



General Assembly

Distr.: General
26 November 2012

Original: English

Sixty-seventh session

Fifth Committee

Agenda item 135

Human resources management

Letter dated 26 November 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the Chair of the Fifth Committee

I am writing to you as the Fifth Committee starts its consideration of my reports on human resources management and, in particular, the proposed comprehensive mobility framework before you in document A/67/324/Add.1.

As you know, this framework responds to the request by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/247. It also responds to the imperative we have in managing the future of the Organization.

The United Nations must be equipped to face the challenges ahead. What we do now in terms of our human resources management will be the cornerstone of our future success as an organization. That is why it is so important that we help develop the careers of our staff to maximize their knowledge and skills, and are able to deploy our workforce strategically to deliver our mandates effectively and efficiently.

The proposed framework before the Committee addresses these issues. It envisages a workforce where moving regularly is institutionalized through position occupancy limits, allowing staff to acquire a range of skills and experience, as well as a central system of placement that ensures staff are deployed where they are most needed.

I have proposed this comprehensive approach because I strongly believe this is what is needed to deliver the benefits. Our current, self-managed system has not resulted in a consistent flow of staff, sharing of experience, or ability to staff our mandates predictably. Some areas still have chronically high vacancy rates despite overall improvements in the past few years. Staff serving in hardship duty stations remain there far too long, without clear prospects for moves to other positions. We must promote a fairer burden-sharing for service in difficult duty stations. This problem cannot be solved without introducing a new mobility policy. Lack of a structured mobility policy will hamper the Organization's ability to build a modern, multifunctional and skilled workforce, which is the most cost-effective way to meet the evolving needs of Member States.



However, in moving to a more managed system, it is also clear that there are a number of fundamental changes that need to be made. For example, if we are to have position occupancy limits, it follows that positions have to be available to staff at the end of their occupancy. Thus, the proposal provides that positions would be open to internal staff first. Nevertheless, there will continue to be opportunities for external candidates to apply because of annual attrition as a result of staff leaving, retiring or separating, as well as through both the junior grades and at the senior levels. In addition, non-rotational posts will be open to external candidates with expertise.

I recognize that issues like these are challenging and that this is a wide-ranging and bold proposal. However, I strongly believe this is a real opportunity to equip the United Nations to be a modern organization that can meet the challenges of the future. The time has come for us, together, to make the difficult choices that will allow this to happen.

I would like to stress that the new mobility framework is at the heart of our key management initiatives and a key enabler for other ongoing reform efforts, such as the enterprise resource planning project (Umoja), and the global field support strategy.

I hope we will be able to proceed according to the timeline set out in the report, with a two-year preparation process starting on 1 January 2013 and the new policy rolled out from 1 January 2015. For this timetable to be possible, we would need to have agreement on the fundamental principles this December. Any further postponement would further delay the phased implementation. I am therefore disappointed with the timeline suggested by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions which cannot meet our requirements. We would naturally continue to come back to the General Assembly with progress reports on preparation and implementation, seeking the guidance of Member States.

I trust that I can count on your support and I would be grateful if you would circulate this letter to the members of the Fifth Committee.

(Signed) **BAN** Ki-moon
