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**EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS
ADAPTATION AND STRENGTHENING OF THE UNITED NATIONS
MACHINERY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

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

Report of the High Commissioner*

Introduction

1. The present report on the composition of the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is submitted in accordance with paragraph 26 (e) of resolution 2005/72 adopted by the Commission on Human Rights on 20 April 2005.
2. Section I of this report provides information on the composition of OHCHR. At the request of the Commission it includes data on staff in posts subject to geographical distribution as well as data on staff in temporary posts funded from extrabudgetary resources and project posts, neither of which are included in the definition of posts subject to geographical distribution.

* The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to include the most recent information.

3. Section II is a description of the High Commissioner's measures for improvement aimed at addressing the geographical composition issues identified by the Commission in resolution 2005/72, and at fully observing United Nations Secretariat human resources policies and, in particular, its recruitment and contractual policies (paragraph 15 of resolution).

I. COMPOSITION OF THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

4. The recruitment of staff to posts subject to geographical distribution is governed by the system of desirable ranges at the global United Nations Secretariat level. For that purpose, Member States are grouped into four categories: unrepresented, underrepresented, within range and over-represented. A Member State is considered "unrepresented" when not a single one of its nationals is serving at the United Nations Secretariat in a post subject to geographical distribution and having been filled in accordance with the established selection process. It is "underrepresented" when the number of its nationals appointed to such posts throughout the entire Secretariat is below the lower limit of the desirable range. It is within range when the number of its nationals appointed to such posts is between the upper and lower limits of the desirable range, and it is "over-represented" when the number of its nationals appointed to such posts within the entire Secretariat exceeds the upper limit of the desirable range. The representation status of Member States is affected by many factors, notably turnover of staff, changes in the scale of assessments and changes in the total number of Member States.

5. OHCHR is part of the United Nations Secretariat and the breakdown of its geographical composition has to be seen against the breakdown of overall geographical distribution within the Secretariat. In the case of OHCHR, the departmental data shows that developing as well as developed countries are to be found among both over- and underrepresented countries.

6. The official report on the composition of the United Nations Secretariat is submitted annually by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly in accordance with a number of Assembly resolutions, the most recent of which are resolutions 57/305 of 15 April 2003 and 59/266 of 23 December 2004.

7. The latest report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat is contained in document A/60/310.

8. Table 1 (see annex) provides a breakdown of OHCHR staff in the Professional and above category by nationality, grade and gender appointed to posts subject to geographical distribution as at 31 December 2005.

9. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the following categories of OHCHR staff in the Professional and above category by nationality, grade and gender as at 31 December 2005:

- (a) Staff holding appointments of less than one year;
 - (b) Staff charged to General temporary assistance funds;
 - (c) Staff employed in OHCHR field offices, including National Professional Officers;
- and
- (d) Staff employed as project personnel.

10. In accordance with paragraph 4 of section IX of General Assembly resolution 53/221, the practice of showing the representation of staff according to major geographical grouping has been discontinued. The information is provided by country, listed in alphabetical order.

II. ACTION PLAN FOR ACHIEVING EQUITABLE GEOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION

The Plan of action of the High Commissioner

11. As stated in the High Commissioner's Plan of action, and called for in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005), "[a]chieving geographical balance in OHCHR will remain one of the priorities of the High Commissioner. While the primary consideration in the selection of staff is the need to secure the highest standards of competence, integrity and efficiency, OHCHR will also pay due regard to recruiting and selecting individuals on as wide a geographical basis as possible. In an effort to widen the pool of qualified candidates, it will continue to work with the Office of Human Resources Management [(OHRM)] to organize specialized competitive human rights examinations, and successful candidates from underrepresented countries will be carefully considered" (A/59/2005/Add.3, para. 120). Also, "OHCHR will institute measures to screen candidates to ensure that, between equally qualified candidates, priority is given to achieving greater geographic distribution" (para. 155).

12. The Office was established in 1997 following the integration of the institution of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the former Centre for Human Rights. One of the prerequisites for OHCHR to contribute effectively to the promotion and protection of human rights is to build up a geographically diverse cadre of professional staff. At the same time, as stated in General Assembly resolution 59/266 of 23 December 2004, which emphasized, inter alia, that "recruitment at OHCHR should be done in full consultation and under the guidance of OHRM consistent with the provisions of the resolution and other legislative mandates", OHCHR must follow the recruitment and staff administration policies and procedures of the United Nations Secretariat of which it is an integral part.

13. OHCHR is subject to the system of desirable ranges described in paragraph 4 above. Under this system, geographical distribution is measured at the overall United Nations Secretariat level. In this context, OHCHR is required to adhere to biennial human resources action plans developed jointly with OHRM. Those plans include United Nations Secretariat-wide geographical distribution targets established by the General Assembly which might differ from those of the Commission on Human Rights, as it may happen that over-represented countries at the United Nations Secretariat level are un- or underrepresented at OHCHR. Over the past few years this has been the case of a number of developing countries. Recently, however, OHRM began acknowledging the unique situation of OHCHR and was able to exercise some flexibility in this regard.

14. As regards entry-level recruitment (P-2), it is carried out United Nations Secretariat-wide through the system of competitive exams, which also applies to OHCHR. It was not until recently that, at the request of OHCHR, a national competitive exam in the human rights area was instituted. Before the year 2000, OHCHR selected P-2 level staff from among those who had successfully passed the national competitive exam in the legal, political, economic and social areas and who were understandably more interested in joining the corresponding departments in

the United Nations Secretariat. As a result, in the past OHCHR often found itself having to make a selection from a limited pool of remaining candidates, including in terms of nationality, who were not selected by those departments which were also in competition with OHCHR for the same un- and underrepresented nationalities.

15. Participation in the first human rights national competitive exam in 2000 proved somewhat disappointing: of the 38 countries which were invited to take part in the exam, only 17 did. The second human rights national competitive exam, offered in 2005, was characterized by the same situation: despite the fact that every effort was made by OHCHR to inform Member States through the Bureau of the Commission on Human Rights and their permanent missions, out of 69 countries invited to take part in the exam, only 57 did. Of these 57 countries, only 10 countries have nationals who reached the interview stage, after completion of the written examination administered and corrected by the OHRM. At best, therefore, OHCHR will be able to select candidates from 10 countries, of which only 3 are developing countries.

16. The High Commissioner deeply regrets this situation which is symptomatic of the difficulties faced by OHCHR in recruiting on a wide geographical basis.

17. Recruitment at the P-3 to D-1 level is governed by the United Nations Secretariat staff selection system in place since 2002. As regards posts at the P-3 level, they are normally reserved for internal candidates, essentially individuals who joined the Organization through the above-mentioned system of national competitive exams. In order to be allowed to recruit externally at the P-3 level, heads of department must demonstrate to the Office of Human Resources Management that no internal applicant and successful national competitive exam candidate meets the requirements of the post. In practice this is extremely difficult given the high number of qualified candidates. While there are fewer constraints to external recruitment at the P-4 to D-1 levels, it is good management to balance external recruitment with a healthy system of internal promotion for well performing staff.

18. In the past, OHCHR relied extensively on the services of temporary staff. That practice developed over a number of years in order to offset the long delays experienced with recruitment under the staff selection system. Unfortunately, given the urgent nature of those recruitments, insufficient attention was paid to the Office's geographical balance needs. Moreover, short-term contracts, even if they are recurrent, do not attract as many candidates. In May 2005, the High Commissioner took determined steps to abandon that practice and to ensure that the best possible terms of employment are offered in order to attract qualified candidates from as wide a geographical base as possible. Specifically, a post regularization exercise was carried out between June 2005 and in February 2006 during which all core extrabudgetary posts were filled under the staff selection system. While continuing to pursue more flexible and expeditious recruitment policies and procedures, the High Commissioner is committed from now on to filling all core posts under the staff selection system, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/266.

Recruitment strategy

19. The recruitment strategy of OHCHR must address both external and internal factors. Specifically, OHCHR will seek to overcome the chronic shortage of candidates from un- and

underrepresented countries by adopting a more proactive approach to recruitment, as reliance on spontaneous applications has proven insufficient. It will also strengthen its internal evaluation and selection mechanisms. In the context of her Plan of action, the High Commissioner established a series of task forces entrusted with making proposals for the implementation of the Plan. A task force was constituted to look into the area of human resources management - in particular into the issues of geographical distribution and recruitment - which recommended a series of measures to broaden the pool of applicants to OHCHR vacancies.

20. First and foremost, OHCHR will identify target countries that meet both General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights criteria i.e. that are un- or underrepresented in the United Nations Secretariat as a whole and at OHCHR. The High Commissioner will also give priority consideration to nationals from countries which are within range in the Secretariat as a whole but which are un- and underrepresented at OHCHR. Within these two groups, special attention will be given to those countries in which there is a reasonable likelihood of identifying qualified external candidates at the P-4 levels and above, bearing in mind that P-2 level posts are reserved for national competitive exams and that P-3 level posts are normally reserved for internal candidates.

21. Steps will be taken to draw the attention of potential applicants to OHCHR recruitment procedures - in particular the fact that all core posts are advertised on the United Nations Secretariat "Galaxy" online application system as well as to specific OHCHR vacancies. To this end, advertisements will be placed in widely read periodicals in Africa, Asia and Latin America and a focal point designated at OHCHR to respond to queries and assist candidates with their applications.

22. With a view to ensuring that vacancies are advertised as widely as possible within Member States, OHCHR will constitute mailing lists of governmental institutions which might be interested in receiving vacancy announcements, it will identify and establish cooperation mechanisms with non-governmental organizations in the area of human rights, national human rights institutions and academic institutions willing to act as information relays by, on one hand, disseminating locally information on vacancies coming from OHCHR and, on the other hand, bringing to the attention of OHCHR the names of interesting candidates from their own rosters. In this same spirit, OHCHR will also solicit the support and assistance of organizations such as the Commonwealth Secretariat, l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the League of Arab States, the African Union and CARICOM.

23. Jointly with the United Nations Office at Geneva, OHCHR will continue to circulate all vacancies to permanent missions. This type of cooperation will be further enhanced through the organization of periodic briefings on the staff selection system for mission staff and visiting officials from capitals as well as the production of briefing material for dissemination within Member States.

24. Also planned is the organization of more systematic OHCHR recruitment missions to targeted countries in conjunction with important OHCHR conferences and travel by OHCHR officials. While OHCHR field presence is currently limited - which explains in part why it is not as well known locally as other United Nations field-based entities - the Office is expected to grow significantly over the next few years and to acquire greater visibility. The description of

duties of all regional and country representatives will prominently feature their head-hunting responsibility, which will include establishing contacts with national institutions and networks able to assist in the identification of qualified individuals. The OHCHR representatives will be expected to organize training programmes and provide counselling for interested national officers in OHCHR and other United Nations local offices and to systematically refer to headquarters the names of nationals who might qualify for international posts.

25. The Office will also seek to avail itself of the services of individuals from un- and underrepresented countries through staff exchange mechanisms such as existing agreements on inter-agency transfers, secondments and loans.

26. In addition, OHRM will be invited to continue to hold periodic national competitive examinations and conduct recruitment campaigns. In order to achieve as wide a participation as possible to national competitive exams, OHCHR is prepared to commit resources of its own to complement OHRM efforts to attract candidates from un- and underrepresented countries.

27. None of the above-mentioned steps can be expected to yield results unless the expressions of interest and the applications which are received are matched with OHCHR openings. To this end, the High Commissioner will introduce a series of policies designed to ensure that applicants from un- and underrepresented countries are systematically evaluated and given the fullest consideration.

28. Effective in 2006, and for an initial period of two years, all chiefs of branch will be required to include among their goals quantified geographical distribution targets for the branches under their supervision. Achievements will be regularly monitored by OHCHR administration which will produce periodic reports for review by senior management.

29. All staff members involved in recruitment activities will be briefed on OHCHR objectives and receive professional advice and training on how to achieve agreed geographical distribution targets. New evaluation procedures will be introduced, requiring Programme Case Officers (staff responsible for evaluating candidates) to:

(a) Ensure that language requirements included in vacancy announcements are carefully tailored to the requirements of the post and do not constitute an unjustified obstacle for applicants from un- and underrepresented countries. In the past OHCHR has made extensive use of generic job descriptions with standard language requirements which sometimes exceeded the needs of the function and were not, in retrospect, warranted;

(b) Interview all pre-screened applicants from un- and underrepresented countries - whenever possible those candidates will be invited to OHCHR headquarters to be interviewed in person;

(c) Ensure that applicants from un- and underrepresented countries will be interviewed by two different panels, the second one including representatives from the United Nations Office at Geneva, for a second opinion. Favourable opinion by only one panel will be sufficient to shortlist the candidate;

(d) To see to it that, in case of equal qualifications and experience, programme managers give priority to candidates from un- or underrepresented countries;

(e) Ensure that in cases where all short-listed candidates are from within-range or over-represented countries, the programme manager would be given the choice between identifying for selection a candidate from an un- or underrepresented country rostered for a similar vacancy, or recirculating the vacancy.

30. While seeking to achieve equitable geographical distribution, OHCHR will continue to pay special attention to the issue of gender balance, an area in which determination and concerted effort have paid off as demonstrated by the fact that as at 31 December 2005 women represented 56.86 per cent of regular OHCHR staff and 45.22 per cent of temporary OHCHR staff, equivalent to an overall ratio of 49.16 per cent.

31. Careful consideration will also be given to geographical balance among associate experts, whose employment has been the subject of scrutiny by the Commission on Human Rights. Every effort will be made to ensure that Member States which sponsor associate experts extend the programme to nationals from developing countries, which is already the case of a number of donors. Since the United Nations Secretariat does not have a mechanism for recruiting associate experts upon completion of the programme, priority will be given to associate experts from un- and underrepresented countries who might be invited to take part in future national competitive exams.

32. As pledged by the High Commissioner during the sixty-first session of the Commission on Human Rights, every effort will be made to achieve equitable geographical distribution at OHCHR through a series of concrete measures which go well beyond any other previously contemplated by OHCHR.

33. As indicated above, OHCHR recently completed a regularization exercise aimed at conforming to General Assembly resolution 59/266 and stabilizing the contractual situation of long-serving temporary staff in the interest of OHCHR efficiency and effectiveness. Geographical representation considerations were also taken into account when selecting individuals for posts. Some general conclusions can already be drawn from a preliminary evaluation of the just-completed exercise, specifically:

(a) The vast majority of posts advertised were at the P-3 level against which, as indicated in paragraph 17 above, external recruitment is severely hampered by relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 59/266;

(b) As regards higher level posts (P-4 and above), the magnitude of the exercise (with 132 posts advertised), combined with the requirements to adhere to the provisions of the staff selection system, made it difficult to consider external applicants for each and every post. Moreover, given the nature of the exercise, there was a very substantial number of highly qualified internal candidates from within the United Nations common system;

(c) More importantly, the pool of qualified external candidates in the post regularization exercise clearly illustrates that the nationality pool was limited. As in the case of national competitive exams (see paragraph 15 above), a significant number of external

candidates were nationals from developed countries. Out of a representative sample of 772 eligible external candidates for 19 vacancies, the first seven most represented nationalities were France (69 candidates); Spain (63); Canada (61); Italy (57); United States of America (44); Germany (29); and Switzerland (21). The nationals from those countries constituted nearly 45 per cent of the total.

34. These findings confirm the need for the proactive approach to recruitment described above and to which the High Commissioner is strongly committed. As part of the programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007, the General Assembly has authorized 78 new posts at Professional and above level for OHCHR. It is also anticipated that a significant number of new extrabudgetary posts will be created during the biennium 2006-2007. The High Commissioner is committed to filling these posts in accordance with the initiatives outlined in the present report as well as with the principles of equitable geographical and gender representation while also ensuring that all staff meet the highest standard of efficiency, competence and integrity.

Table 1

**OHCHR STAFF ON POSTS SUBJECT TO GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION,
BY NATIONALITY, GRADE AND GENDER
(as at 31 December 2005)**

Country of nationality	Total staff		USG		ASG		D-2		D-1		P-5		P-4		P-3		P-2		P-1	
	All	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Algeria	1	0											1							
Argentina	2	2										1				1				
Australia	1	1										1								
Austria	4	2													1		1	2		
Belgium	2	2											1			1				
Bolivia	1	0													1					
Cambodia	1	1												1						
Cameroon	1	0											1							
Canada	1	1		1																
Chile	1	0							1											
China	1	1															1			
Croatia	1	1														1				
Denmark	2	0											1		1					
Dominican Republic	1	0											1							
Equatorial Guinea	1	0									1									
Finland	1	0											1							
France	5	2									1		2			1		1		
Georgia	1	0									1									
Germany	9	5									1				1	5	2			

Table 1 (continued)

Country of nationality	Total staff		USG		ASG		D-2		D-1		P-5		P-4		P-3		P-2		P-1	
	All	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Guatemala	1	1														1				
Guyana	1	1														1				
Indonesia	1	1														1				
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	1	1									1									
Italy	13	8									3		2	2	5			1		
Japan	6	2											2		2	1		1		
Jordan	1	1										1								
Madagascar	1	1																1		
Maldives	1	0													1					
Malta	1	1																1		
Mexico	1	1							1											
Mongolia	1	0														1				
Netherlands (the)	3	2											1	2						
Pakistan	1	1				1														
Peru	1	0											1							
Portugal	1	1																1		
Republic of Korea (the)	3	1													2	1				
Russian Federation (the)	1	0											1							
Saudi Arabia	1	1												1						
Senegal	1	0					1													
Serbia and Montenegro	1	1														1				
Spain	8	7										1	3	1	2			1		

Table 1 (continued)

Country of nationality	Total staff		USG		ASG		D-2		D-1		P-5		P-4		P-3		P-2		P-1	
	All	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Sweden	3	3																3		
Switzerland	2	2											1		1					
Thailand	1	0											1							
Ukraine	1	0											1							
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	5	3									1	2	1		1					
United States of America	7	4									2		2				1	2		
Total	106	62	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	9	6	16	14	13	25	4	14	0	0

Abbreviations: USG, Under-Secretary-General; ASG, Assistant Secretary-General.

Table 2
OHCHR STAFF ON POSTS NOT SUBJECT TO GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION,
BY NATIONALITY, GRADE AND GENDER
(as at 31 December 2005)

Country of nationality	Total staff		USG		ASG		D-2/L-7		D-1/L-6		P-5/L-5		P-4/L-4		P-3/L-3		P-2/L-2		P-1/L-1		NPO		
	All	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Angola	3	3																					3
Argentina	4	2											1	2	1								
Australia	6	1											2		3	1							
Austria	2	0									1				1								
Bangladesh	2	1													1			1					
Belgium	2	1											1	1									
Benin	2	0									1						1						
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2	2																					2
Brazil	3	0													2		1						
Bulgaria	2	0													1		1						
Burundi	8	6													1	1						1	5
Cameroon	3	2										1			1								1
Canada	16	8									1		2	1	4	4	1	3					
Chile	2	0									1				1								
Colombia	14	4																				10	4
Costa Rica	3	0											1		1		1						
Côte d'Ivoire	1	0													1								
Croatia	1	0															1						
Czech Republic (the)	1	1														1							

Table 2 (continued)

Country of nationality	Total staff		USG		ASG		D-2/L-7		D-1/L-6		P-5/L-5		P-4/L-4		P-3/L-3		P-2/L-2		P-1/L-1		NPO	
	All	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Democratic Republic of the Congo (the)	10	4													1	1	1	3			4	
Denmark	5	4													1	4						
Ecuador	1	0													1							
El Salvador	1	0													1							
Eritrea	1	1															1					
Ethiopia	1	0													1							
Finland	2	1									1				1							
France	25	18									1		2	3	4	3	11			1		
Germany	4	3										1	1		1					1		
Ghana	1	0																	1			
Greece	1	0										1										
Guatemala	4	3																			1	3
Guyana	1	0						1														
Haiti	1	1													1							
Hungary	1	1															1					
India	6	3													3	2		1				
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	1	1													1							
Ireland	4	2										1			1	1	1					
Italy	12	3									1	4		1	2	2	1	1				
Japan	1	1													1							
Jordan	3	1													1	1					1	
Kenya	1	0											1									

Table 2 (continued)

Country of nationality	Total staff		USG		ASG		D-2/L-7		D-1/L-6		P-5/L-5		P-4/L-4		P-3/L-3		P-2/L-2		P-1/L-1		NPO	
	All	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Spain	10	6													3	3	1	2		1		
Sri Lanka	1	0									1											
Sweden	7	2						2			1	2				1	1					
Switzerland	7	4									1				1	1	1	3				
Syrian Arab Republic (the)	1	1														1						
Tajikistan	1	1																				1
Thailand	1	1																1				
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	1	1																				1
Trinidad and Tobago	1	1														1						
Tunisia	2	1											1			1						
Ukraine	1	0															1					
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	9	3					1					2			5	1						
United States of America	9	7									1		1	2		1		3		1		
Uruguay	3	1											1		1	1						
Uzbekistan	1	1																1				
Subtotal	254	120																				
Palestine	3	0													1							2
Subtotal	3	0																				
Total	257	120	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	10	5	20	9	56	44	20	40	3	4	20	21