Add.1](#)); and the assessment of the system of desirable ranges ([A/73/372/Add.3](#)). The third of those reports contained a review of the current system of desirable ranges and a request that the Assembly approve the recommended changes and provide further guidance, as appropriate. It also contained proposals to retain or widen the current base number of Professional posts, with a view to establishing a more effective tool for ensuring equitable geographical distribution within the Secretariat. Member States' continued support for the Secretary-General's reform agenda was required to ensure a more responsive and effective Organization.

10. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee ([A/73/497](#)), said that the Secretary-General's reports on the composition of the Secretariat ([A/73/79](#) and [A/73/79/Add.1](#)) were the first reports that reflected data on the Secretariat's composition collected on the basis of the calendar year, a change that had been proposed by the Secretary-General in order to allow sufficient time for data analysis. However, limited analysis had been provided on trends such as the ageing of Secretariat staff and the increasing number of Member States in the unrepresented and underrepresented categories, and on the underlying causes of those trends.

11. With respect to the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report on the overview of human resources management reform for the period 2017–2018 ([A/73/372/Add.1](#)), the Advisory Committee noted the qualifications of staff members in the General Service and related categories and the need to improve their opportunities for career development. In developing human resources policies, all factors should be taken into account to ensure equal treatment of all candidates. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Secretary-General develop a pilot project, with a clearly defined scope and time frame, aimed at achieving equal opportunities for recruitment to entry-level Professional posts, including for staff members in the General Service and related categories.

12. Pending the General Assembly's decision with regard to the current provisional reduction of the standard posting period for position-specific job openings from 60 to 45 days, the Advisory Committee recommended against approval of the Secretary-General's proposal to further reduce the period from 45 to 30 days. Moreover, the Advisory Committee noted that, while the proposal only focused on the job posting period, other factors also affected overall recruitment timelines.

13. The Advisory Committee recommended against approval of the proposal to increase the permissible earnings of retired staff members, as that would likely lead to more frequent hiring of retirees, a practice that ran counter to efforts to rejuvenate the Secretariat and improve workforce planning. On the proposal to remove the requirement for staff members to renounce permanent resident status in a country other than their country of nationality, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly reconsider that requirement.

14. With respect to the proposed global human resources strategy for 2019–2021, he recalled that the Organization had undertaken a number of human resources management reforms over the previous two decades. Any new strategy should reflect a comprehensive impact assessment of those reforms and should address such longstanding challenges as deficiencies in staff selection processes; rejuvenation through external recruitment; equal treatment of external and internal candidates; performance appraisal and management; the quantity of temporary appointments, including those entailing a special post allowance; and impediments to achieving equitable geographical distribution and gender balance targets. Moreover, the proposed implementation plan for the new strategy did not contain necessary information and lacked clarity, and therefore the Advisory Committee

recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit a refined proposal for consideration at the Assembly's seventy-fourth session.

15. The Advisory Committee was not convinced that the concept of regional diversity was necessarily complementary to the aim of equitable geographical representation, and considered that it might actually divert attention from that aim. Lastly, with respect to the Secretary-General's proposals on the system of desirable ranges, the Advisory Committee reiterated its view that the final policy decision rested with the General Assembly.

16. **The Chair**, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [35/213](#), invited the President of the Staff Union of the United Nations Office at Nairobi to make a statement.

17. **Mr. Njuhigu** (President of the Staff Union of the United Nations Office at Nairobi) said that United Nations staff representatives attached great importance to the work that they performed for the benefit of the United Nations system and its staff. They were proud to contribute to the fulfilment of the Organization's mandates and strove to be agents of change in reforming the United Nations to enhance its relevance at a time of increasing global conflict.

18. Staff representatives were committed to the implementation of the global human resources strategy for 2019–2021, the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity, and the 2030 Agenda, initiatives that had a significant impact on the Organization's staff, its most important asset. In order to ensure the success of the human resources strategy, a number of their concerns should be addressed. First, the imperatives of regional and gender diversity should not undermine efforts to ensure the competence and suitability of job candidates. Flexible measures should be taken to enable vacancies to be filled internally through inter-agency mobility before external candidates were considered. Benchmarks should be established for initiatives to motivate staff through career development, fair and transparent recruitment processes, and a robust performance management system. Training and development opportunities should be strengthened with professional bodies in areas such as medicine, accounting, engineering and economics. Orientation should be conducted for staff at all levels to improve respect for United Nations processes, rules and regulations.

19. Consideration should be given to eliminating the requirement that consultants and interns wait for six months following the end of their most recent period of service before applying for positions in the

Secretariat; and the required seven-day break in service for General Service staff moving to posts in the National Professional Officer or Professional categories. The "G to P" examination requirement should also be eliminated so that the experience and expertise of General Service and Field Service staff could be recognized by allowing them to apply for Professional posts.

20. Staff representatives looked forward to objective discussions between staff and management on the global service delivery model, which underpinned other major proposals for human resources management. Any job losses entailed by the model should be offset by retirements, functional and geographical mobility, and voluntary separations. Cost-saving measures such as reduction of travel expenses, use of available infrastructure and containment of recruitment costs should be adopted to meet budgetary requirements, and proactive steps should be taken to address any potential psychological effects of the model's implementation.

21. While a mobility strategy that would provide candidates with a wide range of career opportunities was important to staff, participants in the assessment tests conducted for relevant job networks had called into question the tests' credibility.

22. Measures should be taken to prevent mismanagement of the Organization's resources and ensure that assets found to have been mismanaged by personnel during their service could be recovered within a reasonable period of time after their separation. There was also a need to address gaps in the procedures for reporting cases of retaliation for consideration within the justice system, which was not recognized as a protected activity by the Organization, a situation that made some staff reluctant to seek redress and discouraged witnesses from coming forward for fear of repercussions.

23. Members of central review bodies should be granted official time to perform their duties and should be recognized for their contributions in performance appraisals. The hiring of consultants for unreasonably long periods of time had undermined human resources management in the Organization. The Committee was requested to support staff representatives in their interactions with relevant institutions to ensure desirable conditions of service for staff. Lastly, adequate resources must be allocated to the Office of Staff Legal Assistance and to the United Nations Dispute Tribunal and Appeals Tribunal, which were part of the Organization's system of checks and balances available to staff members, particularly in addressing complaints related to conduct defined in the Secretary-General's

bulletin on the prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority ([ST/SGB/2008/5](#)).

24. **The Chair** drew attention to the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled “Review of internship programmes in the United Nations system” ([A/73/377](#) and [A/73/377/Corr.1](#)) and the note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) on the JIU report ([A/73/377/Add.1](#)). Introductory statements provided by JIU and CEB, would be posted on the Fifth Committee website.

25. **Mr. Alsayed** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group welcomed the proposed global human resources strategy for 2019–2021. The ongoing human resources management reforms were critical to the success of the overall reform of the Organization. The Group took note of the progress made in that area, especially with regard to changes in conditions of service, the streamlining of rules and policies and the initiation of the first ever comprehensive review of the Organization’s human resources policy framework. The Group also welcomed the steps taken to strengthen internal anti-corruption measures, ensure a safe environment for staff reporting misconduct, and prevent and respond to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace.

26. The Organization required a talented international workforce characterized by geographical diversity and gender balance that represented all the peoples it served. Although more needed to be done, the Group was encouraged by the Secretary-General’s progress in improving gender balance, including the unprecedented achievement of gender parity within the Senior Management Group in 2018. The persistent imbalance in geographical representation within the Secretariat was a matter of concern, as it ran counter to the imperative to recruit staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible, in accordance with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations. The Secretary-General must step up his efforts to promote equitable geographical representation, including representation of troop- and police-contributing countries, among United Nations staff, especially at senior levels.

27. Noting that the Secretary-General’s report ([A/73/372](#)) included analysis of the regional diversity of Secretariat staff and that senior managers’ compacts contained a related indicator, he said that the Group would examine how the concept of regional diversity

might improve geographical representation. A comprehensive strategy to enhance geographical distribution must be developed on the basis of an in-depth analysis of the current imbalances, with detailed benchmarks and timelines in order to address gaps and shortfalls, as previously requested by the General Assembly. Greater transparency was also required with regard to the methods of measuring geographical representation. In particular, more complete and understandable information should be provided on how gender parity and geographical representation were reflected across all 38,000 Secretariat posts, and not only within the narrower subset of approximately 3,000 posts subject to geographical distribution. The Group would examine the Secretary-General’s proposals on the system of desirable ranges to ensure that they were in the best interests of Member States and guaranteed the preservation of the Organization’s international character.

28. The increase in the average age of Secretariat staff and the decrease in the number of entry level positions, particularly at the P-1 and P-2 levels, were matters of concern, as those trends were at variance with human resources targets such as the rejuvenation of the Organization and the acquisition of new talent from different regions. They also undermined the objectives of the young professionals programme, a key focus of which was the recruitment of candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented developing Member States.

29. The Group welcomed the implementation of the new criteria for the use of the Field Service category, as recommended by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution [72/255](#). The Group also welcomed the efforts of ICSC, the Secretariat and other field-based organizations to improve conditions of service for staff serving in hardship locations, where extreme hardship conditions and a lack of basic necessities prevented family members from accompanying international staff. Despite the progress made in addressing staff health and well-being, health care for personnel in field duty stations was a matter of concern; access by such personnel to staff counselling should be expanded and management of sick leave should be improved.

30. An efficient and timely recruitment process was important for enabling the Organization to attract a qualified workforce. While the Group noted the Secretary-General’s proposal regarding the posting period for job vacancies, it underscored the need for improvement at every stage of the recruitment process and in roster management practices.

31. Language skills were an essential factor in staff selection; the equality of the two working languages of the Secretariat should be respected and the importance of a good command of the official language at specific duty stations should be taken into account during the recruitment process. The Group noted with concern that the efforts made to reach out to potential candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented countries, including developing countries, had not been successful.

32. With regard to the report of JIU on its review of internship programmes in the United Nations system ([JIU/REP/2018/1](#)), the Group was of the view that introducing measures in support of youth from developing countries would be consistent with the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth and the goals relating to youth, decent work and gender equality established under the 2030 Agenda. Efforts should be made to implement the recommendations contained in the Unit's previous report on the matter ([JIU/NOTE/2009/2](#)), as most of them had not been implemented. The current report ([JIU/REP/2018/1](#)) proposed benchmarks for good practices in internship programmes that would ensure equal access for candidates from all socioeconomic backgrounds, with due consideration of gender balance, geographical diversity and persons with disabilities. The adoption of such benchmarks for internships would help to promote equal opportunity and access for youth from developing countries.

33. **Ms. Nalwanga** (Uganda), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group welcomed the global human resources strategy for 2019–2021 and other proposals contained in the reports of the Secretary-General. The Group would examine the proposals to shorten recruitment timelines by reducing the posting period, introducing video-interviewing and streamlined interview reports, and promoting the use of rosters in order to ensure that they did not adversely affect African Member States and developing countries in general. She welcomed the removal of barriers faced by persons with disabilities in recruitment processes and hoped that further progress would be made in that regard.

34. Noting that African Member States were underrepresented in most Secretariat departments, the Group supported the proposed strategies to improve geographical representation and was in favour of increasing the number of posts subject to geographical distribution. It therefore welcomed the proposal to make all international positions financed under the regular budget subject to geographical distribution and hoped that clear benchmarks would be established in that regard. The Group would also examine how the scope

of that proposal could be expanded beyond regular budget posts.

35. While the development of a new mobility system was welcome, there was a need to ensure that women were given equal opportunities for career advancement, particularly women with young children whose dual role as staff members and caretakers prevented them from serving in hardship duty stations.

36. Staff members in the General Service and related categories, as well as National Professional Officers and Field Service staff, would form a vital part of the transformed global workforce envisaged by the Secretary-General. The Group would examine how the removal of the "G to P" element from the young professionals programme would eliminate a long-standing obstacle to career advancement for staff members in the General Service and related categories, especially those from developing countries. The Group wished to know how the Secretary-General intended to hold leaders accountable for the acquisition, development and retention of a mobile, field-oriented and diverse workforce that reflected gender balance. It welcomed the planned online policy platform to support managers in exercising greater delegation of authority and provide staff members with information in that regard.

37. The Group welcomed the new policy on protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations ([ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1](#)); it would examine the extent to which that policy reflected the recommendations contained in the JIU report on whistle-blower protection policies ([JIU/REP/2018/4](#)).

38. The Group would carefully consider the issues of the hiring of retirees and the granting of continuing contracts to some categories of staff. It supported the establishment of an end-of-service grant for staff who were separated from service upon the expiration of their appointment, even after serving for many years. That measure would be particularly important for locally recruited staff, who could not be laterally reassigned outside of their duty station.

39. The Group would monitor the progress made in enhancing geographical representation under the system-wide strategy on gender parity launched in 2017. It considered the target of achieving gender parity by 2028 to be too generous, considering that the issue should already have been addressed over the previous decade.

40. **Ms. Lee** (Singapore), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said

that, in view of the ongoing ambitious reform of the three pillars of the Organization's work and the management structures that supported them, the Committee's review of human resources management must be guided by an understanding of the United Nations as a dynamic organization focused on the people it served.

41. While encouraging progress had been made, efforts must continue to achieve the goals of gender parity and equitable geographical distribution at every level of the Organization, especially the senior level. The General Assembly required better, more accurate and more easily understandable information on how gender parity, geographical representation and seniority were reflected across all Secretariat posts. ASEAN would therefore engage with particular interest in discussions of the system of desirable ranges during informal consultations.

42. He commended the initiatives undertaken to accelerate recruitment processes and improve the performance management system. ASEAN would examine the impact of those initiatives, in particular on the recruitment of staff from developing countries, and would explore how objective, transparent and consistent benchmarks to measure that impact could be developed system-wide.

43. The United Nations staff engagement survey conducted in December 2017 had indicated the need to focus on continuous staff learning and development. That need remained crucial even at a time of fiscal austerity. Member States that demanded more from staff and expected the Organization to be more effective, efficient, nimble and innovative must be prepared to invest resources to achieve those goals. Accordingly, the Secretary-General should make continuous staff learning and development a priority area for reform.

44. **Mr. Cheshire** (New Zealand), speaking also on behalf of Australia and Canada, said that his delegation supported the objectives of the global human resources strategy for 2019–2021, which was intended to improve the use of United Nations resources in support of programme delivery and mandate implementation.

45. Staff were the Organization's most valuable resource. The United Nations should nurture the talents of its staff, recognize and reward their contributions, and foster a culture of strong performance. He commended the Secretary-General's efforts to improve accessibility, increase diversity and achieve gender parity, all while respecting the Charter of the United Nations and continuing to strive for equitable geographical representation.

46. Changing the culture of an organization was no easy task. It was important to keep up the momentum of the previous two years and support new approaches that were aligned with best practices, in order to improve on the implementation of mandates in the field. Member States had a responsibility to provide the Secretariat with the necessary tools to achieve excellence in its work.

47. **Ms. Baumann** (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, said that the ability of the United Nations to deliver effectively on its mandates depended on the Organization having skilled and motivated staff. Human resources management must be modernized and streamlined in order to create a more effective, efficient, agile and results-oriented Organization. Considerable progress had been made in certain areas. For instance, gender parity had been achieved in the Senior Management Group. However, further human resources reform was needed.

48. Liechtenstein and Switzerland welcomed the global human resources strategy for 2019–2021 and the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen human resources management. Senior management must lead by example and make human resources management a real priority. Consistent efforts must be made to attract, train and retain highly motivated staff. An enabling, innovative work environment and proactive talent management were essential components of the strategy. For the reforms to succeed, there would need to be a change in the culture of the Organization. Staff should feel able to express their ideas and opinions.

49. A credible and fair performance management system that rewarded staff members' achievements and addressed underperformance was essential for ensuring mandate delivery and staff accountability. Staff members and managers should work together to establish, monitor and review professional goals, which would boost performance. In addition, the United Nations would benefit from better system-wide collaboration. She welcomed the progress made with regard to job classification and reference checks, and encouraged the Secretariat to continue identifying areas that could benefit from a system-wide approach.

50. **Ms. Demetris** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the European Union supported efforts to reform human resources management at the United Nations and create a more

modern, nimble, representative and merit-based Organization. She welcomed the new management paradigm, which was intended to optimize the use of the Organization's resources in support of effective programme delivery and mandate implementation.

51. The European Union looked forward to discussing the proposals contained in the global human resources strategy for 2019–2021, in particular those relating to strategic workforce planning, the empowerment of field-based managers, accelerated recruitment processes, diversity, multilingualism and enhanced performance management, with a view to ensuring that the Organization's staff embodied the principles of efficiency, competence and integrity, in line with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations. The proposals would help to improve talent acquisition and management, transform the Organization's management culture and ensure that the core principles of the United Nations were upheld.

52. The European Union welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to build a diverse, geographically balanced workforce that was truly representative of the people the Organization served. Although gender parity had been achieved at the senior management level, female representation remained an issue, particularly in field operations. The Committee had agreed on the need to delegate authority to the field and strengthen accountability measures. The European Union would fully support proposals that would achieve those goals. She welcomed the decision to review the mobility policy and conduct system-wide outreach on lessons learned. The European Union looked forward to receiving a revised mobility policy proposal that would support the development of a nimble and adaptable workforce.

53. **Ms. Norman-Chalet** (United States of America) said that the Secretary-General had identified human resources management as one of the areas most in need of improvement. In particular, he had noted the need to improve recruitment processes, increase the applicant pool, develop a comprehensive workforce planning strategy and implement an improved performance management system. Her delegation fully supported the Secretary-General's efforts to address such issues. The paramount consideration in the employment of staff should remain the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.

54. The Organization's staff were central to ensuring that the Secretary-General's reform vision could be implemented successfully. Senior management must communicate continually and effectively with staff. At the same time, staff must be held accountable. Good

performance should be recognized and rewarded, while underperformance should be sanctioned.

55. She welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals for enhancing the acquisition, development and retention of a high-performing workforce. However, her delegation was concerned at the slow pace of implementation of a proper performance management system to identify and remove poor performers, which was essential for ensuring accountability and effective human resources management and mandate delivery. The United States also welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to prevent and address sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and protect whistle-blowers from retaliation.

56. Her delegation recognized the tireless efforts of those who served the Organization, often in extremely challenging environments. The United Nations had a critical role to play in maintaining peace and security and safeguarding human rights. Accordingly, Member States had a shared responsibility to ensure that the Organization was effective, efficient and accountable.

57. **Ms. Al Mansoori** (United Arab Emirates) said that her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen human resources management. The global human resources strategy for 2019–2021 was intended to create an enabling policy environment for people management, catalyse proactive talent acquisition and management, and contribute to a transformed organizational culture. Her delegation would be interested in learning more about some of the strategic actions set out in the strategy, including the innovative outreach initiatives aimed at attracting young talent, in particular from unrepresented Member States. The United Arab Emirates would also like to know more about the lessons learned from the efforts of other United Nations system organizations to promote youth engagement, including through the young professionals programme.

58. The United Arab Emirates was committed to supporting youth development and preparing its young people to work for international organizations, including the United Nations as Junior Professional Officers. According to the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics (A/73/79), the United Arab Emirates was unrepresented at the United Nations. Her Government had signed memorandums of understanding with various United Nations entities with a view to increasing the number of young, qualified individuals from the United Arab Emirates working for the United Nations.

59. **Mr. Munir** (Pakistan) said that international civil servants should maintain the highest standards of

honour, integrity, justice and fair play. The reports of the Secretary-General on human resources management offered a holistic overview of the situation at the United Nations and made a strong case for rejuvenation to enable the Organization to face the most daunting challenges of the day.

60. The United Nations had yet to achieve the goals of gender parity and equitable geographical representation and representation of troop- and police-contributing countries. Other issues included managed mobility, the use of contractors and the system of desirable ranges. His delegation welcomed, therefore, the Secretary-General's efforts to shift the management paradigm, reposition the United Nations development system and restructure the peace and security pillar, with a view to making the Organization more agile, fit for purpose, effective, transparent and accountable.

61. While there had been a rise in the number of women occupying senior roles, women remained underrepresented at the United Nations. With regard to Member State representation, the number of States within the desirable range had decreased from 120 to 103 between 2014 and 2017, resulting in a rise in the number of States that were unrepresented or underrepresented. At the same time, appointments of candidates from overrepresented countries had increased, while the number of external candidates hired had fallen.

62. His delegation firmly supported the principle of equitable geographical representation. As a long-standing major contributor of troops for United Nations peacekeeping, Pakistan strongly supported the proposal to include troop contribution as an additional factor in the calculation of desirable ranges, which would help to reduce disparities.

63. **Ms. Jerbouai** (Morocco) said that her delegation fully supported the Secretary-General's proposal to place human resources functions in two distinct departments, which would ensure a unified approach, optimize the distribution of functions and avoid duplication. She welcomed the global human resources strategy for 2019–2021, which would help the United Nations to implement the proposed reforms, in support of effective mandate delivery.

64. Some of the key components of the strategy were the enhancement of geographical representation, the promotion of gender parity and the elimination of sexual exploitation and abuse. Her delegation welcomed the recent appointment of a number of women to senior positions and the efforts made to enhance geographical representation at senior levels, implement strategic workforce planning, accelerate recruitment processes

and rejuvenate the Organization's staff. The United Nations must be able to attract and retain highly qualified candidates who were able to work across disciplines, cultures and sectors. It needed leaders with a "One United Nations" mindset and the skills to build strong partnerships.

65. **Mr. Wakabayashi** (Japan) said that the greatest asset of the United Nations was its staff. In order to deliver on its mandates around the world, the Organization must acquire and retain a highly skilled, motivated and diverse workforce. Accordingly, his delegation expected the Secretary-General to pursue his efforts to improve human resources management. Performance management was extremely important. His delegation welcomed the development and implementation of a new performance management approach and 360-degree evaluations for senior management, which would help to secure the highest standards of efficiency and competence.

66. The issue of some Member States being unrepresented or underrepresented was a long-standing problem. As one of several underrepresented countries, Japan requested the Secretary-General to redouble his efforts to ensure equitable geographical distribution within the Secretariat. The Secretary-General had presented several proposals for reviewing the system of desirable ranges; given the huge impact any changes would have, the proposals required careful consideration.

67. **Mr. Kumar** (India) said that his delegation welcomed the global human resources strategy for 2019–2021, which it hoped would address long-standing challenges and contribute to achieving equitable geographical representation. The Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity was proving successful, particularly at the senior management level, as was the strategy to improve the Organization's system-wide approach to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse. His delegation hoped that the global human resources strategy would help to consolidate the gains made.

68. According to the Charter of the United Nations, staff should be recruited on as wide a geographical basis as possible, yet only 3,600 posts – equivalent to less than 10 per cent of Secretariat staff – were subject to geographical distribution. Since 2014, the number of States in the unrepresented and underrepresented categories had been increasing. Over 60 Member States, including 50 developing countries, were currently unrepresented or underrepresented. Moreover, another 60 developing countries were close to the lower level of

their desirable range and were at risk of slipping into the underrepresented category.

69. Under the current system, the contribution of each Member State to the regular budget of the Organization had an overwhelming influence on the determination of the desirable ranges, which put developing countries at a serious disadvantage. The Secretary-General had presented proposals for a comprehensive review of the system of desirable ranges. His delegation hoped that consensus would be reached on the need to widen the base figure and amend the weights of the factors. The proposal to add a new factor based on a Member State's contribution of troops and police personnel merited serious consideration, as the significant contributions made by troop- and police-contributing countries should be taken into account. Those countries were also poorly represented in posts funded from the support account for peacekeeping operations.

70. Increasing the regional diversity of international staff in the Secretariat was one of the actions set out in the human resources strategy. There was a stark lack of regional diversity at the senior level. For instance, nearly half of Force Commanders were nationals of countries belonging to the Group of Western European and Other States, despite the fact that the Group accounted for only 14 per cent of Member States. Meanwhile, nationals of the 53 Member States that made up the Asia-Pacific Group accounted for just 17 per cent of Secretariat international staff. The reasons for such disparities should be examined carefully with a view to finding ways to improve the situation.

71. His delegation took note of the concept of regional diversity as a broad indicator of disparity levels. However, placing too much emphasis on that concept might divert attention away from the actual goal of equitable geographical representation. Reforming the system of desirable ranges was the most effective way of addressing the issues highlighted.

72. **Mr. Wax** (Israel) said that transforming the work culture of the United Nations was a gradual process. While swift decision-making should be encouraged, human resources management reform must be understood through a long-term lens. His delegation supported the proposed global human resources strategy and noted that some important steps had already been taken.

73. His delegation hoped that the reform would address shortcomings regarding staff selection processes, the equal treatment of external and internal candidates, performance management and gender balance targets. Israel acknowledged the Secretary-

General's commitment to achieving gender parity within the Senior Management Group, but called for increased efforts to achieve the gender balance targets throughout the Secretariat. While measures had been taken to prevent sexual harassment at the United Nations, additional action was needed.

74. Lengthy recruitment processes were an issue at all levels of the Secretariat. Decisive measures must be taken to shorten recruitment timelines, including by further reducing the job posting period and improving every stage of the recruitment process. While the reduction of the job posting period in 2017 had been a positive step, there had been little improvement regarding the other stages of the process.

75. In the light of the recent launch of the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy, his delegation was concerned at the fact that the temporary appointment of a Senior Mental Health Officer was still pending. A solution to the issue of G-to-P candidates was long overdue. His delegation was hopeful that progress could be made, although it noted the need to ensure that any changes had the intended effect.

76. **Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) said that all Member States were eager to improve the quality of United Nations staff. His delegation, having carefully studied the Secretary-General's proposals, wished to receive additional analytical information in order to make well-informed decisions and identify solutions.

77. The proposal to decentralize human resources management was inconsistent with the objective of strengthening the Office of Human Resources Management. It would make the organizational structure more complex, decrease accountability and duplicate functions, and would result in a less transparent staff selection system.

78. Some of the Secretary-General's proposals, including the proposal to increase regional diversity, ran contrary to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Article 101 laid down the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible; referring to regional diversity would dilute the notion of geographical representation confirmed by the Charter and numerous General Assembly resolutions. The system of geographical distribution of posts was based on the contribution of each Member State to the regular budget of the Organization. The scale of assessments did not reflect any notion of regional contributions.

79. The financial implications of the Secretary-General's proposals had not been properly explained,

yet such information was a vital part of Member States' deliberations. It was standard practice in the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee to consider proposals based on their financial implications. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee's view that more detailed information on the global human resources strategy for 2019–2021 was needed. Lastly, he noted that previous human resources management reforms had reduced opportunities for external candidates. As a result, only 30 per cent of vacancies were currently filled by external candidates.

80. **Mr. Benhamida** (Libya) said that his delegation welcomed the efforts to reform human resources management in the Secretariat and attract highly qualified young professionals while retaining experienced staff. Although progress had been made, the United Nations must carry out further internal reforms. The Organization should introduce policies on training and career development to ensure that the nationals of developing and developed Member States alike were represented equitably in the Organization's staffing. Senior positions should not be monopolized by certain Member States. His delegation reaffirmed its commitment to the principles of equitable geographical distribution and gender parity, which reflected the values of the United Nations and would help to build a modern Organization with a diverse workforce. Libya hoped that the reforms would enable all Member States to participate in the work of the United Nations in a fair manner and at all levels.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.