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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
Fifty-ninth session  
Agenda item 18

**EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS**

**Algeria, Angola\*, Armenia, Bahrain, Bangladesh\*, Belarus\*, Benin\*, Bhutan\*, Botswana\*, Burundi\*, Cameroon, China, Colombia\*, Congo\*, Côte d'Ivoire\*, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea\*, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic\*, Ecuador\*, Egypt\*, Equatorial Guinea\*, Eritrea\*, Ethiopia\*, Haiti\*, India, Indonesia\*, Iran (Islamic Republic of)\*, Jordan\*, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic\*, Lebanon\*, Lesotho\*, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar\*, Mauritania\*, Morocco\*, Mozambique\*, Myanmar\*, Nepal\*, Nigeria\*, Oman\*, Pakistan, Panama\*, Philippines\*, Qatar\*, Rwanda\*, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tanzania\*, Togo, Tunisia\*, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia\* and Zimbabwe:**  
**draft resolution**

**2003/... Composition of the staff of the Office of the United Nations  
High Commissioner for Human Rights**

*The Commission on Human Rights,*

*Recalling* that, in its report to the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council (E/CN.4/1988/85 and Corr.1), the Commission reaffirmed that the paramount consideration for employing staff at every level was the need for the highest standards of

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\* In accordance with rule 69, paragraph 3, of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

efficiency, competence and integrity and was convinced that this objective was compatible with the principle of equitable geographical distribution and took into account Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations,

*Recalling also* Part II, paragraphs 11 and 17, of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (A/CONF.157/23), in which the World Conference on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General and the General Assembly to provide sufficient human, financial and other resources to the Centre for Human Rights to enable it effectively, efficiently and expeditiously to carry out its activities, while recognizing the necessity for restructuring United Nations human rights machinery, in accordance with its real needs,

*Reaffirming* the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds, as well as of different political, economic and legal systems,

*Recognizing* that the United Nations pursues multilingualism as a means of promoting, protecting and preserving diversity of languages and cultures globally and that genuine multilingualism promotes unity in diversity and international understanding,

*Taking into account* the need to pay particular attention to the recruitment of personnel for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, particularly from developing countries, thus improving the present staff composition, based on a more equitable geographical distribution,

*Noting with deep concern* that the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, submitted pursuant to Commission resolution 2002/80 of 25 April 2002 (E/CN.4/2003/111) concerning the geographical composition and the functions of the Office staff clearly reflects that one region is unequivocally overrepresented in the staff composition and that the imbalance has worsened (see the annexes to the present resolution),

*Expressing again its concern* over the non-representation and underrepresentation of several Member States, especially developing countries, on the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner, particularly bearing in mind the criteria of equitable geographical distribution,

*Expressing its concern also* that the prevalence of project personnel has skewed the geographical distribution of the staff of the Office towards Western Europe and North America, compared to the Secretariat-wide pattern, as has the geographical distribution of consultants,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the High Commissioner on the composition of the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

2. *Welcomes* the commitment of the High Commissioner in the Annual Appeal 2003 that all Geneva-based staff will be brought into an integrated personnel-administration system within the framework of United Nations rules and regulations;

3. *Regrets* that no progress has been achieved in the implementation of the resolutions on this subject, that one region accounts for more than half of the posts of the Office of the High Commissioner and for more posts than the four remaining regional groups combined, and that there has been a decrease in the posts subject to geographical distribution and an increase of the staff not subject to geographical distribution;

4. *Expresses its concern* that new recruitments have not been used to correct the imbalance in favour of one region and that more than half of the newly recruited staff for posts not subject to geographical distribution come from this same region, which accounts for more newly recruited staff than the four remaining regions combined;

5. *Also expresses its concern* about the widespread assignment of technical advisers (200 series staff) to carry out line functions, which should be performed by 100 series staff, and to supervise staff under the 100 series staff rules, a practice against established policies that should be discontinued;

6. *Reaffirms* that Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations should guide the Secretary-General in his policy for recruiting the staff of the Organization, mindful of the criteria of equitable geographical distribution;

7. *Also reaffirms* General Assembly resolutions 49/222 A and B of 23 December 1994 and 20 July 1995, 51/226 of 3 April 1997, 53/221 of 7 April 1999, 55/258 of 14 June 2001 and 57/... of 27 March 2003 on human resources management;

8. *Further reaffirms* section X, paragraph 3, of General Assembly resolution 55/258 on human resources management, which reiterates the request to the Secretary-General to increase further his efforts to improve the composition of the Secretariat by ensuring a wide and equitable geographical distribution of staff in all departments;

9. *Considers* that it is necessary to take urgent, concrete and immediate action to change the currently prevailing geographical distribution of staff of the Office in favour of a more equitable distribution of posts, in accordance with Article 101 of the Charter, particularly by recruiting personnel from developing countries, including to key posts;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to ensure that particular attention is paid to recruiting personnel from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, in particular from developing countries, for the existing vacancies and for additional posts in the Office of the High Commissioner to ensure an equitable geographical distribution, giving particular priority in this regard to recruitment for high-level and Professional posts and to the recruitment of women;

11. *Requests* the High Commissioner to ensure that, consistent with General Assembly resolution 50/11 of 2 November 1995, upon recruitment, personnel recruited have a command of and use at least one of the working languages of the Secretariat and that the use of another of the six official languages is duly encouraged and taken into account, particularly when promotion and incremental steps are under consideration, in order to ensure linguistic balance within the organization;

12. *Urges* donors to make their voluntary contributions unearmarked, as much as possible, to enable the High Commissioner flexibility in the allocation of staff and resources between the different activities and projects;

13. *Requests once again* the Secretary-General, in signing agreements with countries as a result of which Junior Professional Officers are provided to the Office of the High Commissioner, to urge those countries to ensure the allocation of additional financial resources to guarantee that personnel from developing countries are able to work as Junior Professional Officers, with a view to conforming with the principle of equitable geographical distribution; furthermore, a permanent mechanism must be established, by virtue of which every Junior Professional Officer from a donor country who joins the Office will be matched by another Junior Professional Officer from a developing country;

14. *Emphasizes* the importance of openly advertising all posts, including ad hoc appointments for field operations, including the dissemination of detailed job descriptions among all States prior to the filling of those posts;

15. *Requests* the High Commissioner to ensure that Junior Professional Officers are not given sensitive political assignments where their impartiality may be questioned;

16. *Affirms* that consultants shall not perform functions of staff members of the Organization nor have any representative or supervisory responsibility, that the High Commissioner should refrain from using consultants to carry out functions assigned to established posts, that consultants should be hired in strict accordance with existing rules and

relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and where expertise is not available within the Organization, and that the High Commissioner should make greater efforts to ensure geographical balance among qualified consultants and individual contractors;

17. *Reaffirms* the importance of ensuring universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in the consideration of human rights issues and requests the High Commissioner to continue to ensure that the fulfilment of his mandate and that of the Office is guided by these principles;

18. *Stresses* that the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner need to maintain their neutrality and fully respect the independence of the work of all mechanisms of the Commission and the treaty bodies, while providing support to their functioning;

19. *Reiterates* its request to the High Commissioner to use the policy of new recruitments to correct the current imbalance in the composition of the staff of his Office;

20. *Also requests* the High Commissioner to submit a comprehensive report on the implementation of the present resolution to the Commission at its sixtieth session, which should include:

(a) The composition of the staff of the Office, organized by the five United Nations regional groups established by the General Assembly (African States, Asian States, Latin American and Caribbean States, Western European and Other States and Eastern European States) and reflecting, inter alia, grade, nationality and gender, including with regard to non-regular staff;

(b) Measures adopted to improve the current situation and their results;

(c) Recommendations to improve the current situation;

21. *Draws the attention* of the General Assembly to the present resolution in the context of the consideration of the agenda item on human resources management;

22. *Recalls* the request to the Joint Inspection Unit to undertake a comprehensive review of the management and administration of the Office of the High Commissioner, in particular, with regard to its impact on the recruitment policies and the composition of the staff, and to submit a report thereon to the Commission at its sixtieth session containing concrete proposals for the implementation of the present resolution;

23. *Decides* to consider this matter under the same agenda item at its sixtieth session.

**Annex 1****Staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights****Geographical distribution (by number of posts)\***

Regional groups	Posts subject to geographical distribution Table 1				Posts not subject to geographical distribution Table 2				Total			
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2000	2001	2002	2003	2000	2001	2002	2003
Africa	11	10	12	10	25	21	22	24	36	31	34	34
Asia	15	13	17	16	1	6	9	8	16	19	26	24
Latin America and Caribbean States	8	9	9	9	8	10	13	15	16	19	22	24
Eastern Europe States	5	5	5	6	1	6	6	7	6	11	11	13
Western Europe and Other States**	36	41	48	45	61	69	85	96	97	110	133	141
Total of posts	75	78	91	86	96	112	135	150	171	190	226	236

\* Figures for 2003 based on tables 1 and 2 of the Report of the High Commissioner (E/CN.4/2003/111). The figures for the earlier years were based on the Reports of the High Commissioner for those years.

\*\* Includes Switzerland and Israel.

**Annex 2****Staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights****Geographical distribution of posts by per cent of total posts\***

Regional groups	Posts subject to geographical distribution (%)				Posts not subject to geographical distribution (%)				Total (%)			
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2000	2001	2002	2003	2000	2001	2002	2003
Africa	15	13	13	11.6	26	19	16	16	21	16	15	14.4
Asia	20	17	19	18.6	1	5	7	5	9	10	11	10.1
Latin America and Caribbean States	11	11	10	10.5	8	9	10	10	9	10	10	10.1
Eastern Europe States	6	6	5	7	1	5	4	5	3	6	6	5.5
Western Europe and Other States**	48	53	53	52.3	61	62	63	64	56	58	59	59.8

\* Per cents for 2003 were calculated based on tables 1 and 2 of the Report of the High Commissioner (E/CN.4/2003/111). The figures for the earlier years were calculated based on the Reports of the High Commissioner for those years.

\*\* Includes Switzerland and Israel.

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