



General Assembly

Seventy-seventh session

Official Records

Distr.: General
31 March 2023

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 26th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 6 March 2023, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Kridelka (Belgium)
*Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and
Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Al Kumaim

Contents

Organization of work

Agenda item 144: Joint Inspection Unit

Agenda item 143: Human resources management

Agenda item 144: Joint Inspection Unit

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be sent as soon as possible, under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, to the Chief of the Documents Management Section (dms@un.org), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org/>).

23-04146 (E)



Please recycle



The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Organization of work (A/C.5/77/L.28)

1. **The Chair** invited the Committee to consider the proposed tentative and provisional programme of work for the first part of the resumed session, prepared on the basis of the note by the Secretariat on the status of preparedness of documentation (A/C.5/77/L.28).

2. **Mr. Tur de la Concepción** (Cuba), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group welcomed the continuation of the in-person meetings of the Committee, which were vital to achieving delicate balances, successful outcomes and meaningful engagement among Member States. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had provided the Fifth Committee with sound technical advice; however, despite progress with regard to the availability of reports, room for improvement remained. The timely submission of reports was crucial to the Fifth Committee's deliberations on the critical matters before it.

3. The Group was committed to a thorough consideration of the matters before the Committee, in particular human resources management, the accountability system, supply-chain activities, capital investment planning, the information and communications technology (ICT) strategy, standards of accommodation for air travel, the Umoja enterprise resource planning system and the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU). The Committee had been unable to reach consensus on human resources management in recent years; the Group's members would engage with other delegations in a spirit of compromise to adopt a draft resolution on the matter. The Group would consider holistically, as a package, all the related issues, including equitable geographical representation, gender parity, the filling of vacant posts, steps to address deficiencies in the staff selection process and the refinement of performance management. Although divergences had remained at previous sessions, the Group hoped that the areas of convergence that had emerged would constitute a starting point for the Committee's discussions.

4. **Mr. Seah** (Singapore), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the Organization's human resource policies must evolve in tandem with the Secretary-General's reforms of the United Nations and support the future of multilateralism as set out in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Our Common Agenda" (A/75/982). Since the United Nations and its success were defined

by its people, such policies should support the Organization's work and goals.

5. In order to increase the diversity of views among staff and enhance mandate fulfilment, which was essential to addressing global challenges, the composition of the staff of the United Nations should reflect the Organization's multinational character. The underrepresentation and non-representation of developing countries must be addressed, and greater attention must be paid to equitable geographical representation. All staff must be trained to address the increasing workload, and complex new global challenges.

6. In order for the Organization to recruit and retain good staff, its financial and liquidity situation must be robust. Member States must therefore pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions. ASEAN looked forward to the briefing by the Controller on the management of the liquidity situation of the United Nations.

7. Peace and development were two sides of the same coin. The General Assembly, in its resolution 76/305, had recognized that the need for financing for peacebuilding had increased and that the provision of assessed contributions for such financing would represent a shared commitment of Member States to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The Secretary-General noted, in his report on investing in prevention and peacebuilding (A/76/732), that the current demands on the Peacebuilding Fund stemmed from the closure of United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions, and that, between 2017 and 2020, the Fund had invested between 19 and 35 per cent of its portfolio in peacekeeping, and 20 per cent in special political missions. Therefore, given the strong links between peacebuilding and peace operations, whose mandates emanated from the Security Council, ASEAN believed that assessed contributions to the Fund should be calculated primarily using the peacekeeping scale rather than the regular budget scale.

8. The Committee had only a month to agree on human resources management and other weighty, complex matters. ASEAN would work constructively with all other delegations to ensure that the Committee adopted a draft resolution on human resources management by consensus.

9. **Mr. Camelli** (Representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine; the potential candidate country Georgia; and, in addition,

Andorra and Monaco, said that the States members of the European Union trusted that the Advisory Committee would continue to fulfil its technical mandate; its neutral, evidence-based and transparent expertise, and the timeliness of its reports, were essential to the discussions of the Fifth Committee.

10. The first part of the resumed session of the General Assembly had been established to allow the Committee to address – without hampering the deliberations on peacekeeping at the second part of the resumed session – non-time-bound matters that were critical to the efficient and effective functioning of the United Nations and had been deferred from the main part of the session. The European Union and its member States supported the Secretary-General's efforts to reform the Organization to make it more responsive, and looked forward to the conclusion of the Committee's discussions on peacebuilding in accordance with Assembly resolution 76/305. They also looked forward to the resumption of the Committee's consideration of supply chain activities, which were essential to management reform, and commended the progress made on the issue. However, they were concerned about the continuous attempts to undercut the independence of supervisory bodies and hamper their investigations, and were therefore committed to a robust accountability framework. A cornerstone of management reform and an integral part of the delegation of authority, the accountability of the Secretariat staff and its stakeholders was essential to fostering a culture of ethics and transparency, and to preventing and addressing misconduct.

11. Also before the Committee were structural budgetary matters. The biennial review of standards of accommodation for air travel was an opportunity to reflect on the alignment between those standards and the culture of the Organization, and on the ways in which the situation after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, together with environmental concerns and other factors, might lead the Committee to rethink its ways of working. The Committee's deliberations on the ICT strategy and capital investment would allow it to reflect on the importance of adequate information technology tools and data, and on the protection of data, with a view to improving mandate delivery.

12. Lastly, the Committee would resume its discussions on human resources management. More modern, egalitarian and effective human resource policies were needed at the United Nations, together with a work environment in which there was no place for misconduct, in particular discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual exploitation and abuse. United Nations staff played a vital role in fulfilling the

Organization's mandates while upholding its principles and values, and Member States should provide them with an updated and improved labour framework. While it was regrettable that the reports of the Secretary-General that were to be introduced at the current session did not contain more proposals related to mobility and training, which were essential to an agile workforce, the European Union and its member States hoped to build on the momentum provided by the Committee's decision, at the seventy-sixth session, to set aside the previous reports, on which it had been unable to make progress, and start afresh. Building upon the Committee's previous efforts, the European Union and its member States would seek consensus on all aspects of the human resources management package.

13. **Ms. Jones** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that the Committee, whose task was to foster budget effectiveness and efficiency, had not concluded its deliberations at the main part of the session within the allotted time, and should therefore reflect on its own contribution to inefficiency and waste. Despite a promising start, extensions in the deadlines for the submission of contributions to draft resolutions had resulted in empty slots in the programme of work, and a lack of constructive engagement had almost led to the main part of the session being extended into 2023. The unnecessary delays had severely disrupted the activities conducted at the end of the 2022 regular budget period and the start of the 2023 period. They had weakened budget controls, because resources had been stretched thin, and had resulted in the late issuance of letters of assessment and the subsequent late payment of contributions. They had also imposed unreasonable demands on the Secretariat staff who supported the Committee's work. Member States must do better. The Committee must improve its working methods and discipline so that it could conclude its work in a timely fashion.

14. Human resources management should be strengthened and the funding shortfall in the Peacebuilding Fund should be reduced. The most valuable asset of the United Nations was its staff; now more than ever, the Organization needed a capable, agile and mobile workforce to fulfil its complex mandates. In that workforce, gender parity must be reached, the geographical diversity of the Member States must be reflected and rejuvenation must be promoted. Most importantly, the workforce must operate to the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity. It was regrettable that the Committee had not reached consensus on human resources management since the seventy-second session, but the new reports before it at

the current session provided an opportunity for a fresh start. The Committee must strive to achieve an outcome in respect of each report, on the basis of its own merits, in order to provide the Secretary-General with clear guidance. The three delegations looked forward to building on the progress made at the seventy-sixth session in order to arrive at a comprehensive and balanced draft resolution.

15. It was disappointing that the Committee had once again deferred its consideration of investing in prevention and peacebuilding, since investing in peace now was less costly than responding to crises and conflicts later. The flexibility and responsiveness of the Peacebuilding Fund had allowed it to achieve impressive results around the world; it had disbursed funds to 67 Member States, but remained entirely dependent on voluntary contributions and faced a critical funding shortfall. The Committee should, as the General Assembly had encouraged it to do, conclude its consideration of the possibility of providing the Fund with assessed contributions.

16. **Mr. Al Abri** (Oman), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, said that those States paid tribute to the Advisory Committee for its technical advice on the matters currently before the Fifth Committee, and appreciated the Secretariat's efforts to issue reports in a timely manner. The States members of the Council attached particular importance to human resources management, since equitable geographical representation must be achieved, vacant posts must be filled, deficiencies in the staff selection process must be addressed, gender equality must be attained and performance management must be improved. Although progress had been made towards equitable geographical representation in recent years, more effort was needed, since some States were unrepresented among the staff of the Organization.

17. The Peacebuilding Fund must be adequately, sustainably and predictably financed so that it could respond to emerging crises. Although the Committee had not agreed on the financing of the Fund at the main part of the session, he looked forward to engaging in informal consultations with a view to reaching consensus on the matter at the current part of the resumed session. The States members of the Council looked forward to participating in the Committee's deliberations, particularly those on improving the financial situation of the United Nations.

18. **Mr. Velázquez Castillo** (Mexico) said that the Committee's work at the current part of the resumed session was essential to the implementation of the

management reform. The Committee must adopt a draft resolution on human resources management to guide Secretariat policy, and to build and adapt the institutional capacities needed for the Organization to fulfil its mandates and meet the challenges it faced in a changing world. That was no small task, and the potential effects of the draft resolution must be properly considered. Mexico hoped that the Committee would discuss the proposals and recommendations of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee constructively, with a view to providing the Secretariat with the guidance needed to manage the Organization's most important asset, namely, its human resources.

19. Despite the Secretariat's efforts during the reporting period, disciplinary misconduct and harmful behaviour had continued, particularly in the field. Misconduct should be discouraged, and the Secretariat should strengthen the implementation of standards and rules intended to eradicate criminal behaviour in the Organization, while encouraging prevention and avoiding setting precedents and wasting resources. Information on the rights and responsibilities of staff must be clear and precise in order to establish a culture of prevention and zero tolerance of criminal behaviour. The checking of disciplinary records must be further mainstreamed, the role of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) in handling cases of possible misconduct must be consolidated, and the appropriate measures must be imposed when necessary, strictly in accordance with the rules and due process, and regardless of the hierarchical level of the person concerned.

20. Mexico hoped that the Committee would reach agreement on the issue of accountability. Although the Secretariat needed to overcome structural and operational challenges in order to build a responsible system through the management reform, the Organization should be able to provide high-quality services while improving its performance, reinforcing the clear and effective delegation of authority, establishing adequate frameworks to manage risks and fight fraud and corruption, applying the code of conduct and the disciplinary code without discrimination, and ensuring the oversight of activities. In accordance with the Secretary-General's definition of accountability, a sense of responsibility must be thoroughly inculcated in the workforce in order to transform the United Nations into a less bureaucratic and more agile, modern, coherent, efficient and effective organization that avoided duplication and waste and was underpinned by resilience, adaptability, transparency and accountability. Mexico hoped that the Committee would arrive at

consensus on the predictable and sustainable funding of prevention and peacebuilding.

21. **Mr. Dai Bing** (China) said that, given the volatile international landscape and significant global challenges, the United Nations, as the central platform of global governance, had great responsibilities and was entrusted with the aspirations of people around the world. Sound and rational budgeting and human resources management were the foundation for the Organization's efficient operation and performance. China looked forward to cooperation and coordination among all parties to ensure that the Committee achieved the expected results at the current part of the resumed session.

22. China attached great importance to human resources management, on which the Committee had failed to adopt relevant resolutions for several consecutive years, thereby depriving the Secretariat of guidance from Member States on the matter. His delegation was concerned about the long-standing issue of inequitable geographical representation and the high number of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States. The Secretariat must take effective, tailored and results-based measures to address the issue, in particular the underrepresentation of the vast number of developing countries. In addition to the number of underrepresented Member States, such issues as the severity of underrepresentation must be addressed.

23. The General Assembly, in its resolution [76/305](#), had laid the foundation for new solutions in peacebuilding financing. China, as the second largest contributor to the regular budget and peacekeeping budgets, attached great importance to peacebuilding and had, within its capacities, supported conflict and post-conflict countries through various channels. It had also proposed a constructive solution that complied with the budgetary and financial regulations and rules of the United Nations. Regulations and traditions related to the Organization's management should be respected; in the same way, when initiatives were funded through assessed contributions, Member States' supervisory rights must also be respected. The historical responsibility of developed countries as major donors in peacebuilding must not be altered. It was not constructive for traditional donors to evade responsibility for peacebuilding financing on the pretext of changing financing methods.

24. With regard to supply chain management, Member States had not reached consensus on the concept of sustainable procurement. Developed countries had long been the main beneficiaries of United Nations procurement, a sector in which more transparency and

accountability was needed and developing countries must be further favoured. China supported the full exercise by JIU of its functions as an independent external oversight body, and the enhancement of synergies between the Unit and other bodies, including the Board of Auditors and OIOS, in order to strengthen the supervision of the entire United Nations system.

25. **Mr. Bae Jun Hyung** (Republic of Korea) said that the United Nations played an essential role in promoting freedom, peace and prosperity in the international community, particularly in the face of interlocking challenges such as conflicts, natural disasters and the climate crisis, as well as pandemics and other health-related crises. His delegation hoped that the Committee would achieve successful outcomes on all the matters before it at the current part of the resumed session so that the United Nations could fulfil its mandates.

26. The Republic of Korea supported the Secretary-General's United Nations 2.0 initiative and believed that stronger human resources management would be an integral part of reform. Although the Committee had not provided the Secretariat with guidance on human resources management since the seventy-third session, his delegation hoped that, at the current part of the resumed session, tangible results would be achieved. While welcoming the Secretariat's initiatives on the matter, such as the staff selection 2.0 programme, his delegation attached great importance to rejuvenating the workforce by broadening entry-level opportunities, in order to promote efficiency, competence and integrity, as well as better distribution, among United Nations staff.

27. His delegation looked forward to reaching solutions that would help the United Nations to improve its supply chain and procurement system and enhance its standards of accommodation for air travel, thereby increasing accountability and efficiency. His delegation welcomed the efforts described in the twelfth progress report of the Secretary-General on accountability: strengthening accountability in the United Nations Secretariat ([A/77/692](#)). A robust accountability framework was a cornerstone of management reform, as it enabled the Organization and its workforce to perform to the fullest extent of their potential. His delegation looked forward to reaching an outcome in relation to accountability at the current part of the resumed session, putting an end to the undesirable lack of guidance from the General Assembly on the matter for the previous two years.

28. **Mr. Lu** (United States of America) said that, at the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, to be held in September 2023, the United Nations would renew its

commitment to achieving the Goals by 2030, and, at the Summit of the Future, to be held in September 2024, it would chart its course for the rest of the century. The summits would result in important declarations on peace and security, human rights, development, and poverty. In order for those declarations to be more than words on paper, the Organization must be able to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century by recruiting, developing and retaining world-class talent, and providing those employees with the latest technological tools. Organizations worldwide were transforming their workforces to meet emerging demands and adapt to the changing nature of work. Unfortunately, since 2016, the Committee had not adopted a comprehensive reform of the United Nations human resources system. The Organization could not afford another year of inaction. A focused plan was needed to rejuvenate the United Nations. Young, diverse talent was eager to apply its skills and vision to shape the ways in which the Organization addressed global challenges. Unfortunately, the United Nations was top-heavy, with a limited number of entry-level opportunities. Even as new talent was recruited, the skills of all staff must be improved by expanding their access to world-class learning opportunities so that they could meet the challenges of the future. To enable the United Nations to deploy the right talent at the right place and time, staff mobility must also be promoted. Since the United Nations thrived when staff were able to gain experience at Headquarters and in the field, Organization-wide mobility must be accelerated by incentivizing staff to move from Headquarters to the field and back.

29. Investing in staff also meant eliminating barriers to professional growth. The United Nations workforce was a class system in which top performers in the Field Service and General Service categories were blocked from advancing professionally. All exceptional performers should be allowed to achieve their full potential in the Organization.

30. The Committee must encourage accountability by ensuring that staff were held responsible for their performance. It must improve performance management to ensure that managers invested in their teams, that top performers were recognized and that poor performance was promptly addressed. In order for everyone to be respected in the workplace, the Committee must help the United Nations to eliminate harassment and hold perpetrators accountable. It must also strengthen the independence of the Ethics Office by approving long-standing proposals that represented best practice and were supported by JIU.

31. **Mr. Staples** (United Kingdom) said that the United Nations required modern and agile human

resource policies and processes in order to ensure that its workforce could respond to complex global challenges and fulfil the Organization's mandates efficiently and effectively. The United Nations needed diverse staff who represented the people they served, and who felt empowered to bring their perspectives to the Organization. Staff should be hired on the basis of their competence rather than their age, experience or qualifications, through a dynamic, fit-for-purpose recruitment process. They should move within the Organization, gain experience of a range of roles at Headquarters and in the field, and share those experiences with other colleagues. Staff should be managed effectively, provided with the tools they needed to do their jobs well, and aware of a robust system of ethics and discipline established to ensure accountability. His delegation looked forward to enabling the establishment of those conditions for all staff, who were the Organization's greatest asset and expense.

32. At the current part of the resumed session, the Committee had the opportunity to provide the Secretariat with long-overdue guidance on human resources management. The smaller volume of reports before the Committee than in previous years, and the high quality of the recommendations received, represented an opportunity to capitalize on the progress made in 2022 and adopt a draft resolution on the matter.

33. The United Kingdom would work with colleagues from across the Committee to ensure that progress was made on peacebuilding finance. It welcomed the initiative to develop a strategic approach to capital investments, in order to ensure coherence and consistency across investment lines and business areas, and promote efficiency, transparency and predictability. Through its discussions on the ICT strategy, the Committee should ensure that innovation and technology were at the heart of a modern Organization, and should secure information assets to promote technology as an enabler of effective mandate fulfilment. Transparency and accountability were essential to an effective United Nations, and a culture of accountability must be established at all levels, including senior leadership. United Nations supply chain activities should support sustainability, reduce the Organization's effects on the climate and advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in accordance with United Nations procurement principles, such as the principle of best value for money. It was regrettable that, at the main part of the session, inflexibility, disengagement and polarization had increased in the Committee. The United

Kingdom looked forward to the return of the Committee's consensus-based working methods.

34. **Mr. Yamanaka** (Japan) said that, at the current part of the resumed session, his delegation would carefully consider issues such as accountability, supply chain activities, air travel, capital investment planning, the ICT strategy and human resources management, in order to improve mandate fulfilment through the development of a stronger, more integrated and more accountable Organization. Human resources management was a key aspect of any effective and efficient organization. Member States must strive to provide the Secretary-General with consensual guidance in that regard and promote his reforms, through constructive, faithful deliberations in the Committee. The role of the Fifth Committee as the Main Committee entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters, as well as its long-standing practice of consensus-based decision-making, must be preserved.

35. **Mr. Mnguni** (South Africa) said that his delegation was concerned about the long-standing lack of consensus on human resources management within the Committee, which must adopt a draft resolution on the matter so that the General Assembly could provide the Secretariat with urgently needed guidance on improving outreach to recruit talent with due regard for equitable geographical representation, in accordance with Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, and on strengthening accountability and the Organization's ability to address disciplinary matters.

36. Equitable geographical representation must be achieved in the Secretariat, and his delegation was concerned about the number of candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States appointed to posts subject to geographical distribution. He would welcome further information on the Secretariat's efforts to improve the situation, in particular through outreach programmes and cooperation with United Nations information centres in the affected regions. Youth representation, gender parity and disability inclusion in the Secretariat must also be improved, particularly through the recruitment of staff from developing countries.

37. The Secretary-General's strategic action plan on addressing racism and promoting dignity for all in the United Nations Secretariat must be implemented. South Africa commended the Secretary-General on his commitment on the issue, as exemplified by the recent appointment of his first Special Adviser on the matter. South Africa also attached great importance to investing in prevention and peacebuilding, supply chain activities, the ICT strategy, and the work of JIU.

38. **Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) said that, for his delegation, the most important matters before the Committee were supply chain activities, human resources management, investing in peacebuilding, and accountability. The General Assembly had not adopted a resolution on human resources for more than six years, while intensive discussions on a draft resolution on investing in peacebuilding had been ongoing for a year and no agreement had been reached on accountability for two years. The basis for successful agreement on those and any other draft resolutions was to take into account the proposals and interests of each delegation. He hoped that the Committee would make progress on those draft resolutions at the current part of the resumed session. The Russian Federation reaffirmed its position on the importance of issuing documents in a timely manner in all official languages, and hoped that the informal consultation process would be inclusive and transparent.

39. **Mr. Machado Mourinho** (Uruguay) said that the Committee had not reached agreement on human resources management for some years. Human resources were a fundamental asset of the Organization and must be properly managed so that mandates were fulfilled through a modern, efficient and effective system in which duplication of functions was avoided and resources were optimally used.

40. 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](#)), introduced at the seventy-third session, had contained objectives and strategic actions to transform human resources management in the Secretariat with a view to improving recruitment and reducing bureaucracy. The strategy had been supplemented in subsequent reports. Although many of those guidelines had been implemented, Uruguay was concerned about the lack of agreement on those aspects of the reform that required guidance from the General Assembly. The Secretariat must take into account the concerns expressed by delegations in informal consultations and redouble its efforts to improve its dialogue with the Member States before the start of those consultations in the Committee. To that end, all parties must approach the dialogue with an open mind and the Secretariat must be prepared to present alternative ideas.

41. At the current part of the resumed session, the Committee would once again consider the financing of the Peacebuilding Fund, a matter deferred from previous sessions. The Committee should ensure that the resources needed to meet the Fund's needs were allocated, taking into consideration the current budgetary restrictions faced by Member States,

particularly developing countries, given the significant slowdown in world growth, high inflation, rising interest rates and reduced investment. His delegation also attached particular importance to the Committee's deliberations on supply chain activities and standards of accommodation for air travel.

42. **The Chair** said he took it that the Committee wished to approve the proposed programme of work on the understanding that it would be adjusted as necessary, as the first part of the resumed session progressed.

43. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 144: Joint Inspection Unit (A/77/34 and A/77/649)

44. **Ms. Cronin** (Chair, Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the report of JIU for 2022 and programme of work for 2023 (A/77/34), said that, in 2022, the Unit had restored the working methods that had been disrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020 and 2021, the Unit had implemented its programme of work, but the cumulative impact of various factors had delayed several reviews in 2022. During the pandemic, the Unit had requested more data and, as a result, organizations had taken longer to respond, which had affected drafting times and the finalization of reports. The Unit had completed two reviews in 2022 and anticipated completing, in 2023, all the reviews that had been carried over from previous years.

45. However, 2023 had brought new challenges. Faced with a reduction in the Unit's funding, the inspectors had restricted the programme of work for that year to two single-organization reviews, of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and a system-wide review of the medical services. At the request of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund, the Executive Board of UN-Women, and the Executive Board of the United Nations Population Fund, of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Office for Project Services, the Unit would review the governance and oversight mechanisms of those boards.

46. Improving the rate of acceptance and implementation of the Unit's recommendations was essential to making organizations more effective, efficient and accountable in their operations. Annex II of the report contained the status of acceptance of JIU recommendations and of the implementation of accepted recommendations by participating organizations for the period 2014–2021. The attention of governing bodies was essential to driving action on the matter by

management. In 2022, the Unit had completed an internal self-assessment to propose strategic and operational improvements to its work. The results of the self-assessment would contribute to the 2024 midterm assessment of the Unit's 2020–2029 strategic framework.

47. JIU was a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, with a well-defined statute in which its administrative, budgetary and financial arrangements were set out. It was regrettable that those provisions had been disregarded and the Unit's independence threatened. Notwithstanding General Assembly resolution 77/263, on special subjects relating to the proposed programme budget for 2023, in which the gross budget for the Unit had been approved, and article 20 of the statute of JIU, in accordance with which the budget of the Unit must be presented to the Assembly for approval, the JIU budget had been reduced by entities overseen by the Unit. She looked forward to providing, in informal consultations, all the details necessary to ensure that the Unit's independence and operations would not be further affected in future years.

48. **Ms. Pietracci** (United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the report of JIU for 2022 (A/77/649), said that, in accordance with the statute of JIU, the Secretary-General, through the Secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), performed functions that supported the Unit's work, mainly in connection with the preparation of reports that concerned more than one organization. Throughout 2022, the secretariats of CEB and JIU had worked together and engaged in dialogue regarding cooperation, including the timely preparation of notes by the Secretary-General containing responses to reports addressing system-wide concerns. They had also engaged in dialogue to ensure the smooth preparation of reports on system-wide issues. The Secretary-General, in consultation with members of CEB and in accordance with the statute of JIU, had reviewed the qualifications of an inspector whose appointment had been proposed in 2022. The Secretary-General was committed to maintaining a close working relationship with JIU and encouraged all organizations to respond to its requests in a timely manner.

49. **Mr. Tur de la Concepción** (Cuba), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group supported the work of JIU as the sole independent, external oversight body mandated to conduct system-wide inspections, evaluations and investigations. The Group recognized the Unit's implementation of its programme of work during the COVID-19 pandemic

and acknowledged the restoration of many of the Unit's working methods and activities in 2022. However, it was concerned that several reviews had been delayed as a result of the cumulative impact of numerous impediments. Only two reviews had been completed in 2022. The Group looked forward to the issuance, in 2023, of the eight pending reviews that had been included in the JIU workplan in 2022, and recognized the Unit's commitment to releasing five of those reviews by the summer of 2023. Three new reviews had been scheduled for 2023, while other reviews of great importance to the Group, including the review of accountability frameworks in the United Nations system organizations, had been carried over from 2021. The Group looked forward to discussing, in informal consultations, the reasons for which projects were carried over from previous years.

50. The Group expected the review of the acceptance and implementation of JIU recommendations by the United Nations system, scheduled for 2022, to begin shortly. The Group was concerned about the average rate of acceptance and implementation of important recommendations by some organizations; the rate presented in the latest reports must be improved. The Group would address in detail, in informal consultations, the updating of the web-based system for tracking the status of implementation of recommendations, since the replacement of the current system was overdue.

51. The Group recognized the Unit's commitment to the development of action plans based on the formal consideration and prioritization, in 2023, of the recommendations arising from the self-assessment exercise carried out in 2022 to consider the performance of JIU since the previous self-evaluation, conducted in 2013. The Group expected that the results of the 2022 exercise would help to address the current delays in the issuance of reviews and support the 2024 midterm evaluation of the Unit's strategic framework. Coordination must be improved in order to align the workplans of the Board of Auditors, OIOS and JIU, and to avoid overlaps or duplication of work and maximize the synergies between those bodies.

52. The Group welcomed the diversity of the projects envisaged for 2023 and looked forward to the completion of the pending projects; the Unit should consider adding more topics to the programme of work. The inspectors and their teams should finalize all reviews by the end of 2023 while maintaining the quality of their work. Member States should assist the Unit and its inspectors with consular and other travel requirements to enable them to discharge their duties effectively.

Agenda item 143: Human resources management ([A/77/75](#), [A/77/545](#), [A/77/578](#), [A/77/580](#), [A/77/590](#), [A/77/590/Add.1](#), [A/77/606](#), [A/77/727](#), [A/77/728](#), [A/77/728/Add.1](#), [A/77/729](#) and [A/77/730](#))

Agenda item 144: Joint Inspection Unit ([A/77/258](#) and [A/77/258/Add.1](#); [JIU/REP/2021/5](#))

53. **Ms. Lopez** (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics ([A/77/580](#)), said that the report provided a comprehensive view of the staff of the Secretariat from 1 January to 31 December 2021, including overall demographics and structural elements of the workforce, staff movements, forecast retirements, and staff subject to the system of desirable ranges. The report contained in-depth analysis of factors that affected the long-term outcome of efforts to establish a diverse and inclusive workplace through human resources reform. To address Member States' needs related to workforce data, the Secretariat provided online access to such data, updated on a monthly basis, and had launched a Secretariat workforce portal.

54. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: gratis personnel, retired staff, consultants and individual contractors, and United Nations Volunteers ([A/77/578](#)), she said that the report covered the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021. For the first time, United Nations Volunteers hosted by Secretariat entities were included in the report, to provide a comprehensive overview of non-staff personnel working in the Secretariat. The report contained an analysis of United Nations Volunteers by gender, age, nationality and hosting entity.

55. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and cases of possible criminal behaviour, 1 January to 31 December 2021 ([A/77/606](#)), she said that the report provided an overview of the administrative framework for such matters, summaries of individual cases and explanations of some of the factors taken into account by the Secretary-General in imposing disciplinary measures. The report also provided statistics on the number and types of cases received, as well as the number and disposition of the cases completed. When reviewing cases, the Secretary-General was guided by the Organization's legal framework governing the conduct of staff members, as well as the decisions of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal and the United Nations Appeals Tribunal on conduct matters. As the United Nations was a rights-based organization, the procedures for processing cases

involved many checks and balances to ensure due process for all staff involved.

56. Introducing the reports of the Secretary-General on the overview of human resources management reform mandate implementation for the period 2021–2022 ([A/77/590/Add.1](#)) and on ways forward in the implementation of human resources management reforms for the period 2023–2026 ([A/77/590](#)), she said that the overview report provided an account of progress in the implementation of the General Assembly resolutions related to the desired long-term outcomes of the human resources management reform, namely, diversity, agility and accountability. The report on ways forward provided a plan for the implementation of mandates related to human resources reform up to 2026, with specific deliverables.

57. With regard to diversity, progress had been made, albeit more slowly than was desired, towards the goal of equitable geographical distribution under the system of desirable ranges. In response to the challenges mentioned in the report on ways forward, the Secretary-General intended to overhaul the 12-year-old staff selection system, which, according to a recent recruitment analysis, created systemic barriers to the fulfilment of diversity-related mandates. Overcoming those obstacles would require a dedicated change initiative, known as staff selection 2.0, in order to ensure that the Secretariat introduced a new recruitment process that complied with the letter and the spirit of Article 101 of the Charter by ensuring that staff were recruited on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

58. In order to improve agility, the Secretariat aimed to solidify proactive and efficient planning, hiring, deployment and learning for multiskilled, mobile and adaptable talent. To that end, the Secretariat had begun to operationalize its strategic workforce planning framework, an iterative process through which, by 2026, it would identify the required workforce capabilities and, by means of talent management, build them, with an emphasis on data, digital transformation, innovation, strategic foresight and behavioural science.

59. In order to strengthen accountability, the Secretariat aimed to establish efficient human resources services supported by an enabling policy framework, conducive performance and human resources risk management, and the meaningful discharge of duty-of-care responsibilities. Entities had been provided with related operational support and guidance. Key policies were being promulgated and, in order to enhance performance management, a multi-rater/360° feedback mechanism had been expanded to all staff with four or more first or second reports. Standards of conduct and

integrity had been prioritized, and had been upheld through the launch or expansion of such tools as Misconduct Risk Management Tools, the Case Management Tracking System and the Victim Assistance Tracking System. ClearCheck, a database designed to screen personnel during recruitment on the basis of their integrity, had also been expanded. The Secretariat had contributed to the efforts of the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the United Nations System to build a system-wide, victim-centred approach to such harassment.

60. **Ms. Armstrong** (Director, Ethics Office), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Ethics Office ([A/77/75](#)), said that, in 2021, the Office had assisted the Secretary-General in fostering the Organization's culture of ethics, transparency and accountability. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution [71/263](#), the Secretary-General had, in his 2017 report on the activities of the Office ([A/73/89](#)) and his four subsequent reports on the matter, proposed strengthening the Office's independence, which was vital to its work. In 2021, JIU had issued its second review of the ethics function in the United Nations system ([JIU/REP/2021/5](#)), following up on its initial review, conducted in 2010. In its 2021 report, the Unit recognized the importance of the function's independence and urged the General Assembly to approve the Secretary-General's proposals, namely, the direct submission of the Office's annual report to the Assembly in order to assure Member States of the Office's independence; the enhancement of the role of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee in overseeing the Office's work, including through consultation with the head of the Office in the event of a conflict of interest resulting in the Secretary-General's not being able to receive advice from the Office; and the raising of the rank of the head of the Office to the level of Assistant Secretary-General, starting with her successor. The Secretary-General had the authority to introduce term limits, security of tenure and re-employment restrictions for the head of the Office, in order to enhance the Office's independence.

61. In 2021, the Office had responded to 1,848 requests, including 836 requests for ethics advice, mainly related to conflicts of interest. Under the financial disclosure programme, the Office had provided advice on 5,043 disclosure statements. Nearly 85 per cent of the eligible senior officials had participated in the Secretary-General's voluntary public disclosure initiative, a 5 per cent increase from 2020. Around 33,000 personnel had participated in the 2021 Leadership Dialogue, on the theme of accountability.

The Office had received 128 enquiries about the policy on protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations. It had completed 34 preliminary reviews of claims of alleged retaliation, had determined that 3 claims had represented prima facie cases of retaliation and had referred those 3 claims for investigation. She had chaired 11 sessions of the Ethics Panel of the United Nations and taken part in the planning of the thirteenth meeting of the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations.

62. **Mr. Al Kumaim** (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on ways forward in the implementation of human resources management reforms for the period 2023–2026 ([A/77/728](#)), said that the implementation of the human resources management framework, subject to the approval of the General Assembly, required clearly defined and quantifiable targets and timelines, in addition to well-designed monitoring and reporting tools, along with information on the financial implications. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to develop a comprehensive strategy that would improve geographical representation across the board and form part of the overall human resources management framework or strategy.

63. The Advisory Committee saw merit in the Secretary-General's vision for accelerating progress on the Secretariat's staff selection system in accordance with the principles established under Article 101 of the Charter. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to conduct a more comprehensive analysis of the data on the current recruitment process, including the selection stage, to address the challenges in the implementation of equitable geographical representation in the Organization.

64. The Secretary-General stated in his report that the young professionals programme was one of the components of the staff selection 2.0 programme. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive update on the implementation of the programme, in particular the placement rate of successful candidates, and also to provide options related to the further extension of the period of time for which such candidates might remain on the roster and to a mechanism for improving the placement of candidates on the roster. The Advisory Committee was of the view that increasing the number of entry-level positions at the P-2 level that were subject to geographical distribution would improve the placement of successful candidates.

65. The report of the Secretary-General did not contain information on the new consolidated approach to staff mobility, which had been further developed on the basis of his report on the new approach to staff mobility: building an agile Organization by providing opportunities for on-the-job learning and skills development ([A/75/540/Add.1](#)). While acknowledging the Secretary-General's authority to move staff laterally across the Organization pursuant to regulation 1.2 (c) of the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, the Advisory Committee was of the view that such a large-scale mobility framework, whose scope encompassed the entire Secretariat, should have been presented to the General Assembly, with details of its implementation and cost implications. The establishment of such a framework was a policy matter for the consideration of the Assembly.

66. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the overview of human resources management reform for the period 2021–2022 ([A/77/728/Add.1](#)), he said that the Advisory Committee trusted that updated information and clarification on the policies and initiatives introduced since the seventy-third session, including their estimated financial implications, where applicable, would be provided to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of that report of the Advisory Committee. With regard to workforce planning, while noting the delegation of authority to heads of entities, the Advisory Committee saw merit in enhancing workforce planning management at the Headquarters level to better identify opportunities for streamlining functions, especially in situations of relative stability and in the absence of substantial changes in the operational environment. The Advisory Committee also trusted that means of systematically collecting and reporting on the core functions performed by non-staff personnel, in particular consultants and individual contractors, would be established, and that the resulting data, along with the analysis of the information, would be included in the Secretary-General's next overview report and the related report on the composition of the Secretariat.

67. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics ([A/77/729](#)), he said that the Advisory Committee trusted that the Secretary-General would provide, in future composition reports, greater in-depth analysis, more comparative and disaggregated information, and correlations between data and human resources management objectives. The Advisory Committee was concerned that, between 2017 and 2021, the number of Member States unrepresented in posts subject to geographical distribution had increased

from 19 to 21, while the number of overrepresented Member States had increased from 27 to 30. The Advisory Committee was also concerned about the significant number of vacant posts subject to geographical distribution, and the increased number of geographical posts temporarily encumbered by staff without geographical status or with limited appointments, and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures to address the situation. The Advisory Committee was also concerned about the fact that the average age of Secretariat staff had increased, albeit at a slower pace during the reporting period than during the period from 2017 to 2020, and emphasized the need to reverse that trend. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to systematically provide, in future reports on the composition of the Secretariat, detailed disaggregated information on internal and external appointments.

68. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the composition of the Secretariat: gratis personnel, retired staff, consultants and individual contractors, and United Nations Volunteers ([A/77/727](#)), he said that the Advisory Committee expected that the Secretariat would abide by all the General Assembly resolutions, regulations and rules applicable to those categories of non-staff personnel and that any exceptions, in particular in respect of retired staff and consultants, would be made on an exceptional basis. Noting the total number of non-staff personnel, the Advisory Committee considered that comprehensive and effective workforce planning should reduce the need to rely on such personnel, and trusted that workforce planning would be enhanced to restrict the use of such personnel, especially retired staff and consultants, to limited circumstances.

69. The Secretariat had implemented a policy, during the COVID-19 pandemic, that had allowed interns to render their services and expertise remotely, which had slightly improved the participation of interns from diverse geographical regions. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to regard that policy as a complement to the Organization's in-person internship programme, and trusted that the lessons learned from the remote internship option would be consolidated and that potential solutions to improve the participation of interns from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, and developing countries, as well as the possible funding options for all forms of the internship programme, would be included in the Secretary-General's next report on the matter, for the consideration of the Assembly.

70. The report of the Secretary-General contained, for the first time, an overview of the United Nations Volunteers engaged by the Secretariat in 2020–2021. Taking into account the cost differential between national and international United Nations Volunteers, and the importance of national capacity-building, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to increase the use of national United Nations Volunteers. The Advisory Committee also recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure equitable geographical representation among international United Nations Volunteers.

71. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and cases of possible criminal behaviour, 1 January to 31 December 2021 ([A/77/730](#)), he said that transparency, proportionality, due process and consistency were essential to the disciplinary process; the Advisory Committee trusted that the criteria and internal regulations applied in the determination of misconduct and the imposition of disciplinary measures would be more clearly laid out in the Secretary-General's future reports on disciplinary matters. Increased transparency regarding managers' conduct, with enhanced accountability, must be ensured, and investigations of possible misconduct, in particular by managers, should be handled by OIOS to the maximum extent possible, in order to ensure the independence and integrity of the investigations.

72. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the activities of the Ethics Office ([A/77/545](#)), he said that, of the services provided by the Office to United Nations entities, only those related to the financial disclosure programme were cost-shared. A cost-sharing or cost-recovery arrangement should be established with all entities that received services from the Office. The Advisory Committee recognized the importance of the voluntary disclosure initiative for senior officials and the effort to increase transparency in the Organization. With regard to the proposals regarding the head of the Office, the Advisory Committee was of the view that the credibility of the Office's advisory role resided not in the level of the head of the Office but rather in the Office's mandate and functions. The level of seniority of the head should not serve as an indicator of credibility, and the level of any particular post should not be used to justify preventing the incumbent from carrying out the related functions. The D-2 level, at which the head of the Office was currently appointed, was appropriate to the direction and coordination of the Office's work in the implementation of a responsive and

coherent policy for fostering a culture of ethics, transparency and accountability.

73. **Ms. Roscher** (Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the report of JIU on the review of the ethics function in the United Nations system ([JIU/REP/2021/5](#)), transmitted to the General Assembly by means of a note by the Secretary-General ([A/77/258](#)), said that ethics and integrity were critical to the functioning, as well as the credibility and reputation, of United Nations system organizations. A dedicated and effective ethics function was thus essential to the accountability and integrity of those organizations. The Unit, in its review, had assessed the current state of the ethics function and made recommendations on further enhancing and strengthening it.

74. Despite the progress made, the ethics arrangements of United Nations system organizations, including the Ethics Office, suffered from several shortcomings. All but five of the organizations reviewed had established a dedicated ethics function. In smaller organizations, the Unit recommended that the function be shared with or outsourced to another United Nations system organization to ensure independence and coherence. The terms of reference of the ethics function needed to be updated to include new responsibilities, when appropriate. The independence of the ethics function at 13 organizations, including the United Nations, needed to be strengthened to comply with JIU recommendations and standards, as well as established good practices. The mandates of audit and oversight committees, including the Independent Audit Advisory Committee, should be expanded to include ethics oversight. Attendance rates for mandatory ethics courses remained too low; monitoring and follow-up were necessary, and periodic refresher courses should be introduced. The effectiveness and efficiency of policies and programmes related to financial disclosure and declarations of interest, including the United Nations financial disclosure programme, needed to be reviewed. Adequate system-wide coherence in ethics had not been achieved. New demands and challenges resulting from ethical dilemmas needed to be addressed. Ethical risks should be integrated into enterprise risk management frameworks.

75. The Unit recommended that the legislative organs and governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations that had not yet done so request that those organizations update the terms of reference of their respective audit and oversight committees by the end of 2023 to include, where necessary, provisions related to ethics, and to ethics as a desirable area of expertise for new committee members. The remaining recommendations were addressed to the executive heads of United Nations

system organizations; the implementation of those recommendations would be greatly facilitated if the governing bodies requested the executive heads to act on them promptly. The Unit had taken note of the comments of CEB on the report, contained in the note by the Secretary-General on the matter ([A/77/258/Add.1](#)).

76. **Ms. Pietracchi** (United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination), introducing the comments of the Secretary-General and CEB on the report of JIU, as contained in the note by the Secretary-General on the matter ([A/77/258/Add.1](#)), said that United Nations system organizations welcomed the report and appreciated the comprehensive analysis that it contained, noting that it provided a user-friendly and systematized account of the main features of the ethics function across the system. Since the issuance of the report, many organizations had stated that they had strengthened their ethics functions, including by increasing the convergence among those functions' responsibilities and roles. Entities had also emphasized the diversity of the functions' institutional set-up, including the contractual arrangements for the heads of ethics offices, staffing levels and relations with the entities' governing structures.

77. **The Chair**, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [35/213](#), invited a representative of the staff of the Secretariat, as the single representative of staff unions, to make a statement.

78. **Ms. Fattah Wahidi** (Staff representative), speaking via video link, said that she wished to express sympathy and solidarity with those affected by war, natural disasters and economic hardship worldwide. Despite management's efforts to ensure that the conditions of service better reflected staff rights, needs, and aspirations, further improvements were needed. Staff appreciated the new parental leave policy, although those whose children had been born before the effective date of 1 January 2023 had been deprived of an equal chance to provide parental care. The advice of the Fifth Committee was essential to the fair implementation of the new mobility policy, which was also the result of constructive collaboration between management and staff.

79. Consultations in good faith with the staff unions were essential to any improvement in the work environment or conditions of service; the unions played a vital role in the functioning of the United Nations, and their input could ensure that any reform or change was accepted by staff. Consultations with staff were being conducted largely as a formality. The Committee should facilitate the holding of consultations that led to broadly

endorsed changes in order to preserve staff welfare and the interests of Member States.

80. Member State support for staff's continuous calls for the enhancement of accountability across the Organization was essential to avoiding misuse of the system of delegation of authority. Performance management was vital to the career development and progress of staff within the Organization; the staff counted on the Committee to consider the new performance management policy, once endorsed by the staff.

81. Barriers to the career advancement of staff in the General Service and related categories must be removed. The United Nations could not be regarded as an agile, modern and responsive organization while it deprived some of its multi-skilled, mobile and adaptable staff of the right to such advancement. With regard to disciplinary matters, lengthy oversight processes were creating an uncertain work environment that affected staff mental health and well-being. Member State support was needed to establish an agile, fair, and transparent oversight system through which the truth was established while whistle-blowers and the overall environment were protected.

82. **Mr. Tur de la Concepción** (Cuba), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Secretary-General focused, in his report on the overview of human resources management reform mandate implementation for the period 2021–2022 ([A/77/590/Add.1](#)), on the integrated, coherent and interdependent outcomes of agility, diversity and accountability, with the aim of guiding the impact of the reform on the Organization. In his report on ways forward in the implementation of human resources management reforms for the period 2023–2026 ([A/77/590](#)), the Secretary-General outlined a sample of monitoring indicators aimed at measuring progress towards the long-term outcomes. The Secretariat had concluded that the shortcomings of the current recruitment process were systematic and structural. It intended to overcome them through the staff selection 2.0 programme, to be based on the three components of recruitment, outreach and the young professionals programme, with a view to establishing a more effective, fair, efficient and agile system that would fulfil the letter and the spirit of Article 101 of the Charter by ensuring that staff were recruited on as wide a geographical basis as possible. The Secretariat's aim was to complete the programme by 2026; the Group was open to exploring the best ways of studying the proposal consistently and thoroughly. At the same time, it looked forward to a holistic consideration of the Secretary-General's proposals, as a package, in order to ensure that

the Committee adopted a draft resolution that would guide the Secretariat's efforts to overcome the challenges that had recurred at previous sessions.

83. The reform of human resources management was essential to the overall reform of the United Nations. The Group commended the progress made, particularly in streamlining rules and policies, and making changes in the conditions of service. It welcomed the strengthening of internal anti-corruption measures and the steps taken to establish a safe environment for staff to report misconduct. The principles of equitable geographical representation and gender parity were vital. While celebrating the progress made towards gender parity, the Group was concerned that geographical representation had not been broadened. It was hard to comprehend that, while the number of countries within the desirable range had barely increased during the previous reporting period, the Organization would reach full gender parity in the coming years. It might be inferred, from that situation, that far fewer women were recruited from developing countries than from developed States. It was also disheartening to note that the percentage of women from developing countries in senior positions was disproportionately low. The Secretary-General should intensify his efforts to achieve equitable geographical representation, especially at senior levels, paying due attention to the representation of troop- and police-contributing countries. With regard to the system of desirable ranges, which had remained unchanged for decades, around 500 posts subject to geographical distribution were vacant. The Group would give high priority to addressing the issue at the current part of the resumed session.

84. The Group was concerned about the increase in the average age of Secretariat staff members and the decrease in the number of entry-level positions, particularly at the P-1 and P-2 levels. The situation limited the possibility of meeting important human resources targets, including the rejuvenation of the Organization and the acquisition of fresh talent from all regions, especially from unrepresented and underrepresented developing Member States.

85. The Group drew the attention of the Secretariat leadership to the implementation of flexible working arrangements. While those arrangements had proved effective during the COVID-19 pandemic, life was now returning to normal. The Group was concerned that working away from the office might be regarded as a right or even a rule, when that was not the case according to the Secretary-General's bulletin on flexible working arrangements ([ST/SGB/2019/3](#)). That concern was based on the empirical assessment that most floors

of the Secretariat building were filled to half their capacity or less on any given day of the week.

86. **Mr. Camelli** (Representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine; the potential candidate country Georgia; and, in addition, Andorra and Monaco, said that the wealth of the Organization lay in its people, its most valuable asset. The staff was essential to fulfilling the mandates of the United Nations, upholding its principles and defending its values. He thanked the Secretary-General for his efforts, as chief administrative officer, to modernize the human resources system; it was time for the Committee to improve the human resources framework in order to meet the Organization's needs. The Committee had come close to doing so at the first part of the resumed seventy-sixth session, when it had focused, for the second time, on matters predominantly related to human resources management, thereby helping delegations to understand each other's positions better. However, despite constructive engagement, the Committee had been unable to handle the many dated reports whose consideration had been deferred for several years of stalemate. Determined to move forward, the Committee had decided to make a fresh start and requested a new set of reports. The setting was now more conducive to a meaningful outcome, building on the Committee's previous efforts.

87. The Secretary-General, in his report on ways forward in the implementation of human resources management reforms for the period 2023–2026 (A/77/590), laid the foundations for a forward-looking, responsive and integrated human resources management system focused on diversity, agility and accountability. In accordance with the Charter, the Organization's workforce should embody the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, while reflecting the diversity of the people it served, including in terms of geography, gender, age and skills. The European Union and its member States welcomed the progress described in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics (A/77/580) and supported the Organization's efforts to enhance all aspects of workforce diversity. System-wide efforts should be made to achieve gender parity at all levels, including in the field. Due regard should be paid to attracting and retaining talent on as wide a geographical basis as possible. The inclusion of persons with disabilities was essential. The Organization must be rejuvenated, and new and younger talent must be acquired. Multilingualism was of critical importance,

and linguistic diversity must be adequately reflected in human resources management.

88. In order for the workforce to be agile and for staff to feel motivated, effective performance management was needed at all levels, not only to incentivize and reward excellence but also to address underperformance. To that end, comprehensive and strategic workforce planning was essential. The recruitment process should ensure that the Organization hired the most suitable candidate, with the right skills, within the target time frame of 120 days. The Organization should foster career development through enhanced training, so that staff could acquire the skills necessary to adapt to a variety of challenging work environments. A well-functioning mobility framework, both at Headquarters and in the field, was essential to the Organization and its staff in fulfilling mandates and serving the people of the world. Such a framework would allow staff to broaden their experience and develop their careers to the fullest while ensuring that the diversity and richness of mandates and duty stations within the Secretariat was leveraged.

89. A robust accountability framework must be rolled out. Accountability, a cornerstone of management reform and an integral part of the delegation of authority system, was essential to fostering a culture of ethics, inclusivity, and transparency; preventing discrimination; and achieving zero tolerance of misconduct through a victim-centred approach. The Organization must be free of discrimination; harassment, including sexual harassment; and sexual exploitation and abuse. In that regard, he welcomed the efforts of the Ethics Office and emphasized the need to strengthen its independence.

90. **Mr. Peñaranda** (Philippines), speaking on behalf of ASEAN, said that the Association acknowledged the reports of the Secretary-General on the overview of human resources management reform mandate implementation for the period 2021–2022 (A/77/590/Add.1) and ways forward in the implementation of human resources management reforms for the period 2023–2026 (A/77/590). Despite the Secretariat's efforts to establish a diverse workforce and attain equitable geographical distribution, certain challenges persisted. At the seventy-fifth and seventy-sixth sessions of the General Assembly, the Secretariat had informed the Committee that it planned to overhaul the staff selection system to remedy the shortcomings of the recruitment process through changes in policy, processes and technology. ASEAN acknowledged the Secretariat's intention to launch the staff selection 2.0 programme in order to establish an effective and agile recruitment process, and address specific concerns related to human resources management, including in the areas of

geography, gender, youth, multilingualism, disability inclusion and the fight against racism. The Association hoped that the programme, supported by proactive outreach activities, would promote the efficient implementation of the human resources management reform for the period 2023–2026.

91. In updating the global human resources strategy, the Secretariat should give priority to the recruitment and retention of talented individuals who met the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, in accordance with Article 101 of the Charter, as well as to the achievement of gender parity, the inclusion of persons with disabilities, the rejuvenation of the workforce, and the enhancement of accountability. The Secretary-General should regularly provide information on those developments in his reports on reform and the composition of the Secretariat.

92. The Secretariat should be rejuvenated to address the ageing of the staff, without adversely affecting geographical distribution or gender balance. Geographical distribution would be improved, and the careers of young professionals would be advanced, if young nationals of Member States that were unrepresented or underrepresented, or at risk of becoming so, including staff members who had passed the G-to-P examinations, were eligible to participate in the young professionals programme. The Secretariat should develop a proposal to reinforce the career advancement and progression of staff members at all levels.

93. ASEAN welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to achieve gender balance across the Organization by 2030. Recalling the resource proposal contained in the report of the Secretary-General on addressing racism and promoting dignity for all in the United Nations Secretariat (A/76/771), the Association called for an inclusive workplace in which all staff members were treated with dignity and respect, in which an environment free from discrimination, harassment and abuse of authority was maintained, and in which the work-life balance, health and well-being of the workforce were supported. The Association welcomed the initiatives to support the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities, including the leveraging of partnerships with organizations that promoted the inclusion of such persons in order to disseminate information on vacancies, raise awareness and establish standards for the fair and equitable treatment of all segments of the workforce.

94. Staff training and development was a cornerstone of any sustainable organization. As part of such development, the mobility of Secretariat staff members,

in particular between Headquarters and the field, should be promoted. His delegation would welcome updated information on the implementation of the mobility framework.

95. **Ms. Schmied** (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, said that the most valuable asset of the United Nations was its staff, on whose dedication and skills the Organization depended to fulfil its mandates. It therefore needed modern, rationalized human resources management that supported a high-performing workforce and an effective, efficient, flexible and results-oriented United Nations. The two delegations welcomed the guidelines provided by the Secretary-General in his report on ways forward in the implementation of human resources management reforms for the period 2023–2026 (A/77/590). The Organization and its staff must be agile so that the United Nations could meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. In a constantly changing world, good workforce planning and the consideration of future skill needs were essential during recruitment. The Secretary-General should therefore improve workforce planning in order to restrict the use of non-staff personnel to justified, limited circumstances. Mobility offered staff learning opportunities and career development, and was essential to building a skilled, dynamic and adaptable workforce that could interact with different stakeholders in different settings. The two delegations therefore welcomed the consolidation of the new approach to staff mobility and the implementation of annual mobility exercises from 2023. Fair remuneration must be established for all staff in order to attract the best talent and achieve equitable geographical representation.

96. Since diversity and inclusion helped the Organization to meet the needs of a diverse global population, the two delegations welcomed the initiative to establish an integrated framework to promote diversity holistically. They also welcomed the staff selection 2.0 programme, intended to make recruitment more effective, fair, efficient and agile while ensuring that the Organization secured the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity in accordance with the Charter. More effort was needed in order to achieve gender parity in all entities and rejuvenate the workforce.

97. The Organization's responsibility to its staff and the people it served was expressed through its accountability mechanisms; in particular, a victim-centred approach must be taken in the fight against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. The two delegations welcomed the measures to promote staff health and well-being, particularly the new mental health action plan. The quintet of change described in

the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Our Common Agenda” (A/75/982) was essential to more agile, diverse and responsible human resources management through innovation, better use of data and continuous staff involvement.

98. **Mr. Ainomuhisha** (Uganda), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that, despite extensive discussions, the Committee had failed to adopt a draft resolution on human resources management for more than five years. In the meantime, the situation in such areas as mobility, recruitment and equitable geographical representation had deteriorated. The reform of human resources management in order to improve agility, diversity, and accountability, as described by the Secretary-General in his report on the overview of such reform for the period 2021–2022 (A/77/590/Add.1), had proved unambitious and led to no real change. The Group would pay close attention, in informal consultations, to the Secretary-General’s new proposal on the matter, contained in his report on ways forward in the implementation of human resources management reforms for the period 2023–2026 (A/77/590).

99. In making staff selection more effective, fair, efficient and agile on the basis of recruitment, outreach and the young professionals programme through the staff selection 2.0 programme, the Secretary-General should not only completely review the rationale and philosophy related to job offers by introducing dynamic selection criteria but also eliminate risks of bias in favour of or against candidates. Recent data clearly indicated heavy bias in selection processes, with adverse effects on the composition of the workforce. The problem of overfull rosters must also be solved.

100. The Group was concerned that the Secretary-General’s rhetoric related to equitable geographical representation had not been reflected in actions or results. The slowness of change in the situation of unrepresented and underrepresented countries, and the overrepresentation of one Group to the detriment of others, had never been so glaring. In contrast with the achievement of gender parity, for which a strategy had been established, geographical representation had received little attention from managers, who had suffered no consequences in their performance evaluations. A real strategy for equitable geographical representation was needed, with the application of parallel incentives and special measures to those taken in relation to gender parity. Although much had been achieved through the system-wide strategy on gender parity, the representation of developing countries had increased only marginally, and that strategy was therefore a missed opportunity in terms of equitable

geographical representation. The Group would closely consider the Secretary-General’s corrective measures to ensure that women from developing countries also benefited from the system-wide strategy on gender parity.

101. In addition, hundreds of posts subject to geographical distribution were either vacant or encumbered with no regard for equitable geographical representation. The Group would pay close attention to the overall management of posts subject to geographical distribution and would not be sympathetic to managers who believed that the attainment of equitable geographical representation and the filling of vacant posts were optional. The Group would work with all stakeholders to ensure that the number of posts subject to geographical distribution reflected the reality of the Secretariat workforce, including by taking into account the contribution of troop- and police-contributing countries.

102. Through its resolutions on addressing racism and racial discrimination and the establishment of the United Nations Youth Office, the General Assembly had provided the Organization with entities intended to improve working conditions and the participation of youth in the Secretariat. The Secretary-General should reverse the increase in the average age of Secretariat staff members and the decrease in the number of entry-level positions, particularly at the P-2 and P-3 levels, which jeopardized the achievement of human resources targets, including the rejuvenation of the Organization. The Group would, through its consideration of the related reports of the Secretary-General, monitor the contribution made by the new bodies. With regard to disciplinary matters, the Group appreciated the strengthening of internal anti-corruption measures and the steps taken to establish a safe environment for staff to report misconduct. The Secretary-General must take a zero-tolerance approach to acts of racial discrimination and abuse in the Organization.

103. **Mr. Al Salmi** (Oman), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, said that human resources management reform in the United Nations system was vital, in line with the goals and purposes of the Organization and its Member States. At the same time, the United Nations must respond to the needs of all Member States; accordingly, before commenting on the report of the Secretary-General on ways forward in the implementation of human resources management reforms for the period 2023–2026 (A/77/590), the States members of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf wished to discuss their current representation

at the United Nations, as the term “underrepresentation” did not adequately convey the situation.

104. The Secretary-General stated, in his report on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics (A/77/580), that the desirable range for Saudi Arabia was 27–36 posts, but in fact two Saudis were currently working at the United Nations. The desirable range for Bahrain was 4–14 posts, whereas three citizens of Bahrain were working at the United Nations. For Kuwait, the desirable range was 8–17 posts, but only one national of Kuwait was working at the Organization. The desirable range for Oman was 5–15 posts, but only one citizen of Oman currently worked at the United Nations. For the United Arab Emirates, the desirable range was 15–25 posts and, for Qatar, it was 8–18 posts, and no citizen of either country was working for the United Nations. The issue was not only the underrepresentation of those countries among the staff of the United Nations or the nature of the posts concerned, but a systematic problem related to awareness, employment and final selection, which must be resolved immediately in order to achieve the equitable representation emphasized in United Nations documents. The States members of the Council staunchly supported the United Nations and aspired to contribute to the Organization’s work, including through the employment of their citizens in continuing posts in order to achieve the desired workforce balance.

105. **Mr. Velázquez Castillo** (Mexico) said that the fact that human resources were the Organization’s greatest asset was reflected not only in the number of staff but also in the related annual expenditure. The management of human resources, therefore, was important not only to mandate fulfilment but also to the functioning of a large administrative body that must meet complex, global operational challenges. Human resources were also essential to the ability of the United Nations system to meet Member States’ expectations and the challenges of the current international situation; policies must therefore be designed, implemented and evaluated to enable the Organization to fulfil its mandates in a timely and efficient manner through the provision of high-quality services at Headquarters and in the field.

106. Mexico noted the Secretary-General’s ongoing policy initiatives and recommendations on recruitment, talent retention, gender balance, rejuvenation, and the establishment of incentives and professional certainty, as part of the human resources management reforms proposed for the period 2023–2026. In order for the Committee to reach agreement on human resources management at the current part of the resumed session, the General Assembly must take a decision on fundamental guidelines for the human resources reform

process. Mexico recognized the Secretariat’s efforts, but believed that the Assembly should establish common criteria to ensure that the desired goals in the areas of mobility, agility and accountability were reached. Organized generational change was needed within the staff; to ensure that the United Nations remained viable, incentives were needed to attract young, diverse talent, which must be retained and empowered through growth and mobility opportunities, on the basis of a gender perspective. The Secretariat’s human resources initiatives must be incorporated into a plan containing clear priorities, in order to avoid lack of focus. The actions linked to the human resources reform must be ordered in a logical, flexible and transparent sequence in order to achieve the desired results and make rational use of the Organization’s resources.

107. **Ms. Jerbouï** (Morocco) said that, since human resources were the Organization’s greatest asset, the United Nations system must recruit and retain skilled personnel to achieve its goals and fulfil its mandates. A Secretariat with broad geographical representation among its staff, in accordance with Article 101 of the Charter, would improve the Organization’s ability to fulfil its mandates. The Secretary-General had given fresh impetus to human resources management reform since he had taken office in 2017. The implementation of that reform was strengthening the United Nations and making it more efficient, accountable and agile. Morocco welcomed the achievement of gender parity among senior officials and looked forward to the attainment of equitable geographical representation and gender balance throughout the Organization. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on ways forward in the implementation of human resources management reforms for the period 2023–2026 (A/77/590), she welcomed the proposed human resources management framework, which was focused on long-term outcomes in order to ensure that a specific, measurable impact was achieved and account for the human resources system interdependencies required for mandate fulfilment.

108. **Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) said that, unfortunately, the Committee had not reached agreement on the proposals made by the Secretary-General in around 50 reports issued during previous sessions; that did not mean, however, that its work had been fruitless. His delegation noted with satisfaction that, despite the absence of new guidance in 2022, the Secretary-General had taken into account the views of delegations within the Committee. The strategy for the further implementation of the reform of the human resources management system for the period 2023–2026 contained elements that had previously been approved

by practically all Member States, such as the importance of multilingualism to workforce diversity.

109. There were gaps, however. Consensus on additional support for interns had been reached almost as far back as the seventy-fifth session, but the Secretariat had not yet reflected the solution to the existing problems. Progress in complying with Member States' instructions had also been uneven. The Secretary-General's successes in the area of gender were notable, but the situation in terms of equitable geographical representation left much to be desired. The criteria and internal regulations applied in the determination of misconduct, as well as the types of misconduct that resulted in dismissal, must be more clearly laid out. In disciplinary proceedings, due process must be consistently upheld and, when necessary, refined. The Member States and the Advisory Committee had repeatedly drawn the Secretariat's attention to the unacceptably low number of staff from unrepresented and underrepresented countries appointed to posts subject to geographical distribution. No appropriate measures to hold managers of departments and offices accountable for non-compliance with that requirement had been proposed.

110. His delegation needed clarification of what exactly was expected of the General Assembly. The Russian Federation was ready to discuss the long-term outcomes proposed by the Secretariat for the reform of human resources management. However, taking note of the reports – nothing more had been requested – would clearly give the green light to the new approach to mobility, the staff selection 2.0 programme and probably more besides. His delegation did not agree with the issuance of reports for purely informational purposes.

111. **Mr. Kawasaki** (Japan) said that human resources management was essential to an effective, efficient, and inclusive organization, and the United Nations needed to acquire and invest in skilled and motivated staff. However, the Member States had failed in previous years to give the Secretary-General appropriate guidance and promote his efforts to make the Organization effective, efficient and inclusive. Member States must strive to provide proper guidance, while taking full advantage of the discussions on clusters of topics and the more focused discussions of each topic.

112. In order to achieve a more diverse organization in accordance with Article 101 of the Charter, which referred to the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible, the long-standing challenge of the underrepresentation or non-representation of some Member States must be addressed; his delegation

once again called on the Secretary-General to redouble his efforts to that end. Japan also welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to achieve gender parity and encouraged him to strengthen such initiatives as the mainstreaming of gender in the field.

113. Japan was concerned about factors that hindered workforce rejuvenation, in particular the imbalance between the number of entry-level Professional posts and the number of senior-level posts in the Secretariat, an imbalance that made the Organization increasingly top-heavy. The Secretary-General should make further efforts to rejuvenate the United Nations, bring in fresh ideas, and promote succession planning and agility in the workforce to advance management reform.

114. The Secretary-General would begin to implement a new staff mobility framework in 2023. Japan recognized that facilitating mobility would strengthen the Organization, and looked forward to discussing ways of making the framework more effective and efficient while seeking clarification regarding matters such as the timeline for its implementation.

115. **Ms. Alshaikh** (Saudi Arabia) said that human resources were essential to achieving the goals of the United Nations and its Member States, and the Organization must reflect the world's geographical diversity. In Saudi Arabia, major developments were ongoing in the field of human resources, driven by the people's aspiration to achieve the country's Vision 2030 plan. As 70 per cent of the population was under 35, the country had drawn up strategic plans for the development and employment of young people, and had introduced digital systems that gave citizens remote access to human resources services without the need for review by the competent authorities.

116. The current generation of young people was eager to work in multilateral international organizations; as a founding member of the United Nations, Saudi Arabia was disappointed by the figures cited by the representative of Oman. Her delegation looked forward to addressing the matter in informal consultations.

117. Saudi Arabia commended the Secretary-General on the establishment of the Geographical Diversity Strategy, despite the fundamental issues that needed to be addressed. Her delegation was determined to be a partner in resolving those issues and looked forward to working with the Secretary-General to keep staff morale high so that the United Nations would be an attractive place to work and implement resolutions.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.