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PERSONNEL QUESTIONS

OTHER PERSONNEL QUESTIONS

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on personnel problems in the
United Nations and major recommendations of the Administrative
Management Service

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The personnel policies and practices of the United Nations, as well as the structure of the Office of Personnel Services, have been under scrutiny over the past five years. A first review was made by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) in the years 1969 to 1971 and resulted in Inspector Bertrand's report on personnel problems in the United Nations (A/8454). In his preliminary comments on that report (A/8545), the Secretary-General indicated that, inasmuch as it raised questions that were likely to be of interest to the Special Committee for the Review of the United Nations Salary System and since the Administrative Management Service (AMS) had not yet undertaken its review of the Office of Personnel Services, he intended to defer to the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly his comments on the substance of the report.
2. In 1972, the Special Committee issued its report (A/8728), and the General Assembly decided to transmit it to an International Civil Service Commission, to be constituted in 1974, for its consideration. In October of the same year, AMS submitted to the Secretary-General its report on management and manpower utilization in the Office of Personnel Services. The AMS report also included an assessment of personnel policies and practices throughout the Secretariat.
3. In 1973 the Secretary-General reported to the General Assembly (A/C.5/1522) certain conclusions he had reached on the reports of JIU and AMS. However, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee, decided to defer

consideration of the Secretary-General's report until its twenty-ninth session. In the circumstances, the Secretary-General considers it preferable to present a new report to the General Assembly in order to include information on developments since 1973. Thus, the present report, which supersedes A/C.5/1522, provides for the information of the General Assembly the Secretary-General's conclusions on the recommendations made by JIU and AMS, a summary of the implementing actions which have been initiated in response to those recommendations as well as an indication of the actions which the Secretary-General proposes to take in 1975 and 1976.

4. Although specific action by the General Assembly is required in regard to only one matter (see para. 11), the Secretary-General would welcome the views of the General Assembly on the new directions and policies he proposes to pursue.

II. THE BASIC STAFF STRUCTURE OF THE SECRETARIAT 1/

5. The staff of the Secretariat are grouped basically into three categories: Professional, 2/ Field Service and General Service. 3/ The Professional category and the Field Service category are recruited internationally, and the General Service category is largely recruited locally.

6. In its report JIU characterized the staff of the present Professional category in the Secretariat as a large, unstructured group, recruited through somewhat haphazard procedures, for whom there is no clear classification policy, no assignment planning and no career development machinery and who are subject to a random promotion process. The findings of AMS were similar to a number of the JIU observations.

A. Vocational or occupational groups

7. Both JIU and AMS have recommended, as an essential prerequisite of reform, the adoption of a structural concept of "vocational groups" (JIU) or "occupational groups" (AMS) within the existing categories. While under the JIU recommendations this concept would apply to the Professional category only, the AMS recommendations envisage that this concept would be extended to both the Professional and non-Professional categories. 4/ For each occupational group, there would be specified qualifications requirements, classification standards and a planned career progression, with defined plans for training and career development under central standards laid down by the Office of Personnel Services.

1/ JIU recommendations 1, 14 and 16 and AMS recommendations 4, 5, 13, 14, 25, 27, 28 and 32.

2/ For the purpose of this report, the term "Professional" also includes staff in the Director and Principal Officer category.

3/ For the purpose of this report, the General Service category includes security staff and manual workers.

4/ The non-Professional categories are the General Service category and the Field Service category.

8. The Secretary-General is in agreement with the premise that the occupational group structure should serve as the basis for managing the staff of the Secretariat. He notes, in this connexion, that some occupational groups have de facto been recognized in the Secretariat, for example, information specialists, administrators, economists, etc. What is needed, however, is a clearer identification and definition of the occupational groups existing in the Secretariat and the development of the necessary personnel policies and institutions required to manage the staff on that basis. To that extent, the Secretary-General agrees entirely with the thrust of the JIU recommendations 1 and 16 to the effect that occupational groups should be identified, and that within each of them, levels of qualifications should be defined and a clear relationship established between level of qualification and grade.

9. As a first step in the definition of occupational groups, a project has been undertaken during 1974 to identify the major occupations in the Professional category and to distribute Professional staff among these occupations. The distribution of the General Service staff at Headquarters into occupational groups is also under consideration as a part of the work on restructuring the General Service category, as discussed in paragraphs 14 and 15. The definition of occupational groups and the distribution of staff members among these groups are related to the job classification system, referred to in paragraphs 10 and 11 below, which will inter alia define the qualifications requirements for each occupation.

B. Job classification

10. As regards the classification standards required for each occupational group, AMS has proposed that a job classification system covering all posts in the Secretariat be instituted in order to ensure that (a) there will be a consistent relationship between the duties of a post and the grade attached to it; (b) staff members performing the same duties and responsibilities will be graded in the same way, irrespective of when and under what conditions they were initially recruited; and (c) the levels and titles of posts will have a clearly defined meaning for budgetary and personnel purposes. Accordingly, it has recommended that, in order to establish a properly conceived and elaborated job classification system, which would be administered by the Office of Personnel Services, the assistance of outside experts be obtained to plan and develop the system and to train existing Professional staff in this work. The Secretary-General is in complete agreement with, and attaches priority to, this recommendation.

11. For this purpose, the Secretary-General, in the report he submitted in 1973, requested the provision of additional temporary assistance funds in an amount of \$100,000 for the 1974-1975 biennium. Since the General Assembly did not consider the Secretary-General's report, the funds requested were not provided. In view of the high priority which the Secretary-General attaches to the institution of such a system, he renews his request to the General Assembly for authority to recruit two classification experts for the balance of the biennium on the understanding that financial provision therefor will be included in the supplementary estimates which will be submitted in due course.

C. Standard descriptions of qualifications
and standard job descriptions

12. Both JIU and AMS have recommended that once levels of qualifications, or the degree of competence required for a particular occupation at specific grades, have been defined, such requirements should be specified in "standard descriptions of qualifications" corresponding to particular types of posts. These standard descriptions should be used for recruitment purposes instead of individual job descriptions containing different statements of qualifications for similar posts. The development of such "standard descriptions of qualifications" is, of course, dependent upon the institution of a job classification system and the establishment of classification standards.

13. As the Secretary-General agrees with the desirability of moving in that direction, steps have already been taken by the Office of Personnel Services, on an interim basis and pending the establishment of a job classification system, to standardize the descriptions of qualifications for specific types of posts in job descriptions used for recruitment to Secretariat posts.

D. Restructuring of the General Service category
at Headquarters

14. Another major change proposed in the JIU report that would affect the structure of the staff is the reorganization of the General Service category at Headquarters (recommendation 14); the restructuring of this category has also been proposed by AMS. The present structure of the General Service category does not permit sufficient distinctions to be made between levels of qualifications required in certain occupations. Thus, although there are five levels in the General Service category in New York at present, only three of these levels are actually used to provide a career for those who carry out tasks of a clerical or secretarial nature. Additionally, nearly 24 per cent of the staff at the G-4 level and over 30 per cent of the staff at the G-5 level are presently concentrated at the top step of their level (step 9 at the G-4 level and step 10 at the G-5 level). As a result, pressures have unavoidably arisen to widen the career span of certain staff members whose responsibilities and/or qualifications may not merit promotion into the Professional category. On this point both JIU and AMS have suggested that with the adoption of a system of competitive entry to the Professional category (see paras. 21 to 23) and recruitment on the basis of a verified level of qualifications, staff in General Service and other non-Professional posts who possess the required qualifications should be permitted to enter into competition for posts in the Professional category (see also para. 34).

15. In these circumstances, the Secretary-General has concluded that a restructuring of the General Service category at Headquarters is essential. Accordingly, he has decided to review the structure of the category at Headquarters with a view to introducing a clearer distinction in pay between the various jobs now grouped at the same level, providing reasonable career ranges and advancement

opportunities for groups of staff within the category and establishing appropriate salary levels therefor. To this end, a working group with staff participation was established within the joint administrative machinery as envisaged in staff regulation 8.2 to advise the Secretary-General. The group is expected to report to the Secretary-General before the end of the year in time for the Secretary-General to take necessary follow-up action in early 1975.

III. RECRUITMENT 5/

A. Long-range recruitment plan

16. One of the principal means recommended by JIU (recommendation 2) and by AMS for modernizing recruitment methods is the institution of a long-term recruitment plan which would identify, several years in advance, the number of Professional posts in the Secretariat to be filled by external recruitment each year by occupational group. A tentative long-term recruitment plan, covering the period 1 July 1972 to 30 June 1977, was presented in a report of the Secretary-General (A/8836) to the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session. An additional feature of this first plan was that it was also designed to correct imbalances in the current geographical distribution of the Secretariat staff. The Assembly took note of that report and of a request by the Fifth Committee that the Secretary-General include in his annual reports on the composition of the Secretariat information on progress in the implementation of the long-term recruitment plan (A/8980, para. 63).

17. At the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, in his report on the composition of the Secretariat (A/9120 and Corr.1 and 2), noted that the long-range recruitment plan was based on a number of assumptions reflecting previous trends and that the plan had been and would continue to be revised as a result of changes affecting those assumptions. Thus, for example, the planning system has been modified and, for the period 1 July 1974-30 June 1979, recruitment targets have been changed to take account of the increase in the number of Member States and of the revised scale of assessments which affected the desirable ranges for Member States on 1 January 1974.

18. From an operational point of view, the planning system is so designed as to enable forecasts to be made of recruitment requirements of the Secretariat on an annual basis in terms of the number of posts to be filled, by occupation and level, as well as the number of candidates who should be available and the Member States from which it would be most desirable to seek such candidates. The methodology of the plan currently allows the establishment of a purely statistical projection of future recruitment needs on the basis of information concerning staff members in the Secretariat. As the methodology is improved to permit further elements to be introduced into the calculations, particularly by linking these calculations to authorized posts and their characteristics, the plan will become a more practical tool in recruitment operations.

5/ JIU recommendations 2-5, 13 and 15 and AMS recommendations 7-12 and 15-24.

B. Candidates roster

19. Another important means of improving recruitment methods recommended by both JIU (recommendation 4) and AMS is the establishment of a central reserve roster of candidates both for Professional posts in the Secretariat and for expert posts in technical co-operation projects of the United Nations. This roster has since been established as a distinct part of the computer-assisted personnel information system and has become a useful tool in the recruitment process. With the aid of the computer, it is possible to analyse at any time the contents of the roster and to identify readily candidates with particular qualifications required; similarly, the elimination of the names of candidates whose applications are no longer active has now become a very simple matter and will facilitate the maintenance of the roster at an appropriate size for the needs of the Organization.

20. The candidates roster does not yet contain enough candidates with the necessary professional qualifications, particularly candidates from Member States which are not represented or are insufficiently represented in the Secretariat. Therefore, based on the roster, printed reports are being produced monthly for representatives of Member States, national recruitment services and other recruitment sources to highlight those occupations for which there are either too many or, as is regrettably more often the case, too few candidates. Additionally, with the assistance of other departments of the Secretariat, the Office of Personnel Services is developing special registers of suitable recruitment sources for each occupational group and, where appropriate, for individual occupations.

C. Competitive examinations and competitive selection

21. A third significant means of improving recruitment, which has already been the subject of reports to the Assembly, concerns the institution of junior Professional competitive examinations. In its report (recommendation 3) JIU has envisaged such examinations primarily for candidates to posts of administrative generalists and economists; AMS, for its part, has recommended further efforts to develop a competitive selection system. Staff regulation 4.3 provides that, "so far as practicable, selection shall be made on a competitive basis". Until recently, only candidates for interpreter, translator and other posts requiring special language ability have been recruited on the basis of competitive examinations. But in 1970, the General Assembly, in its resolution 2736 A (XXV), authorized the following guideline for the recruitment of staff for the Secretariat:

"In the interest of long-term recruitment planning policies, special efforts should be made to recruit qualified young men and women for service with the United Nations through the development of more objective selection methods such as, wherever appropriate, open competitive examinations, special allowance being made for candidates whose mother tongue is not one of the working languages of the Secretariat."

22. A junior Professional competitive examination organized as a pilot project, was held in January-February 1974 in Italy with the assistance of the Italian Government. As a result, seven candidates have been appointed in the following fields: political science, law, economics, sociology, information and administration, while several more are under active recruitment. A second junior Professional competitive examination will be held in September-October 1974 in the Federal Republic of Germany and a third is being planned in Japan in 1975. The possibility of using the standards applied in these examinations as criteria for determining whether non-Professional staff currently employed by the Organization qualify for entry into the Professional category, as mentioned in paragraph 14, is currently under review. Discussions are also being held with a number of Member States as to the possibility of linking the Organization's selection procedures to existing competitive examinations for entry to national civil services.

23. While encouraging further experimental projects in the hope that the experience gained may help to improve recruitment, the Secretary-General feels bound to point out that the number of staff to be recruited in any given year in any given professional field is relatively limited; furthermore, the areas for recruitment are geographically so extensive and the techniques of written examination so diverse that further experimentation will be required before decisions can be taken regarding a widespread use of the written examination as a valid approach to the approved objective of competitive selection.

D. Recruitment to highest posts

24. Another of the JIU recommendations relating to Professional recruitment (recommendation 5) concerns the establishment of practices or rules that would ensure, as far as possible, a candidate's professional or technical calibre when being recruited to the highest posts, those of Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General. While recognizing the need for the Secretary-General to take account of political and geographical considerations in appointing candidates to the top administrative posts, JIU has recommended the institution of certain practices for selection of candidates for these posts, including consultations with a number of Governments, each of which would nominate at least three candidates, the establishment of precise qualifications requirements for such posts and the prior review of the technical calibre of candidates by a panel of "wise men". The Secretary-General recognizes the importance of exercising particular care in his choice of individuals to serve in posts at the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant-Secretary-General level. These are the most important and responsible posts which he has to fill. The occupants constitute, in a sense, his cabinet, his inner circle of advisers. In some cases the importance and sensitive nature of the appointment is such as to call for confirmation by the General Assembly of the Secretary-General's appointee. Obviously in choosing such candidates, the Secretary-General will wish to consult as widely as possible with Member States and with other knowledgeable sources as well, and will welcome the submission of as many names as possible of qualified potential candidates. It would be a mistake, however, in the Secretary-General's view for his freedom of action to be restricted by the establishment of more formal practices, requiring

consultation in each instance with a prescribed number of Governments and the solicitation and consideration of a prescribed number of candidates. The Secretary-General does not, therefore, intend to adopt the procedures for the selection of his Under-Secretaries-General and Assistant Secretaries-General which are contemplated by this JIU recommendation.

25. JIU has also recommended that a fixed proportion of posts at the Director (D-2) level (60 per cent) and at the Principal Officer (D-1) level (70 per cent) be reserved to staff with at least 10 years of service in the international civil service. In accordance with the provisions of staff regulation 4.4, it has consistently been the policy of successive Secretaries-General to ensure that, without prejudice to the recruitment of fresh talent at all levels, fullest regard is had, in filling posts at the D-2 and D-1 levels, to the requisite qualifications and experience of staff already in the service of the Organization. In practice, this policy has resulted in 40 per cent of posts at the D-2 level and 60 per cent of posts at the D-1 level being filled by staff who have served 10 or more years in the Organization. It is also relevant however to point out that 60 per cent of posts at the D-2 level and 79 per cent of posts at the D-1 level have been filled by promotions of staff who were already in the service of the Organization, even if such service was less than 10 years.

E. Recruitment of General Service staff at Headquarters

26. In recent years, the United Nations has been experiencing difficulties in finding sufficiently qualified candidates for recruitment as General Service staff at Headquarters. AMS has therefore recommended that recruitment for such staff, which is presently conducted only within the metropolitan New York area, be extended to cover the country of the duty station, as is the practice in other duty stations. The Secretary-General has approved this recommendation and draws the attention of the General Assembly to the fact that this will result in some increased costs for prospecting and appointment of such candidates. The Secretary-General proposes to institute such recruitment campaigns in 1975 as available resources permit and he would intend to make provision, in his budget estimates for the 1976-1977 biennium, for such additional resources as experience demonstrates will be required.

F. Appointment of staff

27. The JIU report contains two other recommendations with respect to Professional recruitment which concern appointment of staff. In one of these (recommendation 13) JIU has proposed a system of alternating secondments which would permit staff with permanent appointments to serve alternately with the Organization and with the civil services of the Member States of which such staff are nationals. There are at the present time numerous instances of individuals serving satisfactorily in the Secretariat while on secondment from their Governments. These individuals retain their status as members of the civil service of their "home" governments, but separate themselves from it during the period when they are serving in the

international secretariat. It is now proposed that a similar process be established in reverse, and that staff members holding permanent posts in the Secretariat be permitted to return to serve periodically in the civil service of their home governments. While recognizing that there are some advantages to such a proposal, the Secretary-General considers that there would also be disadvantages, particularly in the interruption of the continuity of work being undertaken in the Secretariat, and also in the increased difficulties which would result for the development of improved career development and promotional patterns within the Secretariat. He has also some concern as to the possible effect of such a system of secondments between the Secretariat and national civil services, if developed to a significant extent, on the international character of the Secretariat which he has an obligation to safeguard in a manner consistent with the intent and purpose of Article 100 of the Charter. After careful consideration therefore the Secretary-General has concluded that he should not move to introduce such a system.

28. In a second JIU recommendation (recommendation 15), a new type of appointment for specialists with exceptionally high qualifications is envisaged. Under the arrangements proposed such specialists, who would be very few in number - not more than two or three a year, would be given non-renewable fixed-term appointments on special terms of remuneration. The Secretary-General questions the utility of such an arrangement. He believes that it would be very difficult to determine in advance that a particular fixed-term appointment should not be renewed under any circumstances; additionally, he questions the propriety of establishing preferential remuneration for some Professional staff while other Professional staff are subject to the standard conditions of service approved by the General Assembly.

29. Regarding the review of candidates for appointment, AMS has concluded that, with the adoption of objective competitive selection mechanisms, the Appointment and Promotion Board could, with advantage, be relieved of the necessity of reviewing those cases of appointment that have, in effect, already been decided under alternative procedures. For example, in the selection of Professional staff for language posts, which has always been made on the basis of competitive examination, the Board has little reason to concern itself with the suitability of a candidate for such a post, inasmuch as his qualifications have already been objectively determined. The same consideration could also apply to other candidates for appointment at the junior Professional level who have been selected by means of a system of competitive selection, such as that described in paragraphs 21-22 above. The Secretary-General agrees with this proposal and, following consultations with the staff, he intends to proceed to implement it.

IV. STAFF MANAGEMENT 6/

A. Assignment planning and career development

30. In line with the premise that the occupational group structure should serve as the basis for managing the staff of the Secretariat, JIU has recommended the establishment of a career development system organized on occupational lines. Such a system, as envisaged by JIU, would involve the creation of training and career planning committees, each specializing in a particular occupational group, which would replace the present Appointment and Promotion Committee; the institution of a system for advance planning of assignments of staff; the establishment of a personnel inspectorate, chosen by occupational group from among former senior officials of the Organization, to evaluate the Professional staff of the Secretariat; and the implementation of a revised performance reporting system involving the personnel inspectorate (recommendations 7-9 and 12).

31. For its part, AMS considers that there is a need for more systematic planning of the careers of staff members. To this end, it has recommended that under the leadership of the Office of Personnel Services, broad guidelines should be established for carrying out career planning along occupational lines; that optimum "career ladders" should be developed for the various occupations in the Secretariat; and that the present promotion machinery should be reconstituted into career planning committees established along occupational lines. It has further recommended the institution of steps to ensure that during the early stages of a staff member's career, i.e., during the probationary period, a staff member is given meaningful assignments and his performance is critically appraised. To assist in this appraisal, AMS has also recommended that the present periodic report system be improved.

32. The Secretary-General is in broad agreement with most of these proposals. He believes, however, in the need to test the proposed system of career planning committees in respect of selected occupational groups before deciding to institute such a system generally for the Secretariat. As a first step, therefore, he is establishing on an experimental basis a career planning committee with staff participation which will develop the proposed system for one occupational group, generally along the lines recommended by JIU and AMS. The Secretary-General does not, however, consider it necessary to set up a formal personnel inspectorate as yet another element in the machinery of personnel management. He is of the opinion that the functions which JIU, in its recommendation 7, has proposed be assigned to the personnel inspectorate could largely be carried out by the proposed career planning committees.

33. Pursuant to the recommendations of JIU and AMS, a task force was established to review the present periodic report system. The task force has completed its basic work and has been asked to report before the end of the year on the results of its efforts.

6/ JIU recommendations 6-12 and AMS recommendations 25-46.

B. Promotion

34. Linked to its recommendations on the career development system, JIU has proposed a new system for promotion of Professional staff (recommendations 8 and 12) whereby the training and career planning committees would review, for each occupational group, the promotion proposals made on the basis of the evaluations by the personnel inspectorate. The Appointment and Promotion Board would review the results of the work of the training and career planning committees, as it presently reviews that of the Appointment and Promotion Committee. As noted in paragraph 30, AMS has recommended that the responsibility for reviewing promotion proposals be assigned to the career planning committees constituted along occupational lines. AMS has further envisaged that after clear guidelines concerning length of service and performance standards have been developed and agreed, the promotion of staff up to P-3 in the Professional category and up to specified levels in the non-Professional categories could be approved by the Assistant Secretary-General, Personnel Services, on the recommendation of the department concerned, without reference to a career planning committee. Both JIU and AMS have recommended that promotion of General Service and other non-Professional staff into the Professional category be discontinued, but that, as noted in paragraph 14, such staff possessing the required qualifications be permitted to enter into competition for posts in the Professional category.

35. The Secretary-General sees merit in an arrangement whereby the promotion review function would be exercised by career planning committees, with the Appointment and Promotion Board monitoring the operation of the career planning committees to ensure that central standards are maintained. To advise him on the detailed procedures required for such an arrangement, a working group with staff participation has been established, within the joint administrative machinery envisaged in staff regulation 8.2, to review the procedures governing appointment and promotion. In the light of the recommendations arising from the work of that group and after the results of the experimental career planning committee mentioned in paragraph 32 are known, the Secretary-General will be in a position to decide, in the course of 1975, what changes should be made in the present promotion arrangements.

C. Training

36. The JIU report contains two recommendations with respect to training. The first of these (recommendation 6) relates to the establishment of a pre-recruitment training scheme in favour of nationals of those countries, particularly the developing countries, that are still at a disadvantage as regards the provision of specialists to international organizations. As stated in the JIU report: "The first symptom of underdevelopment is a shortage of technicians, and this is true in the administrative and economic sectors as in all the rest". While recognizing the importance of meeting this need, which is in reality a form of technical assistance, the Secretary-General realizes that the magnitude of the task is obviously greater than the resources of the Office of Personnel Services - limited as it is to the task of training within the Secretariat - could

be expected to bear. The Secretary-General believes therefore that the type of training programme envisaged, if considered by the developing countries as carrying a sufficiently high priority could best be undertaken as part of the larger programme of technical assistance rather than as a function of the Office of Personnel Services.

37. In recommendation 10 of its report JIU has proposed a comprehensive programme of in-service training; AMS has recommended that current programmes in management, supervisory and professional training be intensified. The Secretary-General fully recognizes the need for a comprehensive training programme. In December 1973 the Secretary-General outlined his policy in detail in a bulletin (ST/SGB/144) which indicates that the leadership of the Organization is committed to the goal of increased efficiency through intensified management, supervisory and professional training. As a result a greater number and wider variety of training courses and seminars in the administrative and management field have been provided in the staff development programme for 1974. However, the limit of what can be accomplished with present resources has now been reached, as the bulk of resources provided for training are currently devoted to language training, in accordance with the emphasis given by the General Assembly to such training.

38. It will be necessary to provide for an increasing range of non-language training activities and to link this training with both career planning and organizational development before it can truly be said that anything like a comprehensive training programme exists. Experience has shown that the range and variety of the in-service training and career development programmes which the Training Service has planned, and is endeavouring to implement this year, will require more manpower and other resources than are currently available for the purpose. Individual substantive departments, regional commissions and other offices away from Headquarters need to be assisted in analysing the types of training that are required to increase the competence of their staff. Further strengthening is required in the administration and organization of the present programmes and in the preparation and distribution of course materials and publications. To meet these needs, the Secretary-General will continue to explore means of achieving an improvement in the balance between the language and other training programmes made available to the staff and to examine methods of increasing the range and effectiveness of the various training programmes, with due regard to economy.

39. AMS has made certain recommendations concerning other aspects of the United Nations training programme, affecting in particular the scope and the objectives of the Junior Professional Trainee Programme. This programme was originally conceived as a means of enabling the United Nations to recruit staff from States underrepresented in the Secretariat; during the years of its existence it has made a considerable contribution to the achievement of this objective. A second purpose of the programme was to enable young university graduates of States with a shortage of qualified civil servants to acquire first-hand knowledge of the United Nations before returning to their own national services. In this, and in the provision of meaningful training to the group generally, the programme appears to have been less successful.

40. In the light of experience it is now recognized that the training objectives for the two groups who were included in the Junior Professional Trainee Programme were not entirely the same; and that the attempt to combine these two groups in the same trainee programme has perhaps contributed to the fact that the training opportunities provided in the different departments to which the trainees were posted and the training itself have not been fully satisfactory. This has led to the conclusion that in future the desired objectives can best be met if the two groups are separated and served by different programmes distinctively tailored to their needs.

41. A further consideration to be taken into account is that most junior professional staff are recruited directly for specific posts in the Secretariat, and do not enter through the Junior Professional Trainee Programme at all. Clearly, if a training programme for junior professionals entering the Secretariat for the first time is to achieve fully the purposes for which it is intended, participation in the programme should be open to all new junior professional recruits, regardless of how they have been recruited. AMS has emphasized, in these circumstances, the need for well-organized and carefully planned training for all new entrants at the junior professional level, and to this end has proposed the development and introduction of an expanded systematic training programme specially designed for all young professional staff recruited for the Secretariat. The Secretary-General concurs in this recommendation and intends to proceed accordingly.

42. As for the second group covered by the present Junior Professional Trainee Programme, young university graduates of certain Member States who enter the programme in order to acquire first-hand knowledge of the United Nations before returning to their own national service, the Secretary-General attaches great importance to the continuation of this programme and its expansion as necessary, to meet the need. For the reasons already mentioned in paragraph 36, however, he considers that such a programme should be recognized for what it is, a form of technical assistance to countries which need to build up their national civil services, and that consequently it should more properly be recognized as the responsibility of a body other than the Office of Personnel Services. To this end discussions have been initiated with UNITAR on the possibility of UNITAR assuming responsibility for carrying on this feature of the Junior Professional Trainee Programme. UNITAR would organize the course, including the formal lectures; on-the-job experience would be provided by placement of trainees for short periods in carefully selected offices of the Secretariat where good supervision could be assured. Further discussions with UNITAR will be held along these lines, with a view to the possible assumption by UNITAR of responsibility for the programme by 1 January 1976.

D. Integrated computer-based personnel information system

43. In its report JIU was critical of the inadequacies of the personnel information system and its lack of proper integration with other information systems at Headquarters containing related information with respect to personnel, in particular the Headquarters payroll system. JIU therefore strongly recommended (recommendation 11) the improvement of administrative methods through the adoption

of an integrated computer-based personnel information system. AMS supported this recommendation. Considerable progress has been made on implementation of the recommendation. A computer-based personnel information system has now been developed to include certain current information on all categories of staff of the Organization except staff on short-term appointments at certain duty stations. Care has been taken to ensure the compatibility of the personnel information system with other computer-based systems in the Organization.

44. Additionally; the personnel information system has now been redesigned to contain up to 60 items of current information on the status of staff members at Headquarters, with much of the information now being entered into the system directly from the payroll system to ensure consistency of information in the two systems. When the reliability of the new aspects of the Headquarters system has been demonstrated, the United Nations Office at Geneva, UNIDO and the regional commissions, which have in their own computer-based systems many of the same items of information on the staff for whom they are responsible, will be asked to supply Headquarters with such information monthly in a format suitable to be entered directly into the Headquarters personnel information system.

E. Delegation of authority

45. AMS found that the exercise of personnel management responsibilities was much too centralized. It has therefore recommended that to expedite actions, eliminate duplication and increase staff effectiveness, there should be greater delegation of authority and responsibility in selected areas of personnel management from the Office of Personnel Services to departments and offices at Headquarters and to other established offices. The Secretary-General agrees with, and attaches priority to, this recommendation.

46. Accordingly, a complete review of all delegations of authority under the Staff Regulations and the Staff Rules relating to regular staff has been initiated. The objective of the review is to delegate as much authority as possible to the officers most directly involved in the administration of the staff, retaining centrally only those decisions which must be taken in the context of their over-all policy implications. While it is expected that certain authorities and responsibilities may be delegated before the end of 1974, other delegations of authority may have to be phased over the period 1975-1976 in order to allow departments and offices to prepare themselves to assume the new responsibilities.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS HAVING INTERAGENCY IMPLICATIONS

47. There are two JIU recommendations that affect the United Nations common system of salaries and allowances and thus require interagency consideration. They are recommendation 16, on the establishment within the Professional and higher categories of four levels of qualifications, each with two grades (the basic university level (P-1 and P-2), the level of first stage of professional experience (P-3 and P-4), the level of great professional experience (P-5 and P-6) and the management level (D-1 and D-2); and recommendation 17, on the reorganization of the system of

allowances. Moreover, the question of allowances was referred for examination to the International Civil Service Advisory Board by the General Assembly at its twenty-eighth session and that Board's report will be considered by the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session. The Secretary-General has not considered it timely or appropriate to bring these matters forward for interagency consideration pending the establishment of the International Civil Service Commission and the consideration by that body, as noted in paragraph 2, of the report of the Special Committee for the Review of the United Nations Salary System. A further JIU recommendation (recommendation 18) concerning the modernization of the Staff Rules to give legal embodiment to the reforms proposed by JIU will have to be considered when the substantive recommendations have been acted upon.

VI. ORGANIZATION OF THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL SERVICES

48. In recommendation 19, JIU has proposed a number of structural changes in the Office of Personnel Services designed to make it possible to carry out the reforms suggested elsewhere, to provide for policy formulation and to improve the division of responsibility. In the course of its review, AMS considered in depth the organization and functions of the Office of Personnel Services. The main conclusions reached by AMS are:

(a) Subject to some realignment of functions and transfer of a few units, the over-all structure of the Office is generally satisfactory; and

(b) It is necessary, however, to strengthen the capability of the Office for planning and programme development and for the initiation of the new personnel management functions recommended.

49. In line with those conclusions, AMS has made recommendations for the detailed organization and staffing of the Office of Personnel Services. The major recommendations are:

(a) Transfer of the secretariat of the Joint Appeals Board and the Joint Disciplinary Committee from the Division for Policy Co-ordination to the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General;

(b) Strengthening of the Division for Policy Co-ordination by establishing in it:

(i) A Classification and Salary Service, which would develop and administer a job classification system and, in addition, take over the pay research and administration functions now performed in the Office of Financial Services;

(ii) A Planning and Information Section, which would have as its responsibility the task of reviewing objectives, appraising methods and securing the necessary information inputs required for the development of alternative plans and policies for consideration by the Assistant Secretary-General;

- (iii) A Rules and Personnel Manual Section, by transfer of a section and some functions now included in the Division of Personnel Administration;

(c) Discontinuation of the outposting of personnel offices to departments and offices at Headquarters in consequence of the greater delegation of authority to executive and administrative officers and redirection of the work of Staff Services in the Division of Personnel Administration along functional lines to cover such matters as review of appointments, promotions and transfers; administration of a career development programme; review of administrative decisions, appeals and disciplinary cases; and the monitoring of personnel actions carried out by Headquarters departments and other established offices under delegations of authority.

50. With one exception, the Secretary-General generally agrees with these recommendations. This exception refers to the transfer of the pay research and administration function from the Office of Financial Services to the Office of Personnel Services. Salaries and allowances account for over 75 per cent of the total United Nations regular budget, and the financial implications of the determination of salary levels are considerable. The Office of Financial Services, in the discharge of its responsibility for maintaining control over the budget as a whole must therefore at least for the present and the foreseeable future continue to deal with pay matters to the extent that these do not fall within the purview of the proposed International Civil Service Commission. However, the Secretary-General agrees with the view expressed by AMS that this function should be carried out in close consultation between the Office of Financial Services and the Office of Personnel Services.

51. Subject to this modification, the Secretary-General has been proceeding in the course of 1974 to reorganize the Office of Personnel Services along the lines recommended by the Administrative Management Service. The new over-all structure intended for the Office of Personnel Services is given in the Annex to this report.

52. As the redeployment of staff within the Office of Personnel Services in line with the revised organization has not been completed, the Secretary-General is not yet in a position to evaluate the extent to which additional resources for staff and other purposes will be required to give effect fully to the new directions of the United Nations personnel programme. The Secretary-General would naturally wish to take account of the views of Member States with respect to the proposals set out in this report before determining the total additional funds needed for the remainder of the biennium. Therefore, with the exception of funds for experts on job classification, as noted in paragraph 11, he is not requesting at the present time appropriations additional to those available in the programme budget for 1974-1975 to carry out the reorganization of the Office of Personnel Services. However, he would expect to provide, in his programme budget estimates for the 1976-1977 biennium, information on the redeployment of existing resources as well as his assessment of additional resources required for future years.

Annex

ORGANIZATION OF THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL SERVICES

The Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services

Office of the Assistant Secretary-General
Secretariat of the Appointment and Promotion Board and
the Appointment and Promotion Committee
Secretariat of the Joint Appeals Board and the Joint
Disciplinary Committee

Division for Policy Co-ordination

Office of the Director
Planning and Information Section
Rules and personnel Manual Section
Classification Section a/

Division of Recruitment

Office of the Director
Secretariat Recruitment Service
Technical Assistance Recruitment Service

Division of Personnel Administration

Office of the Director
Staff Services
Training Service

Medical Service

a/ When the job classification system has been developed, a Section will be established to administer the system.