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Agenda item 7

**Adoption of the report of the Committee on its
fifty-ninth session**

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Jun Yamada (Japan)

Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation

(Item 3 (b))

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Office of Human Resources Management

1. At its 22nd meeting, on 18 June 2019, the Committee considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the evaluation of the Office of Human Resources Management ([E/AC.51/2019/3](#)).
2. The Assistant Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report, and representatives of OIOS and the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance responded to queries raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

3. Delegations expressed appreciation for the report, noting its value and the importance of its subject. They also conveyed their support for the issues raised and recommendations made and their appreciation that those recommendations had been accepted.
4. Several delegations noted with concern the serious deficiencies in human resources management that had been highlighted in the report. One delegation noted that the recommendations seemed to be quite technical, and it concurred with the practical approach taken by OIOS. However, the delegation cautioned against settling on the notion that the recommendations would be a “panacea” for resolving the larger problem faced by the Organization, particularly against the backdrop of inconclusive



discussions during the main part of the seventy-third session of the Fifth Committee on the agenda item on human resources management. Another delegation commented that the recommendations were constructive and said that it looked forward to their implementation. It was also stated that the implementation of the recommendations should result in the human resources paradigm shift being sought by the Secretary-General through his reforms.

5. Regarding extrabudgetary resources for post and non-post requirements, a delegation asked how those resources had been used in the work of the Office. Noting the serious deficiencies highlighted in paragraphs 40 and 45 of the report, the delegation also sought clarification on recruitment and career development and on whether OIOS had included in its evaluation a consideration of how interlinked components were tied to the reform introduced by the Secretary-General.

6. Delegations asked why the evaluation had not included an assessment of the managed mobility policy, and clarification was sought on whether the policy remained in place or was under review and subject to replacement.

7. Several delegations stated that Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations was the primary foundation for the recruitment of staff and should be considered fundamental to the other recruitment principles listed in paragraph 21 of the report. A delegation emphasized that the principle of merit was missing from the criteria set out in that paragraph. The delegation was of the view that, while there were difficulties in reconciling merit-based recruitment with those criteria, the main criterion was merit. Citing the example of recruitment in the foreign service, the delegation explained that merit conflicted with gender parity and geographical distribution in some cases, as cultural concerns meant that women tended to choose “stability” rather than life in the foreign service, where extensive travel was required. In response, a delegation emphasized that the discussions on the empowerment of women encompassed more than simply cultural concerns; the problem ran deeper, and included concerns over access to education for women and girls. In that connection, the delegation expressed the view that, despite the criteria listed in paragraph 21, in particular equitable geographical distribution, the report did not contain an examination of how that aspect of workforce planning was being implemented, and the delegation sought further information on the efforts of the Office on those issues. Another delegation stated that geographical distribution and gender parity did not need to compete with merit when recruiting the best candidates. Delegations agreed that more needed to be done to move away from the stereotypical methodology. However, one urged caution on the metrics used to determine merit and excellence because the fact that the best universities were in the Western world gave a net advantage to some countries. The delegation therefore underscored the need to consider geographical representation since not all talented candidates had the same educational opportunities to excel. Another delegation sought clarification on the steps being taken to attract more female candidates from developing countries.

8. Referring to paragraph 37 of the report, a delegation noted with concern that a 2008 evaluation of the Office by OIOS had highlighted inefficiencies, and that the lack of clarity on delegation of authorities remained an unresolved concern 10 years later. Delegations questioned the evaluation finding that continuous reforms and shifting priorities had changed the focus of the Office and stretched its capacity to provide strategic leadership and support to the Organization in human resources management. They also queried the source of the continual reform noted in the report.

9. Several delegations asked how the most recent organizational reforms, in particular management reform, had been considered in the OIOS evaluation, and others questioned whether those reforms had contributed to improved human resources management. In that regard, a delegation stressed the importance of

ensuring adequate follow-up on the recommendations and related changes in connection with the paradigm shift. Concerns were also raised about whether continuous reforms had affected programme delivery.

10. Some delegations expressed concern at the low promotion rate and lack of career planning for staff recruited through the young professionals programme. Several also expressed concern about the lengthy recruitment timelines, as well as inefficiencies in the delegation of authority. One delegation further noted the contradictory challenges of the need for the Organization to meet its contractual obligations with regard to its staff and the need to reorient the current workforce to meet future organizational needs, goals and objectives as provided in legislative mandates, in addition to noting the balance between compliance and results in human resources policies. With reference to paragraphs 29 and 30 of the report, the delegation asked whether OIOS had any recommendations on how to resolve the conundrum described therein on the disproportionate focus of clients and staff on compliance rather than results, at the expense of operational needs. On a related note, the delegation sought clarification as to how those inefficiencies, which hampered mandate delivery, as well as the goals of geographical distribution at various levels and gender parity, would be taken into account in the reorientation and renewal of the workforce.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. The Committee welcomed the report of OIOS on the evaluation of the Office.

12. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the recommendations contained in paragraphs 62 to 68 of the report of OIOS on the evaluation of the Office.
