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

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

Organization of work (A/C.5/78/L.28)

1. **The Chair** said that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 77/267, the current part of the resumed session of the Fifth Committee would run for five weeks rather than four, a development that should facilitate the conclusion of its work. The Committee had before it a number of issues essential to the improved budgetary and financial functioning of the United Nations, and he called on it to reach agreement on those issues, minimizing the number of matters on which it took no action or of which it deferred consideration. He planned to follow up on the informal discussion of the Committee's working methods, held during the main part of the session, by compiling, on the basis of proposals from Member States and the Secretariat, an informal non-paper that could serve as the basis for enhanced deliberations at the second part of the resumed session.

2. He then 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.5/78/L.28).

3. **Mr. Ainomuhisha** (Uganda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group hoped that the additional week allotted for the Committee's deliberations at the first part of the resumed session, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 77/267, would be used to enable the Committee to reach conclusions on the agenda items before it, rather than being squandered. The Group also acknowledged the efforts of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to provide comprehensive and sound technical recommendations to the Committee on those agenda items.

4. The Group noted the steps taken to ensure the timely submission and availability of reports to the Committee. The timely availability of reports was essential to enable the Committee to conduct its work during normal working hours, within the time allotted in the programme of work; to provide sound guidance to the Organization; and to minimize the number of matters on which it adopted skeletal resolutions or on which it took no action at all.

5. The Group was committed to thoroughly considering all the matters before the Committee, in particular human resources management, the accountability system, supply chain activities, the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), and the United Nations common system. The General Assembly had

adopted resolution 77/278, on human resources management, after having long been unable to reach consensus on the matter. The Group would be interested to learn more about the steps taken to implement the comprehensive guidance provided in that resolution. All departments, without exception, must implement the resolution substantially and unselectively.

6. **Mr. Gafoor** (Singapore), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ASEAN wished to highlight the dismal liquidity situation of the United Nations caused by the non-payment of assessed contributions, particularly by one major contributor. Despite the Committee's best efforts to finalize the 2024 programme budget on time, mandate implementation would be negatively affected as a result of enhanced cost-saving measures, including restrictions on hiring and spending and a reduction in Secretariat support for meetings held in New York and other locations. Member States with the capacity to pay their assessed contributions should do so in full, on time and without conditions. Without such payment, Member States could not expect the Organization to fulfil the mandates that they had entrusted to it, while ensuring appropriate staffing levels and staff welfare. ASEAN hoped that that situation would improve soon and looked forward to the briefing by the Controller on the management of the liquidity situation, to be held on 1 March 2024.

7. The Organization's human resource policies must evolve in tandem with the Secretary-General's reforms of the United Nations, including his vision for the future of multilateralism. Such policies should ensure that staff were adaptable and prepared for the future, so that they could support the Organization's work in an evolving and complex world. Continual reflection on the composition of the United Nations staff was also necessary in order to guarantee that the Organization remained multinational in character and benefited from diverse views and experiences.

8. ASEAN would closely follow the discussions on the budget-related agenda items before the Committee at the current part of the resumed session. Adequate resources were needed to facilitate the entry into force and implementation of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, which was of great importance to the States members of ASEAN and to other developing countries. ASEAN also looked forward to discussing the Secretary-General's proposal to provide the resident coordinator system with adequate, predictable and sustainable funding in order to ensure its proper functioning. ASEAN was

nevertheless disappointed that the matter would not be introduced until 26 March 2024, two days before the conclusion of the first part of the resumed session. He urged the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee to finalize their related reports expeditiously, in order to ensure the availability of adequate time for a thorough discussion of the matter.

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, Georgia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Türkiye and Ukraine, and, in addition, Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, said that 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.

10. The European Union and its member States supported the Secretary-General's efforts to modernize and reform the Organization, in particular supply chain management, which was essential to overall management reform. They commended the progress made on the issue, as it would lead to a better and more responsive United Nations. 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 of the delegation of authority, the accountability of the Secretariat staff and of its stakeholders was essential to fostering a culture of ethics and transparency, and to preventing and addressing misconduct.

11. The Committee must continue to provide adequate funding for all mandates established by United Nations legislative organs. Among the structural budgetary matters before the Committee, the European Union would pay particular attention to ensuring sufficient funding for the orderly liquidation of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS), the implementation of the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity, and the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 77/301. The European Union looked forward to the discussions on ways to ensure the provision of adequate, predictable and sustained funding for the resident coordinator system. The scope of the Committee's responsibilities extended beyond adopting budgets,

however. The European Union therefore called on all Member States to fulfil their financial obligations to the Organization in order to enable it to implement its mandates.

12. The Committee would also resume its discussions on human resources management. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 77/278, on that topic, represented the culmination of years of negotiations, and the European Union looked forward to following up on its implementation, while resuming biennial discussions of the related agenda item. In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, 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 Secretary-General was to be commended for his tireless efforts, as chief administrative officer, to modernize the human resources system; the staff was essential to fulfilling the mandates of the United Nations, upholding its principles and defending its values.

13. Although the progress described in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics (A/78/569) was welcome, the Committee should also consider the more up-to-date information available on the United Nations Secretariat Workforce Portal, launched in 2023. He acknowledged the Organization's efforts to diversify its workforce, welcoming in particular the reduction in the number of unrepresented, underrepresented and overrepresented countries. System-wide efforts should be made to achieve gender parity at all levels, including in the field. The inclusion of persons with disabilities was also essential. New and younger talent must be acquired and retained, in order to rejuvenate the Organization. Multilingualism was of critical importance, and linguistic diversity must be adequately reflected in human resources management. The length of the first part of the resumed session had been extended to five weeks, at considerable cost to the Organization and Member States. The full potential of the first part of the session must therefore be harnessed.

14. **Mr. Alnasr** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, said that the Committee's timely completion of its work at the main part of the seventy-eighth session was commendable, as such timely completion had not been achieved since the seventy-third session. The working methods that had enabled that achievement should be applied to the first part of the resumed session. The matters before the Committee relating to enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations, improving its financial status, and improving

human resources management were of critical importance. In addition, the States members of the Council commended the efforts made by the Secretariat to ensure that documents were issued on time to enable the Committee to effectively discuss all the issues before it.

15. The States members of the Council were grateful to JIU for its efforts to enhance oversight in order to facilitate the optimal use of resources, as illustrated by its issuance of nine reports in 2023. All States members of the Council had paid in full their regular-budget contributions for 2023, and some had made contributions to the 2024 regular budget. The payment of assessments on time and without conditions was essential to ensuring the continued work of the Organization. Transparency during deliberations was critical, as were the legitimacy and competency of the Fifth Committee as the sole Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary questions.

16. **Ms. Jones** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that the Committee's timely conclusion of its work at the main part of the session had resulted in the earlier issuance of letters of assessment and receipt of payments, a vital development given the record level of arrears and critically low cash reserves under the regular budget. The responsibility for those arrears and that level of cash reserves nevertheless lay squarely with Member States. The fact that, in 2023, 51 Member States had not paid their regular-budget contributions in full and 140 Member States had not paid such contributions on time caused her to question the value of approving budgets if Member States were unwilling to fund them. The approval of budgets under such conditions simply led to poor budget implementation rates, a failure to fulfil mandates and, ironically, the return of credits to Member States, including those that had not paid their assessments in full. The provision of adequate resources was essential to mandate fulfilment. Notwithstanding the financial constraints affecting the Organization, setting high expectations without ensuring the necessary resources led to underperformance. Member States must pay their contributions in full, on time and without conditions.

17. 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, owing

to the liquidity crisis, the Secretariat had been forced to take aggressive cash conservation measures in order to prevent a payment default, including by imposing hiring restrictions in July 2023. While such measures might result in short-term savings, they also debilitated the Organization's workforce and hindered its ability to fulfil, over the long term, the mandates set by Member States.

18. In its resolution [77/278](#), the General Assembly provided long-overdue guidance on human resources management. Australia, Canada and New Zealand looked forward to discussing the matters that related to human resources management and were pending before the Committee, including the amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, as set out in the Secretary-General's report on the matter ([A/78/177](#)). The three delegations also looked forward to considering the composition of the Secretariat, bearing in mind that the expansion of the system of desirable ranges had resulted in an increase in the number of Member States within the desirable range. In addition, the three delegations would seek permanent methods of facilitating the full participation of all Member States in seconding military and police personnel, while ensuring respect for national laws on remuneration and benefits, and avoiding duplication of payments. Australia, Canada and New Zealand also looked forward to discussing disciplinary matters, including the possibility of expanding the scope of ClearCheck, a database designed to screen personnel during recruitment on the basis of their integrity, to cover all types of misconduct. Moreover, the three delegations looked forward to discussing the monitoring of staff attendance, given the importance of ensuring a timely response by the Secretariat to the needs of Member States.

19. Australia, Canada and New Zealand appreciated the inaugural review of JIU on mental health and well-being policies and procedures, as United Nations personnel faced disproportionately high psychosocial risk factors in the course of their employment. The high numbers of disability cases and of sick-leave days taken as a result of mental-health conditions, as indicated by the data gathered from the review, were matters of great concern and had significant implications for productivity, morale and financial resources. The three delegations looked forward to discussing the Unit's recommendations to improve the situation, including through the provision of greater psychosocial resources in category D and E duty stations.

20. Australia, Canada and New Zealand looked forward to thoroughly considering the Secretary-General's proposal to increase assessed funding for the

resident coordinator system. It was therefore regrettable that the matter would be introduced at a late stage of the deliberations at the current part of the resumed session.

21. **Mr. Videche Guevara** (Costa Rica) said that the current part of the resumed session, which was devoted mainly to human resources management, was of particular importance to his delegation for a number of reasons. First, the United Nations staff was critical to the functioning of the Organization. His delegation would therefore pay particular attention to the implementation of the mandates set out in General Assembly resolution 77/278, especially those relating to guaranteeing equitable geographical representation and gender parity, both of which were essential to ensuring that the Organization's staff reflected the diversity of its Member States.

22. Second, his delegation attached great importance to the report of the Secretary-General on his practice in disciplinary matters and cases of possible criminal behaviour, covering the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022 (A/78/603 and A/78/603/Corr.1). Any failure to respond appropriately to misconduct, particularly sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation, represented an attack on the credibility of the Organization. Such conduct and its perpetrators had no place in the United Nations system, and impunity must be combated at all levels.

23. Third, at the current part of the resumed session, the Committee would consider the revised estimates for the resident coordinator system. His delegation supported the work of the resident coordinators to advance the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the field. In that regard, the Secretary-General's proposed change to the structure of the regular budget in order to ensure sufficient funding for the resident coordinator system merited careful review.

24. Costa Rica hoped that there would not be a six-year gap between the adoption of the most recent comprehensive resolution on human resources management and the adoption of the next such resolution, as had previously been the case, and that the success achieved at the seventy-seventh session would become the norm.

25. **Ms. Jiang Hua** (China) said that, given the various challenges worldwide, the United Nations, as the central platform of global governance, had an increasingly prominent role to play. Efficient and rational budgeting and human resources management were crucial to the Organization's smooth operation. China looked forward to consultation and collaboration among all parties in

order to ensure the achievement of positive results at the current part of the resumed session.

26. China attached great importance to human resources management and welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 77/278, as it provided comprehensive guidance for the Secretariat's future work. China also welcomed the extension of the length of the first part of the resumed session to five weeks, and hoped that all parties would fully engage in in-depth discussions on the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 77/278. Her delegation paid particular attention to equitable geographical representation and was concerned about the high number of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States. The Secretariat must, as a matter of priority, identify concrete measures to address the issue, especially the underrepresentation of developing countries.

27. China had always supported the work of the resident coordinator system to assist developing countries in meeting their pressing development-related challenges and in accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. China therefore attached great importance to the Secretariat's efforts to ensure stable, predictable and sustained funding for that system. However, China was concerned that the Secretariat had submitted to the Committee a proposed budget for the resident coordinator system in the absence of an agreement among Member States on the reform of the funding model for that system, as that practice ran counter to the principle of "mandate first, programme next, budget last", which guided budgetary deliberation in the General Assembly.

28. The reform of the funding model for the resident coordinator system should not involve merely the redistribution among the entire United Nations membership of the financial responsibility originally borne exclusively by developed countries, but, rather, should entail broad and deliberate consultations, as well as the exploration of multiple options to meet the reasonable financial needs of the resident coordinator system. At the same time, an ever-more integrated and holistic approach was required to address the mounting financial and liquidity constraints faced by the United Nations.

29. **Mr. Laputin** (Russian Federation) said that, notwithstanding the impact on the Organization's work of the austerity measures taken as a result of the financial crisis at the United Nations, all reports must be issued on time in the six official languages, without exception. A failure to ensure the timely issuance of reports in all official languages would result in the necessary postponement of their consideration, as had

occurred at the main part of the seventy-eighth session. He requested that the Coordinator for Multilingualism participate in the briefing by the Controller on the Organization's liquidity situation, to be held on 1 March 2024, in order to provide Member States with information on the impact of that situation and of the related austerity measures on multilingualism.

30. In addition to human resources management, the Committee's deliberations at the current part of the resumed session would be focused on such critical issues as the financing of the resident coordinator system, accountability and supply chain activities, an issue on which consensus had not been reached in more than seven years. The Russian Federation trusted that, in the future, the Bureau would consult with Member States on such aspects of the Committee's programme of work as the grouping into thematic clusters of the reports relating to human resources management. His delegation would take a constructive approach to all matters before the Committee. The deliberations at the current part of the resumed session should be transparent and include all stakeholders, and the Committee's working methods must be strictly observed.

31. **Mr. Yamanaka** (Japan) said that, at its seventy-seventh session, the General Assembly had successfully adopted a resolution on human resources management after over six years of negotiations, thereby providing solid guidance to ensure a more effective, efficient and inclusive Organization. Human resources management was essential to the success of any organization. His delegation looked forward to examining the Secretary-General's efforts to reform human resources management, which should be aligned with the General Assembly's latest guidance on the matter, and would engage in the relevant negotiations constructively and faithfully. Japan would also carefully consider the other matters before the Committee, such as the revised estimates for the resident coordinator system, the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic, accountability and supply chain activities, in order to enable the Organization to fulfil its mandates.

32. **Mr. Young** (United Kingdom) said that, at the first part of the resumed seventy-seventh session, the Committee had, for the first time in many years, adopted a resolution on human resources management, which provided for, among other things, the expansion of the system of desirable ranges as from 1 January 2024. However, given the increasing challenges faced by the international community and the United Nations since the adoption of that resolution, it was necessary to ensure continuous improvement in the Organization's

internal processes and procedures relating to staff, as they were its greatest asset.

33. The current part of the resumed session provided an opportunity for the Committee to reach agreement on matters on which it had been unable to reach agreement for several years. Member States should harness the momentum resulting from the effectiveness and timely conclusion of the main part of the session in order to adopt resolutions on such matters as supply chain management and accountability, both of which were relevant to all aspects of the Organization's work.

34. At the current part of the resumed session, the Committee would consider a request to significantly increase the share of the funding for the resident coordinator system represented by assessed contributions. His delegation strongly supported the Secretary-General's development reforms and had long been concerned by the impact of funding shortfalls on the resident coordinator system. Sustainable, adequate and predictable funding was essential to enable that system to assist national Governments in their efforts to promote development. A more integrated and coordinated United Nations system at the country level was in the interests of all Member States, and the United Kingdom looked forward to working with Committee members to facilitate progress on the matter.

35. In accordance with the Charter and with General Assembly resolution [45/248 B](#), the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters. To discharge its duties effectively, the Committee must adhere to its mandated functions and not seek to second-guess or relitigate decisions taken and resolutions adopted in other Main Committees or in the General Assembly plenary.

36. **Mr. Velázquez Castillo** (Mexico) said that the matters before the Committee at the current part of the resumed session were of particular interest to Mexico owing not only to their impact on the ongoing management reform, but also to their important role in advancing and consolidating the repositioning of the resident coordinator system as the backbone of the development pillar, and in upholding the value of the Organization's presence in places critical to peacekeeping.

37. Mexico would pay particular attention to human resources management, and, in that regard, welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution [77/278](#), as it contained valuable guidance that would enable the Secretariat to respond to the medium- and long-term challenges associated with the reform of human

resources management. The General Assembly had the crucial responsibility of assessing the implementation, results and impact of the mandates set out in that resolution, in order to ensure that tangible and effective progress was made. That was no small challenge, a mere one year after the adoption of the resolution, but was justified given that staff were the Organization's most significant asset, a fact reflected not only in their absolute number but in the percentage of the annual programme budget that they represented, namely, approximately 75 per cent. It was through that lens that Mexico would examine the Secretary-General's reports relating to human resources management, which covered such essential issues as the composition of the Secretariat and related demographic data, disciplinary matters and cases of possible criminal behaviour, arrangements resulting in a reduction in the presence of staff in the workplace, and the conditions of service for military personnel.

38. On a structural level, the resident coordinator system operated as the coordinator of the work of the United Nations development system, particularly in the field. The issue of financing nevertheless presented an obstacle to the consolidation of that system. As a result, the Secretary-General had developed, for the Committee's consideration, a report setting out a proposed model for ensuring predictable and sustainable funding for the resident coordinator system. Mexico looked forward to learning more about the Secretary-General's proposal, while noting with regret that the related report would not be introduced until two days before the conclusion of the first part of the resumed session, a situation that would make it difficult for Member States to seriously consider the report. Given the significance of the report for the Organization and Member States, adequate time should be allocated to enable the Committee to discuss it with the necessary conscientiousness and to adopt a resolution on the matter. Other issues before the Committee and of particular interest to Mexico included accountability, the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic, UNITAMS and JIU.

39. **Mr. Seong Woong** (Republic of Korea) said that the extended duration of the first part of the resumed session would enable the Committee to re-examine its working methods with a view to ensuring more efficient and effective deliberations. Given the liquidity challenges facing the Organization, adequate and sustainable funding for its work was more important than ever. His delegation would engage constructively in order to ensure successful outcomes on all matters before the Committee, so as to contribute to mandate implementation.

40. Sustainable, sufficient and predictable funding would be critical to ensuring the sound performance of the resident coordinator system. His delegation would contribute to the discussions on that system, with a particular focus on promoting the transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of the financing of the system. Bearing in mind the importance of the resident coordinator system, the Republic of Korea would closely examine ways in which to ensure appropriate and constructive oversight of any new methods of financing for that system. The Committee should also remain informed of the outcomes of the ongoing discussions on the matter in the Economic and Social Council and other relevant forums.

41. Staff were essential to mandate implementation. Building on the successful outcome of the seventy-seventh session, the Committee must provide appropriate guidance to the Secretary-General in order to assist him in his efforts to improve the Organization's policies relating to human resources management. The Committee could help to increase the efficiency, capability, mobility and integrity of the United Nations workforce in order to enable the Organization to better respond to global challenges.

42. **Mr. Machado Mourão** (Uruguay) said that, at the seventy-seventh session, the Committee had reached a general agreement on human resources management, finally responding to the issues addressed in 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). The Committee had identified strategic objectives and measures to transform many aspects of human resources management in the Secretariat; most of those objectives and measures were being fulfilled. However, a number of issues, such as staff attendance and the incompatibilities between the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and national laws relating to military and police personnel seconded to the Secretariat, remained unresolved. He hoped that the deliberations at the current part of the resumed session would be focused on such pending issues, and on evaluating the implementation of existing mandates, rather than on re-examining matters that had already been resolved.

43. The resident coordinator system played an essential role in coordinating the activities of United Nations entities in the field, and had conducted particularly valuable work in Uruguay. Uruguay had demonstrated significant commitment to the work of the United Nations Development Programme through its annual contribution, aimed at covering the local costs of

country offices, and had recently increased the value of that contribution significantly.

44. Nevertheless, Member States should not prejudge the outcome of the deliberations on the resident coordinator system, as they remained ongoing. Specifically, during the discussions on the matter at the current part of the resumed session, it should be borne in mind that any additional budgetary efforts on the part of Member States must be the result of political decisions, and that such decisions had not yet been taken. Such decisions would require careful discussion, as they would lead to an additional burden in terms of contributions, not only for countries whose assessments accounted for a greater share of the budget, but also for developing countries which, in many cases, had significant difficulty in fulfilling their existing financial commitments. Hence, notwithstanding the invaluable role of the resident coordinator system, lengthy dialogue was necessary to reach consensus on the matter. He was therefore concerned that the related report of the Advisory Committee was not expected to be issued until 21 March 2024.

45. **Mr. Lu** (United States of America) said that General Assembly resolution [77/278](#), which contained measures to help the Organization to modernize its workforce and strengthen accountability, represented a significant accomplishment, although more remained to be done. At the current part of the resumed session, the Committee would consider amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations in order to promote streamlining, updating and simplification; proposals to address the unfair barriers faced by General Service staff seeking to move to the Professional category; amendments to disciplinary measures in order to strengthen accountability; proposals on supply chain management; and the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition, the Committee would consider the implementation of an appropriate mechanism for the secondment of active-duty military and police personnel. Given the importance of the specialized expertise of such personnel, efforts should be made to uphold the principles of the Charter and to enable the full and regular participation of all Member States in the secondment of active-duty military and police personnel.

46. The Committee would also build on the progress made at the seventy-seventh session to ensure that the Organization had a diverse and inclusive workforce, in accordance with the Charter. In that regard, the fact that 15 countries had moved into the desirable range for representation in positions subject to geographical distribution was welcome, as it demonstrated the

progress made by the United Nations system with regard to such positions and to the system of desirable ranges.

47. The United States was the largest voluntary donor to the resident coordinator system and appreciated its coordination function. Nevertheless, the proposed transfer to the regular budget of the share of the funding for that system currently represented by voluntary contributions was one of the largest such transfers in recent memory. That proposal should therefore be considered carefully, with a focus on transparency and accountability. He hoped that the extension of the length of the current part of the resumed session to five weeks would lead to more effective discussions and fewer agenda items being deferred. Should no such results be achieved, the Committee should consider reverting to a four-week session.

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

49. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 141: Joint Inspection Unit ([A/78/34](#), [A/78/695](#), [A/78/695/Add.1](#) and [A/78/731](#); [JIU/REP/2023/4](#))

Agenda item 139: Human resources management (*continued*) ([A/78/569](#), [A/78/569/Add.1](#), [A/78/602](#), [A/78/603](#), [A/78/603/Corr.1](#), [A/78/604](#), [A/78/745](#), [A/78/745/Add.1](#), [A/78/756](#), [A/78/759](#) and [A/78/762](#))

50. **Ms. Fernández Opazo** (Chair, Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the report of JIU for 2023 and programme of work for 2024 ([A/78/34](#)), said that the workplan of JIU for 2023 had comprised a number of reviews carried over from 2022, as well as three new reviews included in its 2023 programme of work. In addition, JIU had conducted a review of the governance and oversight of the executive boards of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services, at the boards' request and with supplementary funding provided by the related participating organizations.

51. JIU had significantly reduced its backlog of carried-over reviews. In total, JIU had issued 10 products in 2023, namely, six system-wide reviews, two reviews of the management and administration of single organizations, one limited-scope review and one management letter. JIU had selected five reviews for its

2024 programme of work, namely, four system-wide reviews and one single-organization review. In finalizing its 2024 programme of work, JIU had, as usual, consulted with participating organizations, as well as oversight and coordination bodies, to ensure that the topics of the reviews concerned were relevant, considered to be priorities by all United Nations system organizations and aligned with the four thematic areas of the Unit's 2020–2029 strategic framework. In addition to fulfilling its programme of work, JIU would focus on implementing the recommendations from its 2022 self-assessment exercise. It would also conduct a midpoint assessment of its 2020–2029 strategic framework and report on the results of that assessment in 2024, as requested by the General Assembly.

52. The Office of Information and Communications Technology had identified cybersecurity vulnerabilities in the Unit's web-based system for tracking the status of acceptance and implementation of recommendations, and had proposed remedial measures to address the related risks, which were among the most significant operational risks faced by JIU. The proposed measures might require the system to be shut down and taken offline. The efforts made by JIU over the previous two years to raise extrabudgetary funds in order to replace the outdated system had been unsuccessful. Hence, given the urgency of the matter, JIU was now appealing to the General Assembly to follow the precedent set in its resolution [65/270](#) by calling on participating organizations to contribute to the replacement of the system under their existing cost-sharing arrangements.

53. **Ms. Pietracci** (United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the report of JIU for 2023 ([A/78/731](#)), said that, in accordance with the statute of JIU, the Secretary-General, as Chair 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 2023, 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 2023, following a resignation. 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.

54. **Ms. Lopez** (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics ([A/78/569](#)), said that the report provided a comprehensive view of the staff of the Secretariat from 1 January to 31 December 2022, including demographics, staff movements, forecast retirements and staff subject to the system of desirable ranges. The report reflected improvements compared with previous reports, including additional analysis and data points in response to the mandates set out in General Assembly resolution [77/278](#) and to the Advisory Committee's recommendations. That analysis and those data points addressed such matters as the number of movements of staff members into positions subject to geographical distribution necessary for each Member State to reach within-range status; progress towards equitable geographical distribution and gender parity; resignations; and the status of incumbency at the P-2 and higher levels.

55. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General containing a proposal on the movement of Secretariat staff from the General Service category to the Professional category ([A/78/569/Add.1](#)), she said that the report included a proposal to remove the barriers faced by staff in the General Service and related categories, and at the FS-3 to FS-5 levels of the Field Service category, in competing for positions in the Professional category. That proposal was designed to amend General Assembly resolution [33/143](#) of 1978 by recognizing the ways in which recruitment practices had benefited from the structural improvements of the staff selection system over the previous 45 years, in order to ensure the fair and equal treatment of all applicants and to leverage the opportunity to consider all qualified talent, in accordance with the Charter.

56. Addressing the concerns previously raised by JIU, and in accordance with the Advisory Committee's recommendations, the proposal was intended to align the practices of the Secretariat with those of other United Nations system organizations. Specifically, it was aimed at allowing eligible staff members to apply for positions in the Professional category not subject to the system of desirable ranges and located in a duty station different from the duty station to which the staff member was assigned, and to apply for positions at the P-3 and higher levels subject to the system of desirable ranges and located in a duty station different from the duty station to which the staff member was assigned, when the staff member was a national of an unrepresented or underrepresented Member State at the

time of application. In addition, the proposal provided for the removal of the “G to P” element of the young professionals programme, being focused instead on attracting young talent from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States.

57. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on his practice in disciplinary matters and cases of possible criminal behaviour, covering the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022 (A/78/603 and A/78/603/Corr.1), she said that the structure of the report had been updated, resulting in the presentation, in the body of the report, of data and analysis relating to the Secretary-General’s disciplinary practice, and the inclusion, in annex I of the report, of a summary of cases that had been closed and in which disciplinary measures had been imposed in 2022. Annex II of the report contained a visual diagram representing the method by which the Organization determined whether misconduct had occurred and assessed the proportionality of the disciplinary measures imposed, in order to enable a better understanding of the case narratives provided. The report was complemented by a compendium of disciplinary measures, containing consolidated information on cases closed from 1 July 2009 to 31 December 2022, and including an enhanced description of the Organization’s administrative framework and accountability process.

58. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on seconded active-duty military and police personnel (A/78/602), she said that the report built on the five reports of the Secretary-General on the matter submitted to the General Assembly since 2013 and had been issued in response to the request, contained in General Assembly resolution 75/292, for the Secretary-General to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the practical impact, including on Member States, of the different options and possible combinations of options outlined in his report to the Assembly at its seventy-fifth session (A/75/646), and to provide the assessment to the Assembly for consideration at its seventy-eighth session. As a possible solution to the issue, the Secretary-General proposed to identify remuneration or benefits provided by Member States to seconded personnel, and to implement an agreement to amend the conditions of employment in order to avoid duplication of the remuneration and benefits provided by Member States and by the United Nations.

59. Introducing the note by the Secretary-General on monitoring of staff attendance (A/78/604), she said that the note provided an overview of the policy provisions and mechanisms constituting the attendance and leave framework at the Secretariat, in response to the General Assembly’s call, in its resolution 77/278, for the

Secretary-General to support managers in monitoring attendance and to ensure that the Organization remained responsive to Member States and continued to operate effectively and efficiently, including by assisting legislative bodies in performing their work and implementing their decisions.

60. **Mr. Al-Kumaim** (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics (A/78/745), said that the Advisory Committee was concerned about the significant number of vacant posts subject to geographical distribution, including at the P-2 level, and of geographical posts temporarily encumbered by staff without geographical status or with limited appointments. Between 2018 and 2022, the number of overrepresented Member States had grown from 27 to 31, while the combined number of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States had decreased from 61 to 57. Moreover, in 2022, only three entities had fully met or exceeded the target, contained in senior managers’ compacts, relating to recruitment against posts subject to geographical distribution. The Advisory Committee trusted that the Secretary-General would present comprehensive annual comparative data on performance against the geographical targets contained in senior managers’ compacts, and on the progress made towards the target, set by the Secretariat, to reduce the number of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States through yearly incremental gains of 10 per cent. The Advisory Committee trusted that the Secretary-General would make use of the recently increased number of posts subject to geographical distribution for that purpose.

61. The Advisory Committee noted that quantifiable targets existed only for the system of desirable ranges and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide information on possible measures to improve geographical representation outside of the scope of the system of desirable ranges, in accordance with Article 101(3) of the Charter. The report (A/78/745) also addressed other matters relating to human resources management, including gender balance in peacekeeping missions and special political missions, efforts to rejuvenate the Secretariat, and the need for more systematic collection of data on resignations. The Advisory Committee looked forward to receiving updated information on the progress made on those and other issues in future reports of the Secretary-General.

62. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the proposal on the movement of Secretariat staff from the General Service category to the Professional

category ([A/78/745/Add.1](#)), he said that the Advisory Committee noted the qualifications possessed by staff serving in the General Service and related categories, and the need to improve their opportunities for career development. As at 31 October 2023, of the 19,210 staff eligible to move from the General Service category to the Professional category in accordance with the proposals set out in the Secretary-General's report ([A/78/569/Add.1](#)), 0.3 per cent were from unrepresented Member States and 23.6 per cent were from underrepresented Member States, while 75.5 per cent were from Member States that were within the desirable range or were overrepresented. The Advisory Committee noted, from the data that it had received upon enquiry, that substantial disparities existed in the geographical distribution and representation of Member States. In that regard, the Advisory Committee was of the view that some of the issues identified by JIU in the early 1970s remained relevant.

63. As at 31 October 2023, the average age of staff at the G-2 to G-7 levels had been between 45 and 50 years, and the average age of staff at the FS-3 to FS-5 levels had been between 51 and 53 years. Future proposals should therefore address the rejuvenation of the Organization and the need to attract young talent, especially from underrepresented and unrepresented Member States. In that connection, the restrictions on local recruitment for potential applicants for posts and positions in the General Service and related categories should be noted.

64. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to further review the proposals set out in his report ([A/78/569/Add.1](#)) in the context of the overall policies relating to human resources management under the envisaged staff selection 2.0 programme, considering such issues as geographical distribution and representation; the use of the terms included in, and the scope of, the relevant proposals; the recruitment and selection process; internal and external candidates; and the rejuvenation of the Organization, and to submit a revised proposal to the Assembly, as appropriate.

65. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and cases of possible criminal behaviour ([A/78/756](#)), he said that the Advisory Committee noted the efforts made to prevent misconduct and stressed the need to further enhance communication and the dissemination and usage of all available misconduct prevention tools proactively. The Advisory Committee also stressed the importance of transparency, proportionality, due process and consistency in disciplinary matters. In that regard, the Advisory

Committee trusted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [77/278](#), the Secretary-General would continue to clearly lay out the criteria and internal regulations applied in the determination of misconduct and in the imposition of disciplinary measures, including mitigating and aggravating circumstances, as well as the types of misconduct related to separation and dismissal, in his future reports on disciplinary matters. Increased transparency of managers' conduct, with enhanced accountability, should also be ensured.

66. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on seconded active-duty military and police personnel ([A/78/762](#)), he said that, in response to General Assembly resolution [75/292](#), the comprehensive assessment contained in the Secretary-General's current report on seconded active-duty military and police personnel ([A/78/602](#)) was focused on the four options presented by the Secretary-General in his report to the Assembly at its seventy-fifth session ([A/75/646](#)), in order to resolve the conflict between the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and the national laws or practices of some Member States with respect to their active-duty military and police personnel seconded to the Secretariat. While noting that the proposed way forward relied on information disclosed by seconded active-duty military and police personnel and their Governments, the Advisory Committee, in principle and subject to the consideration and approval of the General Assembly, had no objection to the implementation of option 4, namely, identifying remuneration or benefits provided by Member States to seconded personnel, and implementing an agreement to amend the conditions of employment in order to avoid duplication of the remuneration and benefits provided by Member States and by the United Nations, as proposed by the Secretary-General in his report ([A/78/602](#)).

67. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the monitoring of staff attendance ([A/78/759](#)), he said that the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to include information on the monitoring of staff attendance in the report on the assessment of the workplace at the United Nations Headquarters and in other relevant reports, rather than in a separate report.

68. **Ms. Cronin** (Joint Inspection Unit), speaking via video link to introduce the report of JIU entitled "Review of mental health and well-being policies and practices in United Nations system organizations" ([JIU/REP/2023/4](#)), transmitted to the General Assembly by means of a note by the Secretary-General ([A/78/695](#)), said that that review had been conducted at the conclusion of the first phase of the United Nations

System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy and had taken into consideration the adjustments made by organizations during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In the review, JIU had examined organizational approaches to addressing the mental health and well-being of United Nations personnel, as well as relevant strategies, policies and practices, and had evaluated organizational structures and functions and inter-agency initiatives.

69. While the pandemic had worsened the mental health and well-being of personnel, there had been indications of a steady decline well before the pandemic, including a significant uptick in the use of psychosocial services, an increase in the number of sick-leave days taken as a result of mental-health issues, worrying staff survey results and a troubling pattern of cases of personnel receiving disability benefits owing to psychiatric diagnoses, benefits that cost the system an estimated \$44 million annually. The United Nations System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy had been approved in 2018, providing a framework to be adapted by each organization in accordance with its specific circumstances and operational models. However, since its approval, only seven organization had developed their own such strategies. Such strategies enabled organizations to develop a data-driven, evidence-based approach to supporting the mental health and well-being of their workforce. Governing bodies should therefore request updates on their development. Such strategies could also reveal gaps in policies aimed at assisting staff with mental health conditions, identify barriers to access to services and guide the selection of priorities for the training of managers.

70. The level of psychosocial resources across the system had increased by 83 per cent since 2018. However, coverage was uneven, with the level of coverage in high-risk duty stations being of particular concern. The Secretary-General should therefore explore, and request the High-level Committee on Management of CEB to issue a report on, options to ensure the presence of a mental-health practitioner to support personnel in D- and E-category duty stations in all countries that hosted such duty stations. The conclusions of that report should then be submitted for consideration by the General Assembly at its eightieth session.

71. Gaps in the counselling function were also a matter of concern. Some such gaps had been identified by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in its 2019 audit of critical incident stress management in the Secretariat, but remained to be resolved. Such gaps posed a risk to the well-being of counsellors in the field and to that of the personnel they supported. As the

organization with the largest proportion of counsellors in the system, the Secretariat should address the fragmented and disjointed delivery of psychosocial support services, and, at the very least, address the risk associated with the failure to ensure proper supervision of counsellors.

72. The recommendations made in the report of JIU (JIU/REP/2023/4) had been considered at the forty-sixth session of the High-level Committee on Management, and had been taken into account in the development and finalization of the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy for 2024 and beyond. The participation of a greater diversity of stakeholders in the Strategy's implementation, as well as sustainable staffing and the sustainable funding of its activities, would increase the rate of adoption of the Strategy and the level of attention paid to mental health issues.

73. **Ms. Pietracci** (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/78/695/Add.1), said that the United Nations system organizations commended JIU for its timely and insightful report and for its efforts to gain an understanding of the mental health and psychological well-being of United Nations personnel. In the report, JIU provided a comprehensive overview of current issues, supported by diverse data points, and proposed compelling recommendations.

74. The methodology employed by the inspectors had allowed for consultation with a variety of stakeholders and had been lauded for enabling a holistic understanding of mental health policies and practices. Organizations had also valued the inspectors' analysis of the impact, including the costs, of psychological risks in United Nations workplaces, and had acknowledged their integrative approach to addressing risks relating to mental health and well-being at the policy level. Since the publication of the report of JIU, organizations had endorsed the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy for 2024 and beyond at the forty-sixth session of the High-level Committee on Management, held in October 2023, thereby reiterating their commitment to ensuring an inclusive and sustainable working environment, in which considerations relating to mental health were ingrained in the organizational culture and systems. While largely supportive of the proposed recommendations, organizations had highlighted potential challenges and context-specific limitations, including budgetary limitations, which would be taken into consideration in the implementation phase.

75. **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.

76. **Ms. Johnson** (Staff representative), speaking via video link, said that she wished to pay tribute to the 158 United Nations staff members who had lost their lives in Gaza, in what had become the deadliest conflict in history for the Organization's staff. She trusted that the international community would support the staff unions in their call to ensure that United Nations staff were protected, and never targeted, in armed conflicts.

77. Notwithstanding the extremely difficult global situation, staff had continued to work hard to fulfil the Organization's mandates. Although staff had, for years, managed to do more with less, they could not do more with nothing. The persistence of the current liquidity crisis would prevent vital work from being done and, in the meantime, would result in serious damage to the health and well-being of staff by causing them to forgo leave and take on the workload of other colleagues, as departing staff could not be replaced and new staff could not be recruited. A durable solution to the liquidity problem must be found, so that the Organization did not remain paralysed year after year.

78. The Committee's approval of the proposal to eliminate the G-to-P barrier would significantly boost staff morale. In addition to correcting an injustice that had become incomprehensible owing to the nature of modern work, such approval would also improve geographic diversity, taking into account the current composition of the General Service staff population.

79. Once the Organization could resume normal operation, the roster system could be used to fill vacancies efficiently. In that regard, the staff unions noted with deep regret the Secretary-General's pending plan to immediately discontinue all existing roster memberships after four years, in the case of men candidates, and after six years, in the case of women candidates, as it would lead to thousands of suitable internal and external candidates being removed from consideration without having had a fair chance to apply for positions during the long successive recruitment freezes imposed as a result of the liquidity situation.

80. Equal pay for work of equal value was one of the most fundamental principles of labour relations. Therefore, United Nations rules should ensure that internal and external candidates who applied for the same functions and had equal levels of education and experience received equal pay. Just as a legal distinction was no longer made between internal and external

candidates in terms of selection, no such distinction should be made in terms of pay.

81. The suspension of certain construction and renovation projects during the liquidity crisis could provide an opportunity to rethink the shift towards a so-called flexible workspace, as such a shift generally amounted to squeezing more staff into smaller spaces, resulting in worsening working conditions. Given that such a shift also decreased productivity and pushed staff out of their offices, effectively forcing them to work from home, the savings expected to result from it might prove illusory.

82. The Organization's treatment of whistle-blowers could be significantly improved. For example, the Secretary-General had recently terminated several senior investment managers of the Office of Investment Management of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, who had spoken out against what had later been characterized by the Office of Internal Oversight Services as a toxic work environment. The reasons given for termination had included the fact that the personnel in question had spoken to their staff representatives, a situation that raised serious concerns about the Organization's ability to ensure protection from retaliation. United Nations staff required the support of Member States in order to ensure the continued operation of the Organization and to enable staff to do their jobs.

83. **Mr. Ainomuhisha** (Uganda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group was cognizant of the fact that the reports of the Secretary-General on human resources management currently before the Committee were the first such reports that had been issued following the adoption of General Assembly resolution [77/278](#). The Group would therefore study those reports in order to assess the ways in which the Secretariat was responding to the requests contained in that resolution.

84. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics ([A/78/569](#)), the Group noted that, during the period from 1 January to 31 December 2022, the total number of staff had increased from 35,762 to 36,791, owing to factors such as the resumption of hiring against posts funded under the regular budget following the lifting in April 2021 of the temporary hiring freeze imposed as a result of the liquidity situation in 2020; an increase in the number of temporary appointments for the servicing of conferences; and a decrease in the number of separations. The Group also noted that, during the same period, the temporary suspension of recruitment had

reduced movement into regular-budget posts by 67 per cent, and had put on hold progress towards equitable geographical distribution owing to the Organization's inability to fill vacant posts. In that regard, the Secretary-General should take steps to mitigate the impact of the measures being implemented to address the current liquidity situation on the recruitment of staff in critical areas.

85. The principles of equitable geographical representation and gender parity were of critical importance to the Group, and the Group looked forward to learning about the practical steps being taken by the Secretary-General to achieve equitable geographical representation. While noting the significant progress made towards gender parity, complementary efforts to broaden geographical representation were lacking. The Secretary-General should redouble his efforts to achieve equitable geographical representation among staff, especially at the senior levels, where there had been a glaring imbalance for the previous five years, with one regional group accounting for 49 per cent of staff at the D-1 level and above. The Secretary-General should also pay attention to the significant contribution of troop- and police-contributing countries to the Organization.

86. The Group noted with concern the significant discrepancies in the Organization's selection and recruitment processes, as highlighted by the Advisory Committee in its report on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics (A/78/745). It therefore looked forward to having an in-depth discussion on the causes of those discrepancies in order to address them.

87. The Group was also concerned that the Secretary-General's proposal relating to the movement of staff from the General Service category to the Professional category might pose obstacles to equitable geographical representation, given that, among the 19,210 eligible General Service staff, 85.5 per cent were from Member States that were within the desirable range or were overrepresented. The Group would seek further clarifications on the proposal, and on the related justification and rationale, during informal consultations.

88. Moreover, the Group was concerned about the significant number of vacant posts subject to geographical distribution, including at the P-2 level, and of geographical posts temporarily encumbered by staff without geographical status or with limited appointments. The Secretary-General should therefore ensure that all posts subject to the system of desirable ranges were encumbered accordingly and that vacant posts were filled expeditiously, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 77/278. In that regard, the

Group was also concerned that, over the previous three years, the number of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States had remained virtually stagnant, ranging between 20 and 21 and between 37 and 36, respectively, while the number of overrepresented Member States had increased from 27 to 31.

89. It was also regrettable that, by 31 December 2021, of the 30 entities in which recruitment against posts subject to geographical distribution was relevant, only 3 had met or exceeded the target, contained in senior managers' compacts, to ensure that 50.0 per cent of individuals appointed to posts subject to geographical distribution were nationals of unrepresented or underrepresented Member States. Managers who failed to meet that target should be held accountable. The Group nevertheless looked forward to reviewing the Secretariat's efforts to promote the rejuvenation of the Organization, including by implementing the young professionals programme.

90. The Group agreed with the view, as set out in the report of the Advisory Committee on the monitoring of staff attendance (A/78/759), that managers were responsible and accountable for managing the performance and productivity of staff, and for ensuring the implementation of work obligations and agreed outputs. All managers and staff members who benefited from flexible working arrangements must continue to be available and responsive to Member States' needs in a timely and efficient manner.

91. **Ms. Lora-Santos** (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ASEAN acknowledged the work of the Secretariat, in particular its efforts to implement the staff selection 2.0 programme since its adoption during the first part of the resumed seventy-seventh session. ASEAN looked forward to further discussions on the new approach to staff selection represented by that programme, including on implementation plans and timelines, and on any additional resources required. ASEAN also noted the updates on the Secretariat workforce presented in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics (A/78/569).

92. The Secretariat should have a diverse workforce that encompassed a variety of perspectives. ASEAN therefore welcomed the increased diversity of the Secretariat's composition, as it would strengthen the performance of the Organization, and hoped to see further progress in that regard. In particular, ASEAN fully supported efforts to ensure equitable geographical representation among United Nations staff, especially

by increasing the number of staff from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States. It also appreciated the Secretary-General's efforts to improve gender parity at all levels at Headquarters and in the field.

93. ASEAN would seek updates on efforts made to rejuvenate the United Nations and encouraged initiatives to foster a culture of staff mobility and accelerate the mobility process in the Secretariat. Strategic workforce planning across the Organization could be useful to facilitate effective responses to current and future challenges at all stages of staff recruitment and retention.

94. ASEAN noted the Secretary-General's proposal on the movement of Secretariat staff from the General Service category to the Professional category, including the proposed removal of the barriers faced by staff in the General Service and related categories, and at the FS-3 to FS-5 levels of the Field Service category, in applying for positions in the Professional category. ASEAN looked forward to discussing that proposal, including in relation to the young professionals programme. An expanded talent pool would strengthen the Secretariat's efforts to broaden geographical representation and promote gender parity.

95. With regard to the amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, as set out in the Secretary-General's report on the matter (A/78/177), ASEAN supported a simplified and streamlined human resources policy framework that could substantially contribute to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization and its staff in fulfilling mandates. Given the crucial importance of reporting on matters relating to human resources management, ASEAN welcomed the development of the United Nations Secretariat Workforce Portal, aimed at providing Member States with updated information on the operational aspects of the Organization.

96. ASEAN noted the Secretariat's ongoing efforts to foster a culture of ethics, integrity, transparency and accountability in the Organization, including by preventing and ensuring protection from retaliation. Accountability was especially critical. ASEAN welcomed the Organization's victim-centred approach to addressing misconduct, in particular sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse, acts to which a zero-tolerance policy should be applied in order to promote trust and accountability in the United Nations system. In that regard, ASEAN acknowledged the information, contained in the relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/78/603), on the progress made to

address disciplinary cases, including on cases completed or disposed of through the imposition of disciplinary measures or through improved case management. ASEAN supported the development of an administrative framework on disciplinary matters that included an analysis of the cases received and a process to address those cases.

97. **Mr. Alnasr** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, said that human resources management was of particular importance to Qatar and to the other States members of the Council. The greatest asset of the United Nations was its staff. A number of staff members had made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of the United Nations. Specifically, many staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had lost their lives since the beginning of the conflict in Gaza. The Council supported UNRWA and condemned in the strongest terms the rising death toll of United Nations staff in Gaza. It was essential to protect all humanitarian workers in accordance with international humanitarian law.

98. The Council welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to reform management and human resources, in accordance with Articles 97 and 101 of the Charter, in order to promote effective, equitable and agile recruitment and to ensure that the Secretariat had a diverse workforce. The Council was deeply concerned about the demographic composition of the Secretariat, as reflected in the Secretary-General's related report (A/78/569), submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 77/278. The States members of the Council had been unrepresented or underrepresented for approximately 10 years. That situation was not merely related to the number or nature of posts subject to geographical distribution, but rather to a structural imbalance in terms of awareness-raising and recruitment. Swift and effective action must therefore be taken to implement the relevant General Assembly resolutions. The Council supported all the United Nations reform initiatives, particularly the global human resources strategy, in order to enable the restructuring of human resources management to make the Organization more agile and effective, and to facilitate the work of staff, many of whom operated under difficult conditions.

99. **Ms. Minale** (Ethiopia), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group paid tribute to the United Nations staff who had lost their lives during the previous year, while in the service of the United Nations.

100. The Group thanked the Secretary-General for his reports issued pursuant to General Assembly resolution [77/278](#). The human resources of the United Nations were an invaluable asset to the Organization. In that regard, continuous efforts and organizational reform were needed to ensure that the United Nations staff population reflected the principles of competence, integrity and the equitable representation of Member States. At the current part of the resumed session, the Group would pay close attention to equitable geographical representation among staff. A total of 36 of the 54 States members of the Group were underrepresented or unrepresented, or were within the desirable range. Efforts to ensure equitable geographical representation should therefore be redoubled. The fact that the system of desirable ranges was intended to reflect a compromise solution should not be used to undermine the fair representation of Member States or the recruitment of candidates from Member States that had few nationals among the staff population but were nevertheless considered overrepresented. In addition, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [77/278](#), in which the Assembly noted the lack of a separate recruitment policy in relation to posts funded by extrabudgetary resources and posts funded by assessed contributions, enhanced efforts should be made to ensure that the staff population represented both by posts funded by extrabudgetary resources and by posts funded by the regular budget reflected the geographical and national composition of the United Nations membership.

101. The Group supported the Secretary-General's strategy to ensure the equal participation of women in the United Nations, including in senior-level positions. While commending the steps taken to increase the percentage of women staff members to its current level, the participation of women from developing countries should be enhanced. The Secretariat should take a context-driven and balanced approach to addressing the staffing needs of offices, while ensuring gender parity.

102. The Group noted the proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, as set out in the Secretary-General's report on the matter ([A/78/177](#)). While the Staff Regulations and Rules must be updated on the basis of prevailing circumstances and changes in organizational policy, any proposed amendments should not introduce controversial social values on which there was a lack of consensus among Member States.

103. The Group noted the proposal of the Secretary-General on the movement of Secretariat staff from the General Service category to the Professional category, as well as the changes made to that proposal since it had

been previously considered by the General Assembly at the seventy-third session. Although it was necessary to remove the administrative barriers faced by staff in the General Service and Field Service categories in applying for posts in the Professional category, such a development would only be beneficial insofar as it helped the Organization to address prevailing challenges, such as the lack of equitable geographical representation. In addition, the significance of the Secretary-General's proposal depended on the Organization's current effectiveness in ensuring career development opportunities for General Service and Field Service staff. The Group therefore reiterated its views on the matter, as expressed during the seventy-first and seventy-third sessions of the General Assembly (see [A/C.5/71/SR.10](#) and [A/C.5/73/SR.15](#)). Specifically, the proposal on the movement of Secretariat staff from the General Service category to the Professional category should be accompanied by policy guidance and a basic governance structure, endorsed by the General Assembly, so that the costs and benefits of that proposal could be analysed and its impact could be assessed fully and transparently. The Group would scrutinize the merits of the proposal on the basis of such considerations, among others.

104. The Group was of the view that the United Nations must develop and retain an increasingly mobile, field-oriented workforce, recalling that, in its resolution [77/278](#), the General Assembly had stressed the urgent need to nurture a culture of staff mobility and accelerate the mobility process across the Organization, in particular movements between Headquarters and field duty stations. In that regard, the Group was concerned that the administrative instruction on mobility ([ST/AI/2023/3](#)), in which mandatory field service was introduced for staff hired after October 2023, would lead to an unbalanced distribution of staff and to the insufficient deployment of experienced staff to field offices. That administrative instruction should be reconsidered in the light of the equal rights and obligations of United Nations staff to be deployed in and work from all duty stations requiring their expertise, irrespective of their level of seniority. Given the General Assembly's mandate, pursuant to its resolution [77/278](#), to provide guidance on the mobility framework, the Group looked forward to receiving further information on the content and implementation of the administrative instruction.

105. The current duration of recruitment processes far exceeded the 120-day target established by the General Assembly. There was also a significant discrepancy among regional groups between the share of applications and of successful applicants represented by

those groups, a discrepancy that was related to the selection criteria and geographical representation in selection panels, review bodies, hiring managers and rosters, and to embedded and systemic bias in favour of or against candidates. Serious attention should be paid to that challenge and to ensuring the full implementation of the staff selection programme.

106. The Group looked forward to considering the steps taken to prepare for the fulfilment of the request, contained in General Assembly resolution [78/253](#), for the Secretary-General to review the policies, rules and procedures on recruitment, hiring, promotion and other aspects of human resources management of the Organization, and to propose measures with a view to preventing and addressing cases of racial bias, including at the Director and higher levels of the Secretariat. In addition, the Special Adviser on Addressing Racism in the Workplace and the United Nations Youth Office provided the Organization with the institutional capability to address systemic racism and promote the rejuvenation of the workforce.

107. **Ms. Schmied** (Switzerland), speaking also on behalf of Liechtenstein, that the most valuable asset of the United Nations was its staff, on whose daily work the Organization depended to fulfil its mandates. Effective and responsible human resources management was therefore necessary to ensure a modern, efficient and sustainable United Nations system.

108. The adoption of General Assembly resolution [77/278](#) had demonstrated the Committee's ability to achieve consensus on human resources management. The Committee must therefore reach consensus on the matter at the current part of the resumed session. Although the reports on human resources management currently before the Committee were based on data from 2022, the online dashboards on matters relating to human resources management demonstrated the early positive effects of the decisions taken at the seventy-seventh session.

109. Switzerland and Liechtenstein welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen human resources management, in particular by adapting various rules and regulations, and looked forward to the presentation of a new global human resources strategy. More agile, diverse and responsible management was essential to mandate implementation. In that regard, the two delegations would be interested to see a review of the status and conditions of service of the United Nations Ombudsman and of consultants working as sanctions experts.

110. Further work was needed to rejuvenate the United Nations staff. To ensure the Organization's

sustainability, the United Nations must have personnel capable of meeting the needs of future generations. The patterns of resignation by young women at the P-2 and P-3 levels were particularly striking, and must be addressed more effectively through exit interviews.

111. Staff mobility and career development opportunities were essential to ensure that the Organization had qualified and versatile staff. The two delegations therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal to enable General Service staff to apply for posts in the Professional category, as the removal of the barriers faced by such staff would bolster their motivation. Any proposal to remove such barriers must avoid the creation of new artificial barriers, and must be aimed at providing attractive career development opportunities for General Service staff.

112. With regard to disciplinary measures, Switzerland and Liechtenstein welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to increase the number of entities using the ClearCheck database, as well as the possibility of expanding its scope. However, the Organization could only be a high-quality and attractive employer if it was able to pay salaries and recruit the best people. During the current liquidity crisis, Member States had a responsibility to do their part in that regard.

113. **Mr. Laputin** (Russian Federation) said that General Assembly resolution [77/278](#) had had many successful results, in particular the expansion of the number of posts subject to geographical distribution. More than 5,000 posts were now subject to the principle of equitable geographical representation, in accordance with numerous instructions by the General Assembly and recommendations of the Advisory Committee endorsed by Member States. As reflected in the relevant reports of the Secretary-General and the reasonable comments of the Advisory Committee, there had been no reduction in the number of underrepresented, unrepresented and overrepresented States. On the contrary, the number of overrepresented countries had increased from 27 to 31. The long-term dominance of staff from the Western European and other States in posts at the P-5 and higher levels was regrettable, and the Secretariat had no new ideas on ways to address that situation.

114. On the question of gender, however, yet another initiative was proposed. The Committee must now consider gender-inclusive amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, as set out in the relevant report of the Secretary-General ([A/78/177](#)). Obviously, those amendments went beyond the framework of the binary gender system in the context of human resources management, although

substantive discussions on the concept of gender fell outside the Committee's purview. The Russian Federation was grateful to the Office of Human Resources for its annual efforts to coordinate with Member States ahead of the first part of the resumed session. At the coordination meeting held before the current part of the resumed session, it had been explained to Member States that the relevant proposed amendments were editorial rather than substantive in nature. However, those proposed amendments violated the principle of multilingualism because, given that they had originated in English, they could not be reproduced equally in all the other official languages. The Russian Federation therefore opposed their adoption.

115. The Russian Federation noted with regret that the Secretary-General had not implemented General Assembly resolution 75/292, on seconded active-duty military and police personnel, and had not provided, in his report on the matter (A/78/602), information on the steps being taken to address challenges that were beyond the control of active-duty military and police personnel selected for secondment and that prevented their timely onboarding. The Russian Federation would consider all the proposals contained in that report through the lens of the Secretariat's failure to comply with the will of Member States, as reflected in General Assembly resolution 75/292. His delegation had already requested the reissuance of the relevant report and was awaiting a response.

116. In view of the experience of previous years, the Russian Federation did not welcome the grouping into thematic clusters of the reports relating to human resources management. At the first part of the resumed seventy-seventh session, the Committee had achieved success as soon as it had begun to consider all the relevant matters together. Considering the report of the Secretary-General on seconded active-duty military and police personnel (A/78/602) in combination with his report on amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules (A/78/177) seemed particularly inadvisable. The Russian Federation was nevertheless prepared to be constructive and follow the approach proposed by the Bureau with regard to the agenda item on human resources management. However, consultations should be held with Member States on such matters in the future.

117. **Mr. Gadouri** (Algeria) said that, since taking office, the Secretary-General had committed himself to implementing comprehensive reforms to make the United Nations more diverse, transparent and representative of its Member States. Since then, the Organization's workforce policy had been placed at the centre of its overall objectives, despite the setbacks and

challenges faced. In that regard, he paid tribute to the United Nations staff members, in particular those of UNRWA, who had made the ultimate sacrifice and remained steadfast in their commitment to providing aid and support to those affected by the unfolding humanitarian tragedy in Gaza. The work and dedication of UNRWA staff represented a beacon of hope in a time of darkness for the hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians living in Gaza.

118. His delegation noted with appreciation the progress made in 2022 with respect to gender parity, as evidenced by the increase in women's representation in positions in the Professional and higher categories and in posts subject to geographical distribution. However, further efforts should be made to achieve equitable and balanced geographical representation. Specifically, the number of posts subject to the system of desirable ranges should be expanded to include all posts in the Professional and higher categories funded by the regular budget, including in special political missions and peacekeeping operations. In addition, the implementation of downsizing policies should not result in an exacerbation of the existing imbalance in geographical representation in the Secretariat.

119. The United Nations should have a more equitable, transparent and merit-based recruitment system to enable it to achieve the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, while facilitating the recruitment of staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible. With regard to disciplinary matters, the Secretariat was to be commended for its efforts to combat all forms of misconduct, including sexual abuse and corruption, and to foster a safe and healthy work environment for all.

Agenda item 142: United Nations common system
(continued) (A/78/600 and A/78/757)

120. **Ms. Lopez** (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on data on system-wide compensation costs (A/78/600), said that the report had been submitted in response to the request, contained in General Assembly resolution 76/240, for the Secretary-General to provide to the Member States, on an annual basis starting at the seventy-eighth session, comprehensive data on system-wide compensation costs for all staff categories, including all compensation package components. In order to respond to that request, the Human Resources Network of CEB, in support of the Secretariat, had established a list of categories and subcategories of compensation elements and had prepared a template for data collection in accordance with those categories and subcategories. The Human

Resources Network had circulated the list and template to the organizations of the United Nations common system, requesting them to complete the template with data on expenditures incurred in 2022.

121. As 2022 was the first year for which such data had been collected and compiled for the common system, a number of issues related to discrepancies in data reporting and recording methods had emerged. As a result of those discrepancies, the data could not be presented by individual compensation element and had instead been provided in aggregate form.

122. **Mr. Al-Kumaim** (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee ([A/78/757](#)), said that the Advisory Committee noted the limited analytical and statistical utility of the aggregated data provided in the Secretary-General's report and recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of CEB, to endeavour to reconcile the relevant definitions and reporting standards among the common system organizations, with a view to improving coherence, budgetary planning, transparency and accountability with respect to Member States and donors.

123. In collecting data on system-wide compensation costs, the Secretariat should coordinate, as much as possible, with the International Civil Service Commission, as it had been similarly mandated, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [76/240](#), to conduct a comprehensive assessment and review of the compensation system. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly take note of the Secretary-General's report.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.