

Statement made on the occasion of the Second Summit on International Security for United Nations Personnel

United Nations, New York, 9 June 1999

Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear fellow colleagues of the United Nations community at large –

In my capacity as the President of the United Nations Staff Union in New York and as President of the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System, it is my privilege and honor to welcome you to the Second Summit on International Security for United Nations Personnel.

The high-level participation that this meeting has attracted is most auspicious indeed and fully justifies the term "summit". It underlines the importance all the main organs of the United Nations attach to the issue of staff security, safety and well-being. We are very happy to have the Secretary-General of the United Nations in our midst. We are equally privileged to welcome the distinguished Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Joining us on the podium is also Mr. Benon Sevan, the United Nations Security Coordinator.

On behalf of all staff, let me thank you all profoundly for your presence here today. May I now invite all present to stand and observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation in honor of all those staff and personnel, who have lost their life in the line of duty over the last year.

I thank you.

Today's event marks a special occasion, calling both for celebration and reflection.

Celebration is due because the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, adopted by the General Assembly on 9 December 1994, entered into force in January 1999 with the deposit of the instrument of ratification by the twenty-second Member State. As of today, 25 Member States have ratified this Convention. The 25 States Parties are:

Argentina - Bulgaria - Chile - the Czech Republic - Denmark - Fiji - Germany - Italy - Japan - Monaco - New Zealand - Norway - Panama - the Philippines - Portugal - the Republic of Korea - Romania - Singapore - Slovakia - Spain - Sweden – Turkmenistan - Ukraine - the United Kingdom and Uzbekistan.

May I invite the representatives of these countries to kindly take their seats in the designated area in the front of the Chamber. The action by these Governments has elevated the Convention from the legal books and given it practical meaning and operational power. We salute these Governments today and thank them for their demonstrated concern and commitment to staff safety and security. Additional 18 countries have signed the convention, but not yet ratified it. The staff fervently hopes that other ratification and accessions will follow soon from among this group of countries.

Today, almost five years after the adoption of the Convention by the General Assembly, more than 100 member countries of the United Nations are yet to act on this issue of vital importance and interest to the staff. Let me use this opportunity and appeal to them to join the group of countries who are already in the forefront of defending staff safety and security.

An international legal regime acquires authority through the number of parties bound by it. The membership of the United Nations owes it to the staff - their nationals - that this unique convention garners

the largest possible, if not unanimous acceptance by all. Strengthening the United Nations means also strengthening the legal protection and defense of the safety and security of its staff.

This event shall also serve as a moment of reflection.

It is true that we have succeeded in establishing a legal framework for protecting our colleagues in the many dangerous assignments, which are entrusted to them worldwide. But the dangers are real and grave. We must deplore the continued loss of life of our colleagues in the noble service of the United Nations. More than 20 United Nations personnel have been killed since the first security summit last year. Some 50 staffers are detained or missing and their fate is unknown. Untold incidents of kidnapping, arrest, detention attack and injury have been reported. We cannot rest as long as our colleagues' rights, safety, security and well-being is in jeopardy.

Rogue elements must be brought to justice and security must be enhanced to minimize the risks to which the UN staff is exposed. Jeopardising the life of UN personnel is jeopardising the task of the United Nations.

Hence, the international community must renew its commitment to and redouble its efforts to ensure the physical safety and protection of UN staff and associated personnel. As new and difficult assignments are being negotiated and awaiting us, such as in Kosovo and East Timor, we all must resolve to take action at the security front as well. Management and staff must work hand in glove to ensure smooth operations. Member States must ensure that all protective measures have taken and applied for the safety of the United Nations personnel assigned to these missions.

Often times, the security of our local colleagues appears to take a back seat. Yet, their contribution to the Organisation's success and delivery is as crucial and important as is the role of international staff. They must be fully covered by legal safeguards and mechanisms as well. This is an area where more attention has to be paid and where tangible progress must be made.

The security and safety situation of staff is also affected by other factors. Among these, adequate and appropriate training and preparation should be highlighted. Equally, inter-agency and inter- governmental coordination and funding for such activities are critical to success of any operation and deserve special attention.

As the challenges to the Organisation have become diversified, different responses and arrangements must be designed: Complex emergencies may have to be dealt with differently than electoral assistance missions. I am confident that some of the discussions later today will shed light on the needs and exigencies for the future. We all must work together towards the success of our United Nations, while ensuring the safety and security of those carrying the flag and the responsibilities in the field and under sometimes inhospitable circumstances.

Yes, our ideals and tasks are noble, yes, our commitment and dedication is unflinching, but we must also be well-equipped, prepared and protected to face and cope with the harsh realities of our tasks. Often times the families of our fellow colleagues who have paid the ultimate price in the service of the United Nations must carry the burden of loss alone and cope alone with the devastating consequences of losing their loved-ones. I am pleased to announce today that as a sign of solidarity with the families thus bereaved, the Coordinating Committee of United Nations staff unions and Associations (CCISUA) has recently decided to establish a Scholarship Fund for children of colleagues who have lost their life in the line of duty. The initial amount committed to this fund is US\$ 30,000. We appeal today to governments and other donors to contribute to this fund.

Let me thank you most sincerely for your attention and for your participation today. Your presence is a most eloquent expression of resolve to keep focusing in all aspects of our activities on the security and safety of all members of the international civil service and associated personnel.

19 November 1999

Madame Chairman,

It is indeed an honour and may I say a great privilege to address the Fifth Committee on the important issue of human resources management. Over the past decades, this has been one of the most difficult issues to be tackled by this very important Committee. Indeed, Mme Chairman, reform of human resources management system has been one of the principal concerns of the Fifth Committee as evidenced by the considerable number of resolutions and decisions on the subject emanating from this body.

Mme Chairman,

Facing the challenges of the new millennium requires a new level of preparedness. The rapid changes of political and economic forces in the global community surrounding the Organization demands continuous shifting of priorities and change in the requirements of the Organization. In the context of many past initiatives the underlying concept of human resources management and its fundamental need for a true reform have been left untouched.

The haste with which the proposed reform before you is carried forward, compounded by the acute absence of a forward-looking strategy, has led to many questions and present skepticism.

This strategic necessity aside, the HRM proposal does not fully address the existing and persistent problems of personnel management facing the Organization. With the indulgence of the Committee, I wish to refer briefly to the present problems:

The lack of a commitment by the Organization to job security has caused considerable level of anxiety and contributed to a palpable decline in staff morale and in turn has had a deleterious effect on the delivery of programmes entrusted upon the Organization.

The prevailing variety of contractual arrangements, without any ostensible structure or sense of purpose, has given rise to apprehension among staff. It is not always possible to know why a particular person has a certain type of contract and whose interests are served. Such status differentiation without sound rationale is hardly a proper recipe for a renewed and revitalised international civil service.

The current system of performance appraisal system (PAS), which should be an integral component of career development, does not provide the means for useful performance appraisal by management nor does it instil confidence among the staff. In the majority of cases, PAS as practised is of little significance and utility.

As for recruitment, the professional entry point, namely P-2, through competitive examinations, has proved to be expensive, slow and cumbersome. It is not widely known, overly centralised and calls for an extraordinary effort. In 1998, while more than 8,500 persons applied for the examination, some 1,000 applicants were allowed to take the exam. Of that number some 60 to 70 were selected. Is this really the most effective and efficient approach to select new blood and talent for the Organization?

Classification of jobs is another problem area. Posts are often tailored to a particular person or a pre-selected outsider. Such approaches negate the purpose of classification and lead to the creation of jobs for individuals who may not be the best qualified.

Some vacancies confine eligibility to internal candidates, while others allow applications by external candidates. In the practice of our Organization there is neither consistency nor clarity in using either approach.

Despite these, the UN's aura of a noble calling, of international public service, and idealism still draws many young men and women to seek employment with the Organization. But once enfolded into the labyrinths of the Organization some of the same people are not ready and willing to make UN service their lifetime calling. The work environment, conditions of service, pay scales, the lack of a credible career management -- all are factors for their lack of enthusiasm or willingness to continue in the UN. If the present situation continues, our Organization is increasingly in danger of losing the best and it may have to settle for second or third best, if that.

An alarming and ominous trend in recent years is that there are more resignations at middle levels than retirements. For example, in the years 1996-1998 there were 182, 170 and 190 retirements, respectively. However, when compared with resignations during the same time period the results are alarming to the health of the Organization. Resignations accounted for 278, 218 and 323 premature departures from our Organization. The fact that most of the resignations are at the middle level, typically following ten to fifteen years of service, should be a matter of serious concern. To what extent are they due to lack of a comprehensive career development? And why is the UN unable to compete in the global market place? Or are these losses related to work environment? As yet, there is no organized attempt to identify the reasons for premature resignations.

The average age of a staff member is now approximately 49 and is bound to rise in the next decade. This is unacceptable if we want to have a vibrant and effective Organization capable of meeting the many challenges that face us in the new millennium. Early retirements and agreed or induced packages may suit the UN now in terms of reducing the staff and cutting costs to accommodate the wishes of major contributors. But the time will soon come when the Organization simply can no longer afford to absorb the hemorrhage without replenishment. The vacancy rate in many departments by the year 2005 is projected to be 50 per cent. The document before the Committee (A/54/279) anticipated the average vacancies at 32 per cent by 2003.

OHRM reform replaces career development with career management, the implementation of which is virtually left to individual staff members without any structured support by the Organization. Very little is done or put forward to promote a culture of creativity and an environment in which staff can feel a sense of working for a higher purpose.

The processes of placement and promotion in the UN Secretariat are deficient. The respective roles of the Office of Human Resource Management and of other substantive departments have in the recent past varied so often that it is difficult to know who does what. Sometimes, depending on the balance of convenience, one blames the other.

The availability or non-availability of posts can have a crippling effect on career development in the UN. Non-availability of posts within a particular office or inability to move laterally has stifled career development or has prevented recruitment of the most qualified candidates. The rank-in-post system of the UN is hardly conducive to a credible and constructive career management.

The recruitment system in the UN has recognised two distinct classes for employment of staff in the General Service and Professional categories. The way to cross the barrier is to take the competitive examination from G to P: the prerequisite of 5 years experience and a bachelor's degree is required as the established standard of eligibility for these exams.

The latest GA resolution on personnel reform (53/221, para. 22) -- by introducing new criteria for eligibility to promotion -- has run counter to the principles advocated by the Charter and the principle of good human resources management. Equitable geographic representation should play a secondary and supportive role to competence, integrity and efficiency. Although geographic representation may be an important element at the time of recruitment, it should certainly play no role at the time of promotion and more importantly should not constitute a barrier to career advancement of staff on board.

Just to illustrate statistically the dimension of this problem I wish to mention that as of April 1999 there were 2,364 General Service staff members with ten or more years grade seniority. Considering that the functions performed at different grades are not very different, the resultant stagnation is unconscionable.

The record of the UN with respect to lateral mobility is abysmal -- only about 1 percent. Under the present system, the point of entry determines the entire career. The staff feels that their desire for lateral placements in other offices or functional mobility is not considered seriously and fairly. Geographic mobility across the Organization and other agencies has not advanced under the present system and few practical measures facilitating a criss-crossing in the career system have been established.

There is no orderly and orchestrated process of periodic training and interfacing of staff with their peers outside. The Organization spends only 0.75 percent of staff cost on training and staff development -- a shocking figure for an institution that claims staff as its most precious resource. This has led to both insulation and isolation and to the danger of a gradual disconnection between the substantive output of the UN and the professional world.

Mme Chairman,

What we have tried to enumerate in this presentation should be considered as only the tip of the iceberg. The International Civil Service is beset with difficult problems that threaten its efficacy and very reason for being. Many of the assumptions and expectations remain partially fulfilled or unfulfilled. The task of getting the Secretariat ready to face the next millennium is immense. It won't do to use a larger or a different bandage to stop the bleeding. Therefore, in meeting the challenges, the development and design of a new dynamic and motivational system of human resources strategy and planning is absolutely critical.

The proposed reform fails to address many and most of the fundamental problems I have enumerated today. Its main thrust has two features:

To delegate all authority on post and staff management to the programme managers, without a proper system of scrutiny, and to simplify the basic rules and procedures, so that the layman could use, abuse and operate them.

Is this approach going to solve any of our problems? Is this approach conducive for the creation of a dynamic Organization of the future -- flexible, effective and ready to assist the global community?

What has been proposed to you may easily lead to an array of fiefdoms, where a programme manager within his or her confines could rule and decide on all issues related to staff welfare and well-being -- with little regard for the overall picture. In the approach proposed there is little possibility to challenge the power delegated to the individual programme managers, yet there is no verifiable system of accountability. There are no checks and balances to safeguard the rights of staff members. The future of our Organization is proposed to be managed more like a business franchise inspired by the private sector than like a system befitting the only global multilateral and multicultural organization.

The staffs have raised their objections to the proposed measures in the context of various statements and resolutions: No agreement on any major reform proposals was reached at the special session of SMCC in October 1999. In the context of a resolution adopted by the general meeting held only two days ago, the staff called, inter alia, for maintaining the central role of OHRM in all staff matters (as delineated in General Assembly resolution 51/226); demanded that the Administration negotiate in good faith with the duly-elected staff representatives in full compliance with staff regulations and rules; urged the Administration to submit a set of concrete measures to enforce managerial accountability and to ensure proper implementation of the provisions of the GA resolutions 51/226 and 53/221 concerning a genuine system of accountability prior to delegation of authority to the programme managers.

Madame Chairman,

In modern management, constructive staff -- management consultation and relations are considered a win-win strategy. This strategy allows for the two parties to negotiate on issues of mutual interests and provide for input and feedback and create a ground for ownership. The new proposals for reform do not build on this important underlying principle.

Madame Chairman,

The message of the Staff today is simple and clear. We have no objection to the introduction of a genuine reform of personnel. Indeed, we consider this to be a long overdue step. But we are doubtful about the never-ending process of change for the sake of change without a clear blueprint.

The latest set of changes on human resources management as proposed by OHRM may fall into this category. It lacks vision for a successful transformation from what we are today to what we ought to be tomorrow -- in our collective effort to better serve our global community.

We appeal to you, Madame Chairman, and to the distinguished representatives on the Fifth Committee to pay the closest attention to the proposed reforms. Delegation of authority can have many positive and beneficial outcomes as we try to deal with outmoded concepts and to reduce burdensome bureaucracy. But in order for reform to work and not to exacerbate a situation already fraught with difficulty, there must be accountability.

Thank you, Madame Chairman.

Statement made on the occasion of Fifth Committee, United Nations Common System, Agenda Item 126

New York, October 29, 1999

Madam Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

The endemic financial crisis and the rapid changes in the global environment in which the United Nations operates, affect directly the conditions of service, the profile, the caliber and the performance of the staff and the Organization itself.

As financial crisis grow, Job security or the backbone of the independence of the international civil service is being challenged.

In the recent past, the quest for saving has shifted the Organization's paradigm from a good global multilateral employer to that of a corporate entity. Effectiveness has become synonymous with cuts and efficiency with that of economy. The crippling financial crisis has forced the management to pursue a devastating course of action by downsizing and undermining staff entitlements. To that effect, and to keep the organization afloat, in the context of reforms, the staff were reduced, the career development was impaired, and the emphasis of contractual status shifted from the original intent of creating a solid base for the independence of the international civil service to something of a more temporary nature.

Madam Chairman,

All this occurs while the United Nations braces to face new tasks and challenges of a new century. To overcome the negative fallout of the financial crisis, the Secretary-General and the Member States are pursuing several initiatives to reform the Organization. Largely untouched, however, is the very underpinning of the Organization: the underlying concept of the International Civil Service. A revitalised and renewed International Civil Service is a cornerstone to an effective UN and to a more just and enduring international order. In a world influx, the independence and integrity of the International Civil Service is even more critical and integral to the evolution of the UN into the next century. The task of getting the Secretariat ready to face next millennium is immense. It won't do to nibble at the edges and to fix the fringes.

Therefore, in meeting the challenges posed, there is an immediate need to reinforce the noble objectives and the original intent of our founding fathers. We must ensure that the established principles of Noblemaire and Fellingham governing the conditions of service of staff are fully respected and maintained.

Currently, neither the professional nor the GS salaries are competitive. Latest revisions in the GS salary methodology, which had taken effect on 1 January 1998, seemed particularly designed to erode purchasing power and to extend a salary freeze well into the next millennium. The first duty station to experience the negative consequences of the application of this latest revision of the Headquarters methodology was Paris. A survey conducted in spring 1999, revealed a reduction in salary of 6.44 per cent. Based on a decision by ICSC, an immediate deduction of 1.44 per cent from the existing salary scale took place, and the remaining 5 per cent will be deducted at a rate of 1 per cent per year.

One of the requirements of the revised methodology is that the public sector be represented by at least 25% of the retained employers. We consider this a violation of the Fellingham principles. Not all national civil services constitute an adequate base for measuring the 'best prevailing' local conditions. In addition, in cases such as Paris survey, of the 20 employers selected, eight or 40 per cent were from this sector and their data were used for the determination of the scale recommendations.

As for the professional category, the salary increases granted to the federal civil service employees of the United States are higher than current inflation and also higher than those for the United Nations staff at New York. As a result, the margin could go to a level of 111 or lower in a near future. At the same time, concerns about the low levels of the margin at the senior managerial levels, P5-D-1 and D-2 still persist. If the margin were to reach a level of 111 or lower, ICSC has proposed a recommendation for a real salary increase which should be formulated in such a way so as to alleviate the problem of margin imbalance by recommending a differentiated increase. CCISUA believes, however, that in the light of the recent exodus of junior professionals to other sectors and the fact that the organizations were rapidly aging, an upward adjustment in the common system remuneration package for all staff is called for so as to enable the

Organizations to keep their edge and to avoid a further lack of competitiveness. As a result, CCISUA recommends, that all staff must receive a certain minimum increase if and when the differentiated salary increase approach could be pursued for correcting the margin imbalance. The non-transparent application of methodology in margin calculation should also be addressed since this practice has led to a perception that a continuous delay in the post and cost of living adjustments could lead to a situation whereby the United Nations salaries stand far below the mid-point of the margin range.

Madam Chairman,

Based on a study by the Commission in 1995, it had been established that the United States federal civil service was no longer the proper comparator service. This decision had not been accepted for technical or political reasons. Given the low rate of retention in the system, the time has come for the commission to deal with this issue without further delay, fairly and with an open mind.

This review and the anticipated changes and adjustments might go a long way to assist the organizations of the system in re-establishing their originally intended competitive edge. Only then the Organization would be able to attract the most qualified and competent staff on a world-wide basis. This notion had also been stressed by the Administrative Committee on Coordination that restoring competitiveness in conditions of service must be viewed as an integral part of any reform process. By switching the comparator to the best prevailing conditions, not only the staff at large will benefit but also the alleged need to supplement salaries and benefits of the nationals of some governments would be obviated.

Madam Chairman,

It is useful at this juncture to encapsulate the essential principles that must underline the contours and management of a renewed International Civil Service: In addition to a more stable, more transparent and more predictable pay system, CCISUA wish to underline the importance of a proper career development system.

Recognizing this important aspect of the international civil service well being, the General Assembly in the context of its many resolutions including, in para 5 and 6 section VI of its Resolution 53/748, called for a comprehensive and systematic career development policy and system. The haste with which many organizations of the system translated this notion into reality, compounded by the acute absence of a forward looking strategies for human development, has led to a no-win situation for the staff. The career development has been replaced by career management and its implementation has now been virtually left to individual staff members. Training delinked from career and it has little apparent impact on any professional advancement. The current system of job performance evaluation, which should be an integral component of career development, does neither provide the means for meaningful performance appraisal by the management nor does it enjoy the confidence of the staff. Few careers have been advanced or hampered by this paradigm. Few supervisors find it necessary or prudent to give an honest assessment.

In the world outside the United Nations in recent years, there had been major human resources management reforms in which more than ever, accountability has played a key role. Training and development of leaders became the most important underlying concept and fundamental changes in organizational behaviour and created a new set of competitive realities. The present dispersed- and often individualised career management is not promoting a culture of creativity or an environment in which staff can feel the satisfaction of working for a higher purpose and confident that their work is recognised.

Those who are recruited at the UN should not be insulated from the outside professional world by virtue of imposing the undemocratic and old fashioned codes of conducts. This could and has led to an insidious process of de-skirling of staff. The prescribed standards of proper behaviour in these codes confine

the international civil servants to the universe of the UN, isolated from the outside world. CCISUA believes that Interactive peer exchanges, sustained training and constant surveillance of what is happening in respective fields should be part of career development.

On the other hand, the variety of contractual arrangements without any ostensible structure or sense of purpose has given rise to an unnecessary anxiety and status differentiation among the contract holders. These range from probationary to permanent contracts as well as secondment, fixed term, short term and special service agreements among staff at the Professional, General Service, and project personnel. It is not always possible to know why a particular person has a certain type of contract and whose interests are served by this.

In today's reality of the Organization, lack of upward mobility and the little exchange and linkages between the programmes, and specialised organs has given rise to a situation whereby, progress to higher posts for staff members have become personal odysseys, draining their idealism and compromising convictions.

Madam Chairman,

Let me now turn to another issue of grave concern to the staff at large. Nearly 200 unarmed UN staff have been killed in the last seven years, most of them aid workers in Africa. UN Staff have become moving targets in most conflict area. While serving with dedication the poor and needy, their lives are put at jeopardy by those who take advantage of conflicts and resultant lawlessness. Roughly 50 civilian have been detained without regard to the international convention on diplomatic privileges and immunities and the same number of staff workers have been subject of rape and other violation of the rules of human decency. We cannot rest as long as our colleagues' rights, safety, security and well-being is in jeopardy. Rough elements must be brought to justice and security must be enhanced to minimise the risks to which the UN staff is exposed. The international community must renew its commitment to and redouble its efforts to ensure that all protective measures have been taken and applied for the safety of the UN personnel assigned to these missions.

Today, almost five years after the adoption of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel by the General Assembly, more than 150 member countries of the United Nations have yet to ratify this 1994 Convention. The Convention came into force in January 1999 with the 22nd signatory. We also call on states to sign and ratify another international agreement: the Rome Statute for an International criminal Court, which is considered a landmark achievement in the advancement of international law. It includes language making it a war crime to attack personnel involved in a humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping mission in accordance with the UN Charter. Of course the real value of any agreement lies in its implementation. Governments must leave up to their words.

In all of these efforts, however, often times, the security of our local colleagues appears to take a back seat. Yet their contribution to the Organization's success and delivery is as crucial and important as is the role of international staff. They must be fully covered by legal instruments and safeguards as well. This is the area where more attention has to be paid and where tangible progress must be made.

Madam Chairman,

It is my privilege to inform the Committee that, based on a decision adopted by CCISUA General Assembly at its 14th session in March 1999 in Addis Ababa, CCISUA has decided to resume its participation at the deliberations of ICSC. As a result of this decision, CCISUA has participated in the full sessions of the Commission's meetings in April and July 1999. In addition, we have contributed fully to the work of the working groups on Human Resources Management and the on-going meetings of the working group on the standards of conduct of the international civil service. Document A/54/30 before you has accurately reflected

CCISUA's positions on most issues raised before the Commission. Having said that, however, CCISUA wishes to disassociate itself from the thrust of paragraphs 135 to 147 of this document, in the context of which a new shift of paradigm for the international organization has been mapped out.

Thank you for giving me the privilege to appear before you this morning.

REFORM OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE UN CAREER DEVELOPMENT A GLIMSE OF THE FUTURE?

STATEMENT TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION

A LOOK BACK

Mr. Chairman,

The task of getting the Secretariat ready to face next the decades is immense. It won't do to nibble at the edges and to fix the fringes. Therefore, in meeting the challenges posed, the development and design of a new dynamic and motivational system of human resources strategy and planning must become a top priority. In doing so, the basic realities have to be recognized. The UN is -and will remain so- a political intergovernmental organization subject to the will and wisdom of its member governments. There are some hopeful signs that Member States have come to recognize that a sound career development in the UN is essential for an effective program delivery. This can be gagged by paragraph 5 and 6, section VI of General Assembly Resolution 53/748, which called for a comprehensive and systematic career development policy and system.

At this juncture it may be useful to encapsulate essential principles that should underline the contours and management of a renewed International Civil Service capable of shouldering the burdens of the future. First, the Organization has to be dynamic, flexible and capable of making rapid adjustments and managing contradictions. The Secretariat has to be unified while retaining its disparate character and discharging multitude of mandates. It has to operate in a political environment while upholding top professional standards. It has to balance continuity with flexibility. It needs to strive towards a widest possible representation at the point of entry, while not compromising competence and excellence.

At the heart of a reformed Secretariat should be a core, classless civil service that promises continuity, institutional memory and professional excellence. While the academic requirements should be raised to graduate degree, but a relaxation may be needed in cases of candidates who possess skills required by the Organization. The pay system should be reorganized in order to ensure that it can attract the best-qualified candidates, so as to retain a competitive edge and professional excellence for the Organization.

On the job, a comprehensive career policy should also be provided in order to ensure retention of skills and expertise on board. This may require a new system of career planning which departs from the traditional approach taken in this regard. In a "class-less" career personnel system, it is essential to map out the future needs of the Organization and to make an allowance for meeting the unforeseen challenges as may be required in serving the global community. In light of the present growing vacancies in the Secretariat, forecasting the future skill needs must be given top priority. While recruitment should continue through competitive examinations, its basic requirements for skills and qualifications of staff may be modified. The minimum requirement for recruitment could then be determined at the graduate degree, which calls for a

certain degree of specialization in a discipline concerned. All candidates should be required to perform at the entry level a mix of administrative and substantive work. Periodic and systematic training both on- the- job and external (specialized) studies relevant to the needs of the Organization should be provided at the time of transfer or upward movements. This is essential in order to keep the knowledge and skills of personnel of the Organization up-to-date, enabling them to face the new challenges. Mobility, both functional and geographic, should be considered as a means of career advancement and career planning. Facilities for staff to move between various disciplines in the Organization could reduce marginalization and help build a dynamic and motivated career personnel. Closer linkages between specialized training and mobility (upward or lateral) could foster skill development and enhanced productivity. As part of their overall career management, all newly recruited staff- within the first five years of their recruitment- should be expected to move at least once to other duty stations and/or to other disciplines. This will build a level of familiarity with the Organization.

While promotion should be considered a requirement right for good performance, meritorious staff should be awarded additional cash or non-monetary awards for their performance. Such a system will encourage recognition of highly-motivated staff and the best performers.

By introducing such system, the two tier-system and the need for competitive exams (from G to P) and many other administrative problems will become absolute. Upward mobility will become part of the anticipated career of staff. After a certain length of service at a particular level, each staff member should be able to look forward to progress to the next level without his or her having to wedge the present world-wide battles! An international civil servant, as established by the Charter, should not be forced to search, strive and lobby for hierarchical progression. Very often the difference between the top levels of a post and the entry levels of the next higher post is insignificant in financial terms. But it makes a world of difference to the staff member to be recognized and appreciated and to enjoy the higher level status. A discontented and demoralized civil servant is a wasted resource. Conversely, creating the conditions and enabling orderly professional progress can be the highest cost effective measure.

Under these arrangements, a compact between the staff member and management should be established by which the staff member would perform his or her duties diligently and with excellence and management would create the conditions for steady and orderly advancement. At each stage or level, there has to be an objective competency assessment, in which the staff member should also be involved. As one rises in the Organization, the skills required might change and not every one who might be efficient at the lower level may have or may even to be able to acquire the skills. Sometimes a good manager may not be a good leader and a good technician may not be a good manager. Interpersonal skills and core competencies become more important at senior positions, particularly in the UN which draws its staff from different countries and varied cultures.

Performance evaluation which is now more of a post-mortem than a forward-looking input into career development should be used not to build a record for denial but to correct any deficiencies through orientation and needed training. It should be the task of management to monitor the skill profiles of the core civil service through competency assessments and to help equip the staff with the qualities and skills required for higher level responsibilities. Presumably, the United Nations Competency Development Project seeks to address some of these issues. Its contours and methodology are still unclear.

Grounds for disqualification or denial of promotion should be made known. Evaluation and assessment should be a two-way process. The subordinate should also be entitled to assess the supervisor on aspects that relate to management and communication. Interactive peer exchanges, sustained training and constant surveillance of what is happening in respective fields should be part of career development. If need for new skills and expertise arises, the future career system should provide for recruitment of experts at the middle level and if need be at the senior levels

Mr. Chairman,

My statement today should be but a small contribution on behalf of the staff to the discussions of this session. At the eve of the new millennium, our hope and desire is to witness the prosperity and excellence of our Organization for decades to come. The staff do not see themselves an element apart. Their aspirations to participate actively in achieving the noble objectives of this Organization should be fully taken into account. We want to be the change, not only part of the change. It is certain that the needs of the global community will change more rapidly in the coming years than any other centuries before. This rapid change will call for our Organization and its staff to be ready and prepared to face effectively the new challenges of the future. The proper response to the challenges ahead requires careful thinking. Their depth and magnitude call for fundamental reforms to restore the Secretariat to the prestige and role assigned to it in the Charter. Our hope is that through establishing a true and a more collaborative environment between staff and management and through introduction of the principles of a good governance namely, team work, participation in decision making and democratic practices, the staff could work in partnership with the management in advancing the noble objectives of our Organization.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Statement Made on the occasion of screening of the movie “The Hurricane”
“By Mehri Madarshahi”

Excellency President of the General Assembly, Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, Members and Producers of Universal Studios, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is a wonderful and uplifting moment indeed. Tonight we are witnessing the unusual convergence of concerns and commitment by two actors rarely seen together – the United Nations and Hollywood. Human rights, an issue central to the United Nations and its staff is the glue that brings us together tonight.

And so it is fitting that the screening of the new movie “The Hurricane” be preceded by this very thoughtful and much appreciated donation by Universal Studios to the Scholarship Fund established by the staff of the UN to assist the children of those colleagues who gave their lives in the line of duty to the international community. As you see on the scroll behind me, a shockingly large number of our colleagues have paid the ultimate price for their dedication to a better world and humanity at large. Let me also say how pleased I am that Ms. Beverly Crosby, who has dedicated the song “United we stand” to UN staff, which you hear, is among us tonight.

For us, the United Nations staff, discussions about human rights always have a dual dimension. On the one hand, one of the tasks of the United Nations is to advance human rights worldwide and to ensure observation and implementation of human rights treaties – a theme that will resonate through tonight’s showing. On the other hand, there is the concern about the human rights of United Nations staff who voluntarily participate in peace-keeping operations, humanitarian assistance programmes and other challenges facing the United Nations. This is an often unknown and ignored dimension.

The United Nations has become involved in a great number of complicated and frequently hazardous operations involving the resolution of conflicts, the preservation of peace or cease-fires, caring for millions of refugees and displaced persons or the creation of an environment where the rule of law reigns supreme even in hostile terrain.

In the past, the Secretary-General has pointed out that security conditions are changing in the world, usually for the worst. This is bound to have an immediate impact on the situation of UN personnel, which may become targets of lawless elements. While in the past casualties were frequently accidental, nowadays UN personnel are often deliberately attacked with the sole aim of paralysing a particular operation. The facts speak for themselves: 900 of the 1630 fatalities in past UN missions have occurred since 1990. As UN Member States are entrusting new and demanding tasks to the UN, its staff become more exposed to perils. Some of the sad examples are the downing of aircraft in Angola and Kosovo, the taking of hostages in Georgia and the cold-blooded killing of one of our colleagues, some two months ago in Kosovo.

By and large, this situation is insufficiently known and recognized. Yet, a vital and independent international civil service - that is necessary to respond to the crisis situations in many part of the world - deserves the full understanding and support of the international community. Tonight's event and the contribution by Universal Studios is thus not only a welcome salute to the UN staff, but a signal that the international community must redouble and renew its efforts to ensure the physical safety and protection of human rights of UN personnel. One tool to protect UN staff is the Convention on the Safety and Security of UN Personnel, elaborated by the General Assembly, which entered into force in 1999. While some 50 Governments have acceded and ratified this important legal instrument, another 140 Governments are yet to act. Let me take this opportunity to call upon all those Governments that haven't signed or acceded to the Convention to do so speedily.

The scholarship fund is a token of solidarity with the families of our fallen colleagues so as to give a modest helping hand in the education of children of those colleagues. Often times it is the families who must carry the burden of their loss alone. Any assistance to this fund is thus much appreciated.

It is now my pleasure to introduce to you Mr. Arman Berman, who is the producer and writer of "The Hurricane". Mr. Berman is the Chairman of Berman Pictures and Universal Studios' partner in making the movie you are about to see.

STATEMENT BY MEHRI MADARSHAHI
PRESIDENT OF THE UN STAFF COUNCIL
20 December 1999

On behalf of the staff of the United Nations I wish to thank all of you for being here and to share the joy of this evening with us. The gifted musicians and artists who through their dedication made this very important event possible are known to most of you. I wish to take this opportunity and thank all and every one of them for providing us the gifts of their talents.

The highlight of the evening is dedication of a great song written for and performed by Beverly Crosby to the children of our slain staff. Those who paid the ultimate price for maintaining global peace and security.

Events during the past few weeks and months has once again driven home to all of us the meaning - and the dangers - of serving peace, reconciliation and development. The inspiring performance of our colleagues in East Timor and Kosovo epitomizes the true notion of 'international civil service'. Despite the tremendous stress and deprivation suffered by our brave colleagues in many war and conflict thorn areas of the world, they remained without fail at the service of humanity. They left their families and homes on short notice and worked round the clock to ensure an early, effective presence of the United Nations where it was most needed.

Throughout the years, a considerable number of UN staff did not live to share in the glory of peace or the resolution of conflicts for which they had committed themselves. The facts of human losses by the United Nations is nothing but alarming. Since October 1998, the United Nations suffered the loss of over 80 staff members in the cause of peace. Some 50 staffers are detained or missing and their fate is unknown. Untold incidents of kidnapping, arrest, detention, attack and injury have been reported. The security situation in many locations has continued to deteriorate.

Often times the families of our fellow colleagues who have paid the ultimate price in the service of the United Nations must carry the burden of loss alone and cope alone with the devastating consequences of their losses. I am pleased to announce today that as a sign of solidarity with the families thus bereaved, Beverly Crosby not only dedicated her song "United WE Stand" to the children of our slain colleagues, but she also for the next two years donated 20 per cent of the proceeds of this song to the Scholarship Fund established by the Coordinating Committee of United Nations staff unions and associations (CCISUA). Scholarship Fund was designed to be a 'living memorial' to our colleagues who paid the ultimate price in service of humanity. We appeal today to all of you to become a donor and to contribute to this fund. Thank you Beverly.

Staff Committee President Deplores "Vicious Killings" of UN Staff Says United Nations and Agencies Not Doing Enough To Protect Personnel

The following is the text of a statement issued by the President of the United Nations Staff Committee, Mehri Madarshahi, upon learning of the killings of United Nations staff in Kosovo and Burundi:

It is with deep sadness and shock that we have learned of the deaths on 12 October of United Nations staff member Valentin Krumov, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) representative Luis Zuniga and a World Food Programme (WFP) staff member whose identity we are still seeking to determine.

Newly arrived in Kosovo, staff member Valentin Krumov, 38 years old, a Bulgarian national assigned to the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) was brutally assaulted by a crowd of thugs and then shot dead in the centre of the capital of Pristina.

In Burundi, the UNICEF Representative to that country, Luis Zuniga, age 52, of Chile, and the chief WFP Logistics Officer were killed, along with seven others, when a United Nations team was ambushed during a visit to a displaced persons camp. A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) staff member was also seriously injured.

These vicious and senseless killings of our colleagues underscore the difficult conditions under which all United Nations personnel serve. Again, as too often has happened, staff members have paid the ultimate price in the service of the high ideals of the United Nations.

These deplorable actions reinforce the need for effective protection for all UN staff serving worldwide, whether local or international. We call on the international community to bring their killers to justice.

Our sincerest sympathies go out to all the bereaved relatives and colleagues.

UNITED NATIONS MILLENNIUM STAFF DAY
STATEMENT BY MEHRI MADARSHAHI
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS STAFF COMMITTEE
New York, 17 September 1999

Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Dear colleagues,
Dear Guests and Friends,

Welcome to the last Staff Day of this century! This century gave birth to two major world wars and a great number of regional and national conflicts – often fueled by ideological or ethnic differences. It is a century during which gross violations of human rights occurred. But it is also a century marked by the fastest scientific and technological change in history.

Today is a very special day for us all. It is so special that even the strongest hurricane of this century could not stop us from celebrating it! I thank all of you, I thank our volunteers, our member governments, a number of private donors, I thank each and every individual artist. They all by their generous gifts and donations made these very exciting events today possible.

The main theme of the day is “peace and harmony”. This is to highlight the noble objectives of our founding fathers, who gave birth to this great Organization of ours with the hope to deter conflicts and create lasting peace and prosperity for all. The multi-cultural programmes, which we will present throughout this day, are reflective of this motive and represent a “tour du monde”. We have invited musicians from Serbia and Croatia to perform together, we have a mixed group of Arab, Armenian and Israelis musicians and dancers to provide you with an exotic and exquisite programme, we are the proud recipients of a wonderful Georgian performance which I am sure will add grace to this celebration. In addition, there will be many more performances than I can mention here and you will find them all listed in the printed programme. Tonight we will have the pleasure of listening to the NY Virtuosi Orchestra under the direction of Maestro Kenneth Klein, who will play a programme of Vivaldi in this great Hall. Last but not least, our own colleagues from groups of the UN Staff Recreational Council will entertain us with an exciting menu of singing, dancing and performing.

We also offer you a silent auction with artworks donated by a galaxy of outstanding international painters, sculptors and artists. I encourage you to participate in the bidding for these wonderful artworks which you can find in the Staff Lounge outside the Cafeteria. The proceeds will serve a purpose that should be close to all our hearts: they will benefit the Scholarship Fund established for the children of UN staff killed in the line of duty.

I leave the rest to you to see and to enjoy. I hope a hundred years from now we all can look back to the memory of the Staff Day of 1999!

Let's give a round of applause to all who made this day possible.

This day, however, should not be regarded as joyful occasion alone. The annual UN Staff Day should also allow us to reflect on the purpose and challenges of our mission, both as an Organisation and as international civil servants; to hail the global reach and universality of the United Nations; to celebrate the exciting multicultural diversity of our backgrounds, traditions, our workplace and professional environment; to commemorate the invaluable contribution and dedication of our colleagues who have paid the ultimate price in the service of the United Nations, among them the second Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, who tragically lost his life tomorrow 38 years ago; to salute the wonderful contributions of the generations preceding us, many of whom are now happy retirees and without whose dedication and excellence we as the successor generation would not have been able to carry the torch; to extol the heroes among us – those colleagues who have endured the trials and tribulations of assignments to East Timor, Kosovo, Rwanda, Bosnia, Namibia, Somalia, Cambodia and numerous other places where we as United Nations staff are called to serve and make a difference. (May I ask all of you who have served this noble Organization in peacekeeping missions to stand and be recognized); and last but not least to reconfirm our unwavering commitment and determination to one of the few outstanding and moral world leaders of our time, our boss – the one and only Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan.

Mr. Secretary-General, the past twelve months were replete with conflicts, wars, refugee dramas and a large number of other challenges in virtually every corner of the world, accompanied by some unjust criticisms of the United Nations. Your humanity, your poise and evenhandedness, your abiding concern for the safety and well being of the staff – made us all proud and humble. The overwhelming respect you command among leaders and ordinary people in all walks of life have brought the world – and the eyes and the hopes of the world – back to this Organisation and to this great hall of the world's peoples.

We want you to know, Mr. Secretary-General, that we all stand behind you. We are more than ever ready to work hand in glove with you as you tackle the awesome and often daunting tasks awaiting us.

Let me reiterate that the last few days and weeks have driven home to all of us in graphic detail what it can mean to be in the service of peace and development. The inspiring performance of our colleagues in East Timor conveyed to us the true meaning of "international service". No doubt, they have suffered immensely, they saw colleagues being killed in cold blood, they experienced extreme stress and deprivation, but throughout all of this pandemonium they remained without fail at the service of humanity. Please let us stand and give all of these wonderful individuals and colleagues a hand of solidarity and appreciation. They are our heroes!

Mr. President, given your own heroic struggles for attaining the independence of your own country, with assistance from the UN - I am sure you share all these sentiments. We wish that under your able leadership, the 54th session of the Assembly will prosper and succeed as you, Sir, will lead the General Assembly into the new century by celebrating the Year of Peace 2000.

In the past decades much intergovernmental work has been devoted to harmonize international norms, practices, legal standards, ethics and approaches. Judging from a total of some 500 international conventions and treaties which were initiated, negotiated, adopted and ratified with the help of the staff of this Organization, the world no doubt has succeeded to put in words the most imaginative set of prescriptions. These prescriptions could facilitate peaceful coexistence among peoples and ensure respect for life and human rights. What is often missing is a commitment to implementation. This task is daunting, but the world

community can continue to count on the staff of this Organization - on US - to assist in moving words into deeds.

Peacekeeping has been one of the widely lauded UN inventions of the second half of the twentieth century. I believe the predicted avalanche of micro- and other conflicts may call for more and more involvement of our Organization in these endeavors. In light of this, let me appeal to our Member states to adopt more tangible measures, including adequate funding for requisite staff training and preparations. I also urge those countries who have not yet done so to ratify the convention on the security and safety of United Nations staff.

This will be but one part of preparing and transforming the staff of the United Nations – in the words of the Secretary-General its most valuable asset – into the much-vaunted “Millennium Staff”. Yes, we must be well-prepared and skilled, competent, capable, motivated and courageous. By the same token, we should be well protected, well-trained and operating in an environment where fairness, justice and transparency prevail in all administrative dealings and interactions. As we are working with the peoples of the world towards improving their governance systems and practices, we must also be ready to be held against the same standards in our internal dealings and affairs. A system of justice, which is beyond reproach and the manipulation – or defiance - of senior managers, is long overdue. We cannot only lecture the world on their failures, we must set an example across the Board. I appeal to the Secretary-General and to the Member States to join forces so as to accomplish this long elusive goal in close consultations with the staff.

The same holds true for administrative and managerial arrangements in our own house. We find it hard to accept – that under the overall umbrella of reform- a system be introduced whereby delegation of authority will be implemented on many issues of immediate concern to staff - including recruitment, contractual status, promotion and reassignments – without putting in place a proper system of accountability and appeals, coupled with a modicum of training for managers, supervisors and staff.

Mr. Secretary-General, it is also high time to end the freeze on granting career appointments. After all, the permanent career staff is the cornerstone of the independent international civil service, as stipulated in our Charter. Staff needs job security and recognition for their sincere services at and for this Organization. Back door recruitments and the introduction of different contractual layers have been and remain undesirable personnel policy.

Today, the salaries of UN staff across the board are no longer competitive with the outside world. Staff expects and demands that this situation be checked and reversed soon. We call upon the ICSC and the General Assembly to recognize and reverse the present imbalances, simply by applying their own rules, principles and procedures.

Any reform that deserves this label must take into account staff needs and concerns. Above all, any new reform initiatives should aim at unifying the staff rather than creating new divisions, structures or classes. We must ensure that all staff has equal opportunity, regardless of nationality, gender and nature of work. Professional advances should be based on merit and conduct and the UN staff must be remunerated fairly in line with the Noblemaire principle. To invoke an overused metaphor: we are sitting all in the same boat, we row together and if we sink, we must swim together to safety.

I have kept you long enough. It's your day, it's our day – and so let us unite and celebrate and uphold peace and harmony. Let me thank you all for being here to hear me to talk – on your behalf - to our Secretary-General and our President of the General Assembly. I encourage you all to join our many performers and give them our appreciation by your presence.

Thank You!

SUMMIT ON SECURITY OF INTERNATIONAL STAFF TO BE HELD AT HEADQUARTERS 9 JUNE

To address the increasing security problems faced by United Nations personnel around the world, the second Summit on the Security and Independence of the International Civil Service will be held at 10 a.m. Wednesday, 9 June, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber at Headquarters. The event is organized by the United Nations Staff Council Standing Committee on the Security and Independence of the International Civil Service.

Last year, the first-ever Summit highlighted the increasingly hazardous and very often life-threatening conditions in which international staff have to operate, and offered possible solutions. Since the first Summit a year ago, over 20 United Nations personnel have been killed. Incidents of kidnapping, arrest, detention, attack and injury have increased, while the fate of some 50 staffers detained or missing throughout the world -- some of them since the 1970s -- is still unknown.

The Summit will focus on the urgent need for governments to demonstrate in practice their commitment to protect the international civil servants performing their duties in often highly difficult and dangerous conditions. Other issues include security training for staff and a follow-up to the statement of principles issued from the 1998 Summit.

The Summit will also recognize those Member States who have ratified the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, which came into force with the twenty-second ratification earlier this year. At a special ceremony, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Ambassador for Peace, Marisa Berenson, will present awards to those 25 governments that have ratified the Convention.

The Summit keynote will be delivered by Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Invited speakers include: Acting General Assembly President Ibra Deguene Ka (Senegal); Security Council President Baboucarr-Blaise Ismaila Jagne (Gambia); Economic and Social Council President Francesco Paolo Fulci (Italy); as well as Security Coordinator Benon Sevan. Also invited are the Permanent Representatives of Member States and the heads of United Nations operational agencies.

- 2 - Note No. 5562 7 June 1999

Secretary-General Kofi Annan, welcoming the Security Summit said, "too many of our dedicated personnel have suffered injuries or even lost their lives due to security-related matters". Mr. Annan applauded the Summit "initiative to address this critical issue, and raise awareness about the importance of staff security and training".

The President of the United Nations Staff Committee, Mehri Madarshahi, who will be moderator for the Summit, said, that "a vital and independent international civil service is needed more than

ever to respond to the crisis situations in many parts of the world, and deserves the full understanding and support of the international community. By continuing to highlight the problems faced by the staff, solutions can be found".

October 29, 1999

UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM
FIFTH COMMITTEE,
AGENDA ITEM 126

STATEMENT BY MEHRI MADARSHAH
PRESIDENT OF THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR
INTERNATIONAL STAFF UNIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS
OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (CCISUA)

Madam Chairman,
Distinguished delegates

The endemic financial crisis and the rapid changes in the global environment in which the United Nations operates, affect directly the conditions of service, the profile, the caliber and the performance of the staff and the Organization itself.

. As financial crisis grow, Job security or the backbone of the independence of the international civil service is being challenged.

In the recent past, the quest for saving has shifted the Organization's paradigm from a good global multilateral employer to that of a corporate entity. Effectiveness has become synonymous with cuts and efficiency with that of economy. The crippling financial crisis has forced the management to pursue a devastating course of action by downsizing and undermining staff entitlements. To that effect, and to keep the organization afloat, in the context of reforms, the staff were reduced, the career development was impaired, and the emphasis of contractual status shifted from the original intent of creating a solid base for the independence of the international civil service to something of a more temporary nature

Madam Chariman,

. All this occur while the United Nations braces to face new tasks and challenges of a new century. To overcome the negative fallout of the financial crisis, the Secretary-General and the Member States are pursuing several initiatives to reform the Organization. Largely

untouched, however, is the very underpinning of the organization: the underlying concept of the International Civil Service.

- . A revitalized and renewed International Civil Service is a cornerstone to an effective UN and to a more just and enduring international order. In a world influx,, the independence and integrity of the International Civil Service is even more critical and integral to the evolution of the UN into the next century. The task of getting the Secretariat ready to face next millennium is immense. It won't do to nibble at the edges and to fix the fringes.
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Therefore, in meeting the challenges posed, there is an immediate need to reinforce the noble objectives and the original intent of our founding fathers. We must ensure that the established principles of Noblemaire and Felemming governing the conditions of service of staff are fully respected and maintained.
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Currently, neither the professional nor the GS salaries are competitive. Latest revisions in the GS salary methodology, which had taken effect on 1 January 1998, seemed particularly designed to erode purchasing power and to extend a salary freeze well into the next millennium. The first duty station to experience the negative consequences of the application of this latest revision of the Headquarters methodology, was Paris. A survey conducted in spring 1999, revealed a reduction in salary of 6.44 per cent. Based on a decision by ICSC, an immediate deduction of 1.44 per cent from the existing salary scale, took place and the remaining 5 per cent will be deducted at a rate of 1 per cent per year.
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One of the requirements of the revised methodology is that the public sector be represented by at least 25% of the retained employers. We consider this, a violation of the Flemming principles. Not all national civil services constitute an adequate base for measuring the 'best prevailing' local conditions. In addition, in cases such as Paris survey, of the 20 employers selected, eight or 40 per cent were from this sector and their data were used for the determination of the scale recommendations.
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As for the professional category, the salary increases granted to the federal civil service employees of the United States are higher than current inflation and also higher than those for the United Nations staff at New York. As a result the margin could go to a level of 111 or lower in a near future. At the same time concerns about the low levels of the margin

at the senior managerial levels, P5-D-1 and D-2, still persist. If the margin were to reach a level of 111 or lower, ICSC has proposed a recommendation for a real salary increase which should be formulated in such a way so as to alleviate the problem of margin imbalance by recommending a differentiated increase. CCISUA believes, however, that in the light of the recent exodus of junior professionals to other sectors and the fact that the organizations were rapidly aging, an upward adjustment in the common system remuneration package for all staff is called for so as to enable the Organizations to keep their edge and to avoid a further lack of competitiveness. As a result, CCISUA recommends, that all staff must receive a certain minimum increase if and when the differentiated salary increase approach could be pursued for correcting the margin imbalance. The non-transparent application of methodology in margin calculation should also be addressed since this practice has led to a perception that a continuous delay in the post and cost of living adjustments could lead to a situation whereby the United Nations salaries stand far below the mid-point of the margin range.

Madam Chairman,

- Based on a study by the Commission in 1995, it had been established that the United States federal civil service was no longer the proper comparator service. This decision had not been accepted for technical or political reasons. Given the low rate of retention in the system, the time has come for the commission to deal with this issue without further delay, fairly and with an open mind.

· This review and the anticipated changes and adjustments might go a long way to assist the organizations of the system in re-establishing their originally intended competitive edge. Only then the Organization would be able to attract the most qualified and competent staff on a world-wide basis. This notion had also been stressed by the Administrative Committee on Coordination that restoring competitiveness in conditions of service must be viewed as an integral part of any reform process. By switching the comparator to the best prevailing conditions, not only the staff at large will benefit, but also, the alleged need to supplement salaries and benefits of the nationals of some governments would be obviated.

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Madam Chairman,

It is useful at this juncture to encapsulate the essential principles that must underline the contours and management of a renewed International Civil Service: In addition to a more stable, more transparent and more predictable pay system, CCISUA wish to underline the importance of a proper career development system.

Recognizing this important aspect of the international civil service well being, the General Assembly in the context of its many resolutions including, in para 5 and 6 section VI of its Resolution 53/748, called for a comprehensive and systematic career development policy and system. The haste with which many organizations of the system translated this notion into reality, compounded by the acute absence of a forward looking strategies for human development, has led to a no-win situation for the staff. The career development has been replaced by career management and its implementation has now been virtually left to individual staff members. Training delinked from career and it has little apparent impact on any professional advancement. The current system of job performance evaluation, which should be an integral component of career development, does neither provide the means for meaningful performance appraisal by the management nor does it enjoy the confidence of the staff. Few careers have been advanced or hampered by this paradigm. Few supervisors find it necessary or prudent to give an honest assessment.

In the world outside the United Nations in recent years, there had been major human resources management reforms in which more than ever, accountability has played a key role. Training and development of leaders became the most important underlying concept and fundamental changes in organizational behavior and created a new set of competitive realities. The present dispersed- and often individualized career management is not promoting a culture of creativity or an environment in which staff can feel the satisfaction of working for a higher purpose. and confident that their work is recognized.

Those who are recruited at the UN, should not be insulated from the outside professional world by virtue of imposing the undemocratic and old fashioned codes of conducts. This could and has led to an insidious process of de-skirling of staff. The prescribed standards of proper behavior in these codes confine the international civil servants to the universe of the UN, isolated from the outside world. CCISUA believes that Interactive peer

exchanges, sustained training and constant surveillance of what is happening in respective fields should be part of career development.

On the other hand, the variety of contractual arrangements without any ostensible structure or sense of purpose has given rise to an unnecessary anxiety and status differentiation among the contract holders. These range from probationary to permanent contacts as well as secondment, fixed term, short term and special service agreements among staff at the Professional, General Service and project personnel. It is not always possible to know why a particular person has a certain type of contract and whose interests are served by this.

In today's reality of the Organization, lack of upward mobility and the little exchange and linkages between the programmes, and specialized organs has given rise to a situation whereby, progress to higher posts for staff members have become personal odysseys, draining their idealism and compromising convictions.

Madam Chairman,

Let me now turn to another issue of grave concern to the staff at large. Nearly 200 unarmed UN staff have been killed in the last seven years, most of them aid workers in Africa. UN Staff have become moving targets in most conflict area. While serving with dedication the poor and needy, their lives are put at jeopardy by those who take advantage of conflicts and resultant lawlessness. Roughly 50 civilian have been detained without regard to the international convention on diplomatic privileges and immunities and the same number of staff workers have been subject of rape and other violation of the rules of human decency. We cannot rest as long as our colleagues' rights, safety, security and well-being is in jeopardy. Rough elements must be brought to justice and security must be enhanced to minimize the risks to which the UN staff is exposed. The international community must renew its commitment to and redouble its efforts to ensure that all protective measures have been taken and applied for the safety of the UN personnel assigned to these missions.

Today, almost five years after the adoption of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel by the General Assembly, more than 150 member countries of the United Nations

have yet to ratify this 1994 Convention. The Convention came into force in January 1999 with the 22nd signatory. We also call on states to sign and ratify another international agreement: the Rome Statute for an International criminal Court, which is considered a landmark achievement in the advancement of international law. It includes language making it a war crime to attack personnel involved in a humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping mission in accordance with the UN Charter. Of course the real value of any agreement lies in its implementation. Governments must leave up to their words.

In all of these efforts, however, often times, the security of our local colleagues appears to take a back seat. Yet their contribution to the Organization's success and delivery is as crucial and important as is the role of international staff. They must be fully covered by legal instruments and safeguards as well. This is the area where more attention has to be paid and where tangible progress must be made.

Madam Chairman,

It is my privilege to inform the Committee that based on a decision adopted by CCISUA General Assembly at its 14th session in March 1999 in Addis Ababa, CCISUA has decided to resume its participation at the deliberations of ICSC. As a result of this decision, CCISUA has participated in the full sessions of the Commission's meetings in April and July 1999. In addition we have contributed fully to the work of the working groups on Human Resources Management and the on-going meetings of the working group on the standards of conduct of the international civil service. Document A/54/30 before you, has accurately reflected CCISUA's positions on most issues raised before the Commission. Having said that, however, CCISUA wishes to disassociate itself from the thrust of paragraphs 135 to 147 of this document, in the context of which a new shift of paradigm for the international organization has been mapped out.

Thank you for giving me the privilege to appear before you this morning.

FIFTH COMMITTEE

Human Resources Management

Item 164

Statement by Ms. Mehri Madarshahi,
President of CCISUA and the New York Staff Union
Friday, 19 November 1999
Conference Room 2

Madame Chairman,

It is indeed an honour and may I say a great privilege to address the Fifth Committee on the important issue of human resources management. Over the past decades, this has been one of the most difficult issues to be tackled by this very important Committee. Indeed, Mme Chairman, reform of human resources management system has been one of the principal concerns of the Fifth Committee as evidenced by the considerable number of resolutions and decisions on the subject emanating from this body.

Mme Chairman,

Facing the challenges of the new millennium requires a new level of preparedness. The rapid changes of political and economic forces in the global community surrounding the Organization demands continuous shifting of priorities and change in the requirements of the Organization. In the context of many past initiatives the underlying concept of human resources management and its fundamental need for a true reform have been left untouched.

The haste with which the proposed reform before you is carried forward, compounded by the acute absence of a forward-looking strategy, has led to many questions and present skepticism.

This strategic necessity aside, the Human Resources Management proposal does not fully address the existing and persistent problems of personnel management facing the Organization. With the indulgence of the Committee, I wish to refer briefly to the present problems:

- The lack of a commitment by the Organization to job security has caused considerable level of anxiety and contributed to a palpable decline in staff morale

and in turn has had a deleterious effect on the delivery of programmes entrusted upon the Organization;

- The prevailing variety of contractual arrangements, without any ostensible structure or sense of purpose, has given rise to apprehension among staff. It is not always possible to know why a particular person has a certain type of contract and whose interests are served. Such status differentiation without sound rationale is hardly a proper recipe for a renewed and revitalised international civil service;
- The current system of performance appraisal system (PAS), which should be an integral component of career development, does not provide the means for useful performance appraisal by management nor does it instil confidence among the staff. In the majority of cases, PAS as practised is of little significance and utility;
- As for recruitment, the professional entry point, namely P-2, through competitive examinations, has proved to be expensive, slow and cumbersome. It is not widely known, overly centralised and calls for an extraordinary effort. In 1998, while more than 8,500 persons applied for the examination, some 1,000 applicants were allowed to take the exam. Of that number some 60 to 70 were selected. Is this really the most effective and efficient approach to select new blood and talent for the Organization?
- Classification of jobs is another problem area. Posts are often tailored to a particular person or a pre-selected outsider. Such approaches negate the purpose of classification and lead to the creation of jobs for individuals who may not be the best qualified;
- Some vacancies confine eligibility to internal candidates, while others allow applications by external candidates. In the practice of our Organization there is neither consistency nor clarity in using either approach;
- Despite these, the United Nations' aura of a noble calling, of international public service, and idealism still draws many young men and women to seek employment with the Organization. But once enfolded into the labyrinths of the Organization some of the same people are not ready and willing to make United Nations service their lifetime calling. The work environment, conditions of service, pay scales, the lack of a credible career management -- all are factors for their lack of enthusiasm or willingness to continue in the United Nations. If the present situation continues, our Organization is increasingly in danger of losing the best and it may have to settle for second or third best, if that;

- An alarming and ominous trend in recent years is that there are more resignations at middle levels than retirements. For example, in the years 1996-1998 there were 182, 170 and 190 retirements, respectively. However, when compared with resignations during the same time period the results are alarming to the health of the Organization. Resignations accounted for 278, 218 and 323 premature departures from our Organization. The fact that most of the resignations are at the middle level, typically following ten to fifteen years of service, should be a matter of serious concern. To what extent are they due to lack of a comprehensive career development? And why is the United Nations unable to compete in the global market place? Or are these losses related to work environment? As yet, there is no organized attempt to identify the reasons for premature resignations;
- The average age of a staff member is now approximately 49 and is bound to rise in the next decade. This is unacceptable if we want to have a vibrant and effective Organization capable of meeting the many challenges that face us in the new millennium. Early retirements and agreed or induced packages may suit the UN now in terms of reducing the staff and cutting costs to accommodate the wishes of major contributors. But the time will soon come when the Organization simply can no longer afford to absorb the hemorrhage without replenishment. The vacancy rate in many departments by the year 2005 is projected to be 50 per cent. The document before the Committee (A/54/279) anticipated the average vacancies at 32 per cent by 2003;
- OHRM reform replaces career development with career management, the implementation of which is virtually left to individual staff members without any structured support by the Organization. Very little is done or put forward to promote a culture of creativity and an environment in which staff can feel a sense of working for a higher purpose;
- The processes of placement and promotion in the United Nations Secretariat are deficient. The respective roles of the Office of Human Resource Management and of other substantive departments have in the recent past varied so often that it is difficult to know who does what. Sometimes, depending on the balance of convenience, one blames the other;
- The availability or non-availability of posts can have a crippling effect on career development in the United Nations. Non-availability of posts within a particular office or inability to move laterally has stifled career development or has prevented recruitment of the most qualified candidates. The rank-in-post system of the UN is hardly conducive to a credible and constructive career management;

- The recruitment system in the UN has recognized two distinct classes for employment of staff in the General Service and Professional categories. The way to cross the barrier is to take the competitive examination from G to P: the prerequisite of 5 years experience and a bachelor's degree is required as the established standard of eligibility for these exams;
- The latest General Assembly resolution on personnel reform (53/221, para. 22) -- by introducing new criteria for eligibility to promotion -- has run counter to the principles advocated by the Charter and the principle of good human resources management. Equitable geographic representation should play a secondary and supportive role to competence, integrity and efficiency. Although geographic representation may be an important element at the time of recruitment, it should certainly play no role at the time of promotion and more importantly should not constitute a barrier to career advancement of staff on board;
- Just to illustrate statistically the dimension of this problem I wish to mention that as of April 1999 there were 2,364 General Service staff members with ten or more years grade seniority. Considering that the functions performed at different grades are not very different, the resultant stagnation is unconscionable;
- The record of the UN with respect to lateral mobility is abysmal -- only about 1 percent. Under the present system, the point of entry determines the entire career. The staff feels that their desire for lateral placements in other offices or functional mobility is not considered seriously and fairly. Geographic mobility across the Organization and other agencies has not advanced under the present system and few practical measures facilitating a criss-crossing in the career system have been established
- There is no orderly and orchestrated process of periodic training and interfacing of staff with their peers outside. The Organization spends only 0.75 percent of staff cost on training and staff development -- a shocking figure for an institution that claims staff as its most precious resource. This has led to both insulation and isolation and to the danger of a gradual disconnect between the substantive output of the UN and the professional world.

Mme Chairman,

What we have tried to enumerate in this presentation should be considered as only the tip of the iceberg. The International Civil Service is beset with difficult problems that threaten its efficacy and very reason for being. Many of the assumptions and expectations remain partially fulfilled or unfulfilled. The task of

getting the Secretariat ready to face the next millennium is immense. It won't do to use a larger or a different bandage to stop the bleeding. Therefore, in meeting the challenges, the development and design of a new dynamic and motivational system of human resources strategy and planning is absolutely critical.

The proposed reform fails to address many and most of the fundamental problems I have enumerated today. Its main thrust has two features:

- To delegate all authority on post and staff management to the programme managers, without a proper system of scrutiny; and
- To simplify the basic rules and procedures, so that the layman could use, abuse and operate them.

Is this approach going to solve any of our problems? Is this approach conducive for the creation of a dynamic Organization of the future -- flexible, effective and ready to assist the global community?

What has been proposed to you may easily lead to an array of fiefdoms, where a programme manager within his or her confines could rule and decide on all issues related to staff welfare and well-being -- with little regard for the overall picture. In the approach proposed there is little possibility to challenge the power delegated to the individual programme managers, yet there is no verifiable system of accountability. There are no checks and balances to safeguard the rights of staff members. The future of our Organization is proposed to be managed more like a business franchise inspired by the private sector than like a system befitting the only global multilateral and multicultural organization.

The staff have raised their objections to the proposed measures in the context of various statements and resolutions: No agreement on any major reform proposals was reached at the special session of SMCC in October 1999. In the context of a resolution adopted by the general meeting held only two days ago, the staff called, inter alia, for maintaining the central role of OHRM in all staff matters (as delineated in General Assembly resolution 51/226); demanded that the Administration negotiate in good faith with the duly-elected staff representatives in full compliance with staff regulations and rules; urged the Administration to submit a set of concrete measures to enforce managerial accountability and to ensure proper implementation of the provisions of the GA resolutions 51/226 and 53/221 concerning a genuine system of accountability prior to delegation of authority to the programme managers.

Madame Chairman,

In modern management, constructive staff-management consultation and relations are considered a win-win strategy. This strategy allows for the two parties to negotiate on issues of mutual interests and provide for input and feedback and create a ground for ownership. The new proposals for reform do not build on this important underlying principle.

Madame Chairman,

The message of the Staff today is simple and clear. We have no objection to the introduction of a genuine reform of personnel. Indeed, we consider this to be a long overdue step. But we are doubtful about the never-ending process of change for the sake of change without a clear blueprint.

The latest set of changes on human resources management as proposed by OHRM may fall into this category. It lacks vision for a successful transformation from what we are today to what we ought to be tomorrow -- in our collective effort to better serve our global community.

We appeal to you, Madame Chairman, and to the distinguished representatives on the Fifth Committee to pay the closest attention to the proposed reforms. Delegation of authority can have many positive and beneficial outcomes as we try to deal with outmoded concepts and to reduce burdensome bureaucracy. But in order for reform to work and not to exacerbate a situation already fraught with difficulty, there must be accountability.

Thank you, Madame Chairman.

ORG/
23 MARCH 2000

UNITED NATIONS STAFF UNION APPEALS TO GOVERNMENTS TO
SECURE FREEDOM OF DETAINED STAFFERS

The following is the statement of United Nations Staff Union President Mehri Madarshahi issued on the occasion of the Day of Solidarity with Detained Staff Members, 25 March:

Fifteen years ago, on 25 March 1985, our colleague Alec Collett, serving in the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), was abducted near Beirut airport by armed men, never to be seen again. To highlight his fate, as well as that of many other colleagues, the staff of the United Nations has been observing that date as the Day of Solidarity with Detained Staff Members. Alec Collett's fate has come to symbolize the fate of too many staff members who "disappeared" or have been detained for long periods while serving the Organization. A good number of cases of "disappearance" date back to the 1980s, and their fate has never been determined.

The United Nations staff is fully conscious of the responsibilities assigned to them by the United Nations Members States. The staff has become increasingly involved in various complex operations ranging from handling emergency situations under very pressing and difficult conditions, to resolving conflict in hostile environments. One of the consequences of these developments is the fact that more and more staff members participate in missions away from Headquarters. Increasingly, the policy issues related to the safety and security of staff are being questioned. The worsening security situation in recent years speaks for itself. Since 1994, some 228 United Nations staff have been victims of hostage taking and kidnapping. Arbitrary arrests, detentions and "disappearances" have continued and governments have done too little to address this tragedy.

It would be almost impossible to ensure the safety and security of staff, if their privileges and immunities are not duly respected. Respect for the privileges and immunities of United Nations staff are not a rhetorical plea but a practical requirement necessary for the independent exercise of the functions entrusted to the United Nations.

On 9 December 1994, the General Assembly adopted a very important new international instrument - the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. The purpose of this Convention is to protect United Nations and associated personnel against attacks when deployed in the service of peace-keeping operations. These operations, have the binding support of the Security Council and the General Assembly, which have recognized the “exceptional risk” to the safety of personnel participating in these operations. We are encouraged by the entry into force, last year, of this Convention, requiring States parties to release United Nations personnel detained while performing their duties. I want to convey my gratitude to the 30 Member States that have thus far ratified the Convention. At the same time, I urge the 158 Member States not yet party to this instrument to join in as soon as possible.

Let me take this opportunity and once more urge all Member States still detaining our colleagues to release them promptly. As Secretary-General Kofi Annan mentioned last year, “the safety and security of staff is a non-negotiable issue.”

**Statement by the President of CCISUA, Ms. Mehri Madarshahi,
to the Fifty First Session of the International Civil Service Commission
(ICSC)
on Pay System and Human Resource Reform
Vienna, 3-20 April, 2000**

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Let me start with a renewed call for a revitalized and independent international civil service which is considered a cornerstone for an effective United Nations and a more just and enduring international order. In a world in flux, the independence and integrity of the international civil service is even more critical and integral to the evolution of the United Nations into the next century. The task of getting the Secretariat ready to face the challenges ahead is immense. At this juncture it is therefore essential to capture and codify clearly the principles that must be at the core of the management of a revitalized international civil service. One of these principles is a more stable, more transparent and more predictable pay system. Another, closely related to it, is a proper career development mechanism. CCISUA wishes to emphasize the importance of both principles.

Recognizing the importance of the well-being of the international civil service, the General Assembly in many resolutions - including in section VI of resolution 53/748 paras. 5 and 6 - called for a comprehensive and systematic career development policy. The haste with which many organizations of the system have sought to respond to this call, compounded by the absence of forward-looking strategies for human resource development, has led to a no-win situation for the staff.

The ICSC, in the context of its document 51/R.10, has made an attempt to address this and other pressing issues, such as the vanishing competitiveness of organizations in attracting and retaining high quality staff; the lack of flexibility in job assignments; the establishment of performance awards and the creation of systems to recognize individual merits. While CCISUA appreciates the efforts made to seek compensation for the prevailing predicaments, we, however, have considerable doubts if the ICSC proposals

- as put forward in this document - provide an adequate solution to the problems at hand. CCISUA therefore considers that the proposals put forward in document R.10 require further elaboration.

The ICSC proposal is based on a “no loss, no gain” concept applicable to all new initiatives seeking to advance the objectives of the Organization. Proceeding from this premise unfortunately imposes constraints which may prevent a real solution from emerging. By necessity, the proposal takes into account the restrictive nature of the Noblemaire and Flemming principles. But foregoing the principle of “equal pay for equal work”, the proposal suggests a system of differentiated pay for equal work. It links the already established system of allowances and benefits to extraneous factors tied to the merits and performance of an individual. While this approach may be acceptable in the private sector where clear yardsticks may exist to measure the performance and productivity of employees, their application may be more difficult, if not impossible, when it comes to measuring the productivity of public sector employees, including the staff of the United Nations. As we agreed implicitly in the past, the majority of functions performed in the Organization by their very nature do not lend themselves to such precision. Given the multi-cultural nature of our Organization and its diverse value system, any attempt to truly measure the merits and performance of an individual may yield little if doubtful results. Therefore, establishing a direct link between granting allowances and benefits to that of individual performance may lead to a deterioration of staff morale and the gradual emergence of a professional caste system. In addition, and contrary to the intent of the proposals, taking away allowances and benefits from some and offering it to others does not necessarily enhance the competitiveness of the pay system and the Organization.

The main question, however, remains as to how and on what basis the administrators could judge the suitability of a candidate at the time of recruitment for granting payment of these benefits? The selective application of this policy to a few does not automatically lead to a better overall career development. The ICSC proposals on broadbanding might be able to fix the fringes of a crumbling system, but they stop short of providing an adequate response to the shortcomings of our classification and career bottlenecks.

CCISUA believes that in order to tackle the problems posed by the present practice, it may be required to depart completely from the customary quick fix and move towards a more profound and integrated reform of

human resources management as a whole. The outcome of the deliberations of the ICSC working group on human resources management reform are contained in document R.9 before the Commission. CCISUA has participated diligently in this working group and fully supports the proposals before you. While at the beginning tackling human resources management-related issues may have posed new challenges for ICSC, the overall holistic approach towards an integrated human resources framework as put forward in this document is welcome.

To supplement this effort, CCISUA has decided to present to the Commission a concept paper on a proposed new system of career development for the international civil service. CCISUA understands that the present dispersed - and often individualized career management - is not promoting a culture of creativity or an environment in which staff can feel the satisfaction of working for a higher purpose. It is our hope that the new and visionary approach contained in this document could also be considered in conjunction with the consideration of documents R.9 and R.10 before the Commission. The main thrust of our paper is on forecasting the actual needs of the Organization and on proper planning for the selection and recruitment of future staff. CCISUA believes that the UN must build on its aura as a global body with a noble calling and the notion of public service. Idealism still draws many young men and women to the Organization. What is, however, essential is improvement in the work environment, conditions of service, pay scales, credible career management, etc. as part of a comprehensive and integrated human resources policy in need of development and implementation by the system's Organization.

Therefore, in meeting the challenges posed, there is an immediate need to reinforce the noble objectives and intent of our founding fathers. We must ensure that the established principles of Noblemaire and Flemming continue to govern the conditions of service of staff and are fully respected and maintained.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank you for giving me the floor and I hope you and the distinguished commissioners will consider CCISUA's proposal to open up new avenues to benefit the staff of our Organization.

Statement by the President of CCISUA
To
The Administrative Committee on Coordination
First Regular Session
April 6-7, 2000
Rome
Subject: Staff Security and Safety

Mr. Secretary-General, Distinguished Colleagues

The United Nations has become involved in a great number of complicated and frequently hazardous operations involving the resolution of conflict, the preservation of peace or cease-fires, caring for millions of refugees and displaced persons or the creation of an environment where the rule of law reigns supreme even in hostile terrain.

While in the past casualties were frequently accidental, nowadays UN personnel are often deliberately attacked with the sole aim of paralyzing a particular operation. As UN Member States are entrusting new and demanding tasks to the UN, its staff has become more exposed to perils. Nearly 200 unarmed UN staff have been killed in the last seven years, most of them aid workers in Somalia, Sudan, Angola, Rwanda and Afghanistan. While serving with dedication the poor and needy, their lives are put in jeopardy by those who take advantage of conflicts and resultant lawlessness. Other sad examples are the downing of aircraft in Angola and Kosovo, the taking of hostages in Georgia, the ripping off of the UN flag from vehicles and ambushing colleagues in the Sudan, the takeover of the Geneva and Vienna offices by Kurds, the cold-blooded murder of one of our colleagues at his first day on the job in Pristina. This list can be continued by citing the problem-laden evacuation of our colleagues due to forest fires, volcanoes or, the bombings of cities like Bagdad and Belgrade, the chaos in East Timor and continuous problems with rapes, detentions and violation of human rights of our staff without Governments paying due regard to the international convention on diplomatic privileges and immunities.

In 1999, during the third week of October alone, the world witnessed a number of incidents affecting various missions of the United Nations around the globe when e.g. the UN missions in Georgia, Burundi and

**Statement by the Vice-President of SMCC, Ms Mehri Madarshahi,
to the XXIV Session of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee
(SMCC XIV)
26 April – 3 May 2000, Vienna**

Mr. President, Mme. Salim, Dear Colleagues,

Let me take this opportunity and express my appreciation and thanks to all of you who have entrusted me once more with the honour of Vice-presidency at this important meeting. I am privileged to address this session of SMCC which owing to its important agenda may well become a historic event in the staff-management relations of our Organization. We have all congregated here in the hope of accomplishing objectives which will help ensure the integrity and independence of the international civil service and uphold the highest values enshrined in the Charter of our Organization.

But we are also here with the hope of writing a new chapter in the relatively new modality of participatory decision-making on all issues having a direct or indirect implication for the conditions of service and the well-being of the staff-at-large. The principle of negotiation with the staff at a forum such as this has been embodied in the Staff Rules and Regulations and has frequently been invoked by various General Assembly resolutions. For its part, the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) at its latest round of discussions recognized the importance of “good governance” in staff-management relations. This aspect also played an important role in the reformulation of the standards of conduct for the international civil service. We hope that this principle will also guide our deliberations over the next few days, especially respecting staff input to the managerial decision-making process as it affects staff well-being and human rights.

In this context let me quote the Secretary-General who in his statement of 3 April concerning globalization mentioned “To make a success we must learn how to govern better and – how to govern better together”.

Mr. President,

The reform proposals before this meeting call for careful review and extreme caution. Although we stand to be corrected, but in our assumptions a number of proposals contained in the reform package tend to realize monetary savings rather than improving the effectiveness of our Organization and reinstating its status as an exemplary multilateral employer. The bold attempt to do away with the most basic principle of our employment – a principle which is enshrined in the Charter and is considered a cornerstone in the independence and integrity of the international civil service – namely the permanent appointment, is one but not the only example of these ill-conceived reform proposals. The permanent appointment is not only a crucial component of a truly independent international civil service, but it is above all a defense against all tendencies to redefine the role of the international civil service in a backhanded manner. It bears emphasizing that we still agree with our Secretary-General that the staff are the most valuable asset of the Organization and, therefore, for the sake of change, we should desist from mortgaging its security and its future.

The reform proposals as presented in “power point” have rendered us “powerless!” Its immediate and long-term effects on our career development, on our contractual status, and our conditions of service and well-being calls for extensive discussions at this session.

For our part, we advocate that international civil servants with a permanent contract to continue to form the core of the institutional capability – and memory – of this Organization. Having said that, however, Mr. President, let me also express an agreement with the management on the “multiplicity of the types and conditions of current contracts and their complex, administrative nature which infringes upon flexibility”. Our understanding of the present complexities and inadequacies, however, are at variance with that of the proposed reform. We believe a proper application of Staff Regulation 4.5 concerning two types of contracts, namely permanent and temporary appointment, should suffice to simplify the present practice. In this scenario, non-permanent contracts after a definite trial period could be converted to either permanent as advocated by General Assembly resolutions or, as it is proposed by the Administration, to a “continuing contract”. Further elaboration of this proposal will be provided at the time of consideration of this item.

Likewise, the staff while supporting the notion of mobility as an essential element of career management, is also convinced that OHRM reform proposals fall short of many essential elements required for a managed career and mobility

scheme. Reading between the dotted lines has convinced us that little thought and vision have been devoted to this important but complex issue.

Mr. President,

Mobility as a part of career development should neither be a detriment to the staff nor the Organization as a whole. In today's market, moving assets without a clear mission, strategy and business plan may be too risky. The reform proposal submitted to us by the Administration is in danger of eliminating the institutional memory and know-how of the Organization, which especially in the environment of a knowledge-based society and economy constitutes a central asset for the future.

The staff stands firm on all concerns and issues raised and discussed at SMCC regular and special sessions last July and October in New York. We are extremely dismayed by the obvious disregard for the results achieved at these meetings and wish to reiterate our request for a mutually agreed system of recruitment, placement and promotion.

Let me now turn to the most important pillar of the confidence-building measure in an environment which is ruled by the principle of "good governance", e.g. accountability. Mr. President, the staff with no hesitation support the main trust of General Assembly resolutions 51/226 and 53/221 on accountability and believes that any proposed system of accountability should be built on transparency and verifiability. Accountability should run through the veins of the Organization vertically and horizontally and it should be based on rewards and sanctions principles. Accountability can not only be an individual attribute, but the Organization should assume the most responsibility for its establishment, verification and monitoring.

The Administration proposals lack what in today's modern management practice is called "empowerment". The delegation of authority may well shift all problems by executive fiat to the programme managers, yet it provides little support in the form of training to interpret rules, to invest in staff resources or to manage with justice. Managers are made accountable to the Secretary-General through a Panel which is not vested with any executive power. No incentives and sanctions have been provided in a non-transparent system of reporting. No guarantee has been provided to the staff-at-large that a sharply pruned OHRM would have enough power and authority to monitor effectively the conduct of those exercising full power. Unless satisfactory mechanisms are being put in

place, we may witness soon a further reduction in creativity and initiative of staff, who quickly will realize that their contracts, promotion and entitlements – in short their future and their lives - are at the mercy of managers who themselves are not empowered. To address and resolve this issue will be a major challenge for us.

Mr. President,

In the concept paper, which we presented to this meeting, we have analysed the shortcomings of the present system and have put forward a new approach countering the present malaise, which threatens to render this Organization ineffective. The main thrust of our argument is that the UN must build with more determination on its asset as a global body with a noble calling, combined with the appeal for public service. Idealism still draws many young men and women to the Organization. Against this background, issues pertaining to the working environment, conditions of service, pay scales, and career management, including systematic mobility provisions, become more important than ever and must form part of an integrated human resources policy. We call for a better forecasting of the actual needs of the Organization and on proper planning for the selection and recruitment of future staff.

Mr. President,

We are committed to contribute to a full participatory process and negotiations among the two parties at this table. We will approach each topic in this spirit and make our voice and opinions heard. We are determined to shape together the conditions which will have a lasting effect on the life of all human resources of our Organization. In that spirit, we are looking forward to a negotiating environment that is conducive to achieving a better understanding and arriving at mutually satisfactory solutions.

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Statement by the President of CCISUA, Ms. Mehri Madarshahi, at the
Opening Session of the 52nd Session of ICSC
17 July 2000, New York

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Commissioners, Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to participate in the 52nd session of the International Civil Service Commission, which has on its agenda a number of critical issues concerning the future of the international civil service. These issues include: review of the pay and benefit system, conditions of service of the professional and general service staff, draft standards of conduct, post adjustment for the professional categories and salary survey for the General Service category of staff. I will present to you the staff perspective on each of these items at the time of their consideration.

At this point, let me, however, emphasize the utmost need to preserve the key planks of the international civil service, which should be protected throughout. I refer to Article 101 of the Charter, which states: “The paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity”. Paragraph 2 of the same Article states: “appropriate staffs shall be permanently assigned to the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council and, as required, to other organs of the United Nations. These staff shall form a part of the Secretariat.” It is clear from these provisions that the Charter links intricately the independence of the international civil service with the granting of permanent contracts. This relation was further reinforced by the establishment of the Noblemaire and Flemming Principles by which staff should receive emoluments in line with the highest paying comparator national civil service.

Recently, the institution of permanent contracts seems to have come under attack from a variety of sources. One element of the human resources reform at the Secretariat seems to propose the elimination of the permanent contracts in favour of a “continuing contract” which according to Staff Regulations 4.5 is of a temporary nature. In the view of staff this is a misguided development. It is not only against the provisions of the Charter, which I quoted earlier, but it also against

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Staff Regulations. Beyond, we doubt that the abolition of the permanent contract will enhance the efficiency and agility of the international organizations. Too frequent turn-over in an Organization may lead to a feeble commitment to the

cause of the international civil service and may very well deprive the multilateral organization concerned of an invaluable source of institutional memory and, hence, stability. It is hard to see how efficiency can be enhanced in a situation where institutional memory and knowledge of a working organization will have to be reinvented and reestablished cyclically. We therefore look to the Commission to preserve the granting of permanent contracts as a central feature of an independent international civil service in the 21st century.

Mr. Chairman,

Another issue of considerable interest to the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA) is staff- management relations. We wish to draw it to your special attention at this session. Staff-management relations cannot only be created on paper. They must be lived, nurtured and consummated. The building of mutual trust and faithful implementation of agreements reached, require an engaging and transparent process. CCISUA hope to write a new chapter in the relatively new modality of participatory decision-making on all issues having a direct or indirect implication for the conditions of service and the well being of staff at large in the context of the redrafted standards of conduct. We believe this principle is part and parcel of the Staff Rules and Regulations and has frequently been invoked by various General Assembly resolutions. For its part, the ICSC, at its latest round of discussions, recognized the importance of “good governance” in staff-management relations and its impact on the staff well being and human rights.

The experience of staff-management relations in the United Nations has not been unequivocally positive. I will revert to this issue when ICSC takes up the item on the new Standards of Conduct.

Let me conclude by wishing you well in your deliberations. CCISUA looks forward to a continued and fruitful cooperation with the Commission.

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and in turn has had a deleterious effect on the delivery of programmes entrusted upon the Organization;

- The prevailing variety of contractual arrangements, without any ostensible structure or sense of purpose, has given rise to apprehension among staff. It is not always possible to know why a particular person has a certain type of contract and whose interests are served. Such status differentiation without sound rationale is hardly a proper recipe for a renewed and revitalised international civil service;
- The current system of performance appraisal system (PAS), which should be an integral component of career development, does not provide the means for useful performance appraisal by management nor does it instil confidence among the staff. In the majority of cases, PAS as practised is of little significance and utility;
- As for recruitment, the professional entry point, namely P-2, through competitive examinations, has proved to be expensive, slow and cumbersome. It is not widely known, overly centralised and calls for an extraordinary effort. In 1998, while more than 8,500 persons applied for the examination, some 1,000 applicants were allowed to take the exam. Of that number some 60 to 70 were selected. Is this really the most effective and efficient approach to select new blood and talent for the Organization?
- Classification of jobs is another problem area. Posts are often tailored to a particular person or a pre-selected outsider. Such approaches negate the purpose of classification and lead to the creation of jobs for individuals who may not be the best qualified;
- Some vacancies confine eligibility to internal candidates, while others allow applications by external candidates. In the practice of our Organization there is neither consistency nor clarity in using either approach;
- Despite these, the United Nations' aura of a noble calling, of international public service, and idealism still draws many young men and women to seek employment with the Organization. But once enfolded into the labyrinths of the Organization some of the same people are not ready and willing to make United Nations service their lifetime calling. The work environment, conditions of service, pay scales, the lack of a credible career management -- all are factors for their lack of enthusiasm or willingness to continue in the United Nations. If the present situation continues, our Organization is increasingly in danger of losing the best and it may have to settle for second or third best, if that;

- An alarming and ominous trend in recent years is that there are more resignations at middle levels than retirements. For example, in the years 1996-1998 there were 182, 170 and 190 retirements, respectively. However, when compared with resignations during the same time period the results are alarming to the health of the Organization. Resignations accounted for 278, 218 and 323 premature departures from our Organization. The fact that most of the resignations are at the middle level, typically following ten to fifteen years of service, should be a matter of serious concern. To what extent are they due to lack of a comprehensive career development? And why is the United Nations unable to compete in the global market place? Or are these losses related to work environment? As yet, there is no organized attempt to identify the reasons for premature resignations;
- The average age of a staff member is now approximately 49 and is bound to rise in the next decade. This is unacceptable if we want to have a vibrant and effective Organization capable of meeting the many challenges that face us in the new millennium. Early retirements and agreed or induced packages may suit the UN now in terms of reducing the staff and cutting costs to accommodate the wishes of major contributors. But the time will soon come when the Organization simply can no longer afford to absorb the hemorrhage without replenishment. The vacancy rate in many departments by the year 2005 is projected to be 50 per cent. The document before the Committee (A/54/279) anticipated the average vacancies at 32 per cent by 2003;
- OHRM reform replaces career development with career management, the implementation of which is virtually left to individual staff members without any structured support by the Organization. Very little is done or put forward to promote a culture of creativity and an environment in which staff can feel a sense of working for a higher purpose;
- The processes of placement and promotion in the United Nations Secretariat are deficient. The respective roles of the Office of Human Resource Management and of other substantive departments have in the recent past varied so often that it is difficult to know who does what. Sometimes, depending on the balance of convenience, one blames the other;
- The availability or non-availability of posts can have a crippling effect on career development in the United Nations. Non-availability of posts within a particular office or inability to move laterally has stifled career development or has prevented recruitment of the most qualified candidates. The rank-in-post system of the UN is hardly conducive to a credible and constructive career management;

- The recruitment system in the UN has recognized two distinct classes for employment of staff in the General Service and Professional categories. The way to cross the barrier is to take the competitive examination from G to P: the prerequisite of 5 years experience and a bachelor's degree is required as the established standard of eligibility for these exams;
- The latest General Assembly resolution on personnel reform (53/221, para. 22) -- by introducing new criteria for eligibility to promotion -- has run counter to the principles advocated by the Charter and the principle of good human resources management. Equitable geographic representation should play a secondary and supportive role to competence, integrity and efficiency. Although geographic representation may be an important element at the time of recruitment, it should certainly play no role at the time of promotion and more importantly should not constitute a barrier to career advancement of staff on board;
- Just to illustrate statistically the dimension of this problem I wish to mention that as of April 1999 there were 2,364 General Service staff members with ten or more years grade seniority. Considering that the functions performed at different grades are not very different, the resultant stagnation is unconscionable;
- The record of the UN with respect to lateral mobility is abysmal -- only about 1 percent. Under the present system, the point of entry determines the entire career. The staff feels that their desire for lateral placements in other offices or functional mobility is not considered seriously and fairly. Geographic mobility across the Organization and other agencies has not advanced under the present system and few practical measures facilitating a criss-crossing in the career system have been established
- There is no orderly and orchestrated process of periodic training and interfacing of staff with their peers outside. The Organization spends only 0.75 percent of staff cost on training and staff development -- a shocking figure for an institution that claims staff as its most precious resource. This has led to both insulation and isolation and to the danger of a gradual disconnect between the substantive output of the UN and the professional world.

Mme Chairman,

What we have tried to enumerate in this presentation should be considered as only the tip of the iceberg. The International Civil Service is beset with difficult problems that threaten its efficacy and very reason for being. Many of the assumptions and expectations remain partially fulfilled or unfulfilled. The task of

getting the Secretariat ready to face the next millennium is immense. It won't do to use a larger or a different bandage to stop the bleeding. Therefore, in meeting the challenges, the development and design of a new dynamic and motivational system of human resources strategy and planning is absolutely critical.

The proposed reform fails to address many and most of the fundamental problems I have enumerated today. Its main thrust has two features:

- To delegate all authority on post and staff management to the programme managers, without a proper system of scrutiny; and
- To simplify the basic rules and procedures, so that the layman could use, abuse and operate them.

Is this approach going to solve any of our problems? Is this approach conducive for the creation of a dynamic Organization of the future -- flexible, effective and ready to assist the global community?

What has been proposed to you may easily lead to an array of fiefdoms, where a programme manager within his or her confines could rule and decide on all issues related to staff welfare and well-being -- with little regard for the overall picture. In the approach proposed there is little possibility to challenge the power delegated to the individual programme managers, yet there is no verifiable system of accountability. There are no checks and balances to safeguard the rights of staff members. The future of our Organization is proposed to be managed more like a business franchise inspired by the private sector than like a system befitting the only global multilateral and multicultural organization.

The staff have raised their objections to the proposed measures in the context of various statements and resolutions: No agreement on any major reform proposals was reached at the special session of SMCC in October 1999. In the context of a resolution adopted by the general meeting held only two days ago, the staff called, inter alia, for maintaining the central role of OHRM in all staff matters (as delineated in General Assembly resolution 51/226); demanded that the Administration negotiate in good faith with the duly-elected staff representatives in full compliance with staff regulations and rules; urged the Administration to submit a set of concrete measures to enforce managerial accountability and to ensure proper implementation of the provisions of the GA resolutions 51/226 and 53/221 concerning a genuine system of accountability prior to delegation of authority to the programme managers.

Madame Chairman,

In modern management, constructive staff-management consultation and relations are considered a win-win strategy. This strategy allows for the two parties to negotiate on issues of mutual interests and provide for input and feedback and create a ground for ownership. The new proposals for reform do not build on this important underlying principle.

Madame Chairman,

The message of the Staff today is simple and clear. We have no objection to the introduction of a genuine reform of personnel. Indeed, we consider this to be a long overdue step. But we are doubtful about the never-ending process of change for the sake of change without a clear blueprint.

The latest set of changes on human resources management as proposed by OHRM may fall into this category. It lacks vision for a successful transformation from what we are today to what we ought to be tomorrow -- in our collective effort to better serve our global community.

We appeal to you, Madame Chairman, and to the distinguished representatives on the Fifth Committee to pay the closest attention to the proposed reforms. Delegation of authority can have many positive and beneficial outcomes as we try to deal with outmoded concepts and to reduce burdensome bureaucracy. But in order for reform to work and not to exacerbate a situation already fraught with difficulty, there must be accountability.

Thank you, Madame Chairman.

**Statement by Ms. Mehri Madarshahi, President of the
Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and
Associations
Of the United Nations System (CCISUA)
To the Administrative Committee on Coordination
Item 2 of the Agenda**

**A LOOK BACK AND A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE
“From Staff Perspective”**

Introduction

The topic under review calls for a through analysis of the events and challenges awaiting the world community in the next decade. It calls for the visionary thinking to map up proper future responses to the needs of the international community placed on the Organization. The importance of staff contribution to success or failure of an organization have been the underpinning element of many strategies focus to human resources planning. In that light, the following thoughts are shared with the membership of the ACC.

A LOOK BACK

1. The chronic financial crisis of recent years and the rapid change of political and economic forces in the world surrounding the Organization have contributed to the prevailing problems of the United Nations. This, in addition to a continuous shift in priorities and change in the requirements of the Organization, has accentuated the need for rapid transformation to prevent decline in the caliber, prestige and performance of the Secretariat. As a consequence, the Organization finds itself challenged to organize and manage people who will be able to lead the Organization efficiently and effectively into the 21st century. This is tantamount to a revolution in its own right. Staff is concerned that this “revolution” occurs without a sound forward-looking strategy. Instead, management pursues a course of action characterized by cost cutting, downsizing and pruning staff entitlements. In such an environment, the quest for monetary savings has replaced the quest for effectiveness and efficiency in their full meaning.

2. Though the cost cutting wave has not yet run its course, many examples suggest that current downsizing programmes will not do the trick. The implementation of new strategies requires fundamental changes in organizational behavior and a new competitive framework to stay with the revolution metaphor, we might also initiate a cultural revolution. Leaner organizations are not necessarily more effective. In fact, recent research suggests that when cost reduction is the principal thrust of change, organizational performance is not enhanced in the long run.
3. In the past few years, several initiatives by Member States and the Secretary-General have sought to keep the Organization afloat. Many of these reforms, however, leave untouched the underlying concept of human resources management. It continues to focus in the traditional manner on attracting, selecting and developing individuals. What is lacking is a new focus on developing an organizational context which is conducive to attracting and developing change agents as well as facilitating team work. Research shows that successful corporate change, occurs unit by units like ripples. This requires the encouraging and nurturing of larger circles of innovative organizational units and reform leaders. This has been proven to be the most critical factor determining successful organizations. To chart a successful transformation, human resource planning must shed its traditional preoccupation with administrative, compliance and service roles and instead adopt a new strategic focus concerned with developing the organization and the capabilities of its managers. It should help to increase the return on the investment in staff. It must help redesign pay benefits and personnel policies to maximize the value received, and to a work environment that is conducive for a productive and empowered work force.
4. Pursuing hasty changes, might damage the motivation and commitment of the thousands men and women constituting the key asset of this Organization, as they might feel that they are largely taken for granted, neglected, or their work inadequately appreciated, frozen in posts without careers. The idealism with which most of us joined the organization might be the victim.
5. We also perceive changes in the value system and transparency of the Organization, as contacts, coattails and coincidences seem to gain importance. Has the Secretariat grown into a conglomeration or

confederation of autonomous units rather than as interdependent and intertwined elements of a larger synergistic whole? Although recruited for service to the UN, in reality many staff members spend virtually their entire time with the UN in a particular office, thus developing a vested interest in its survival. The preoccupation is often with the process and its management, how jobs are filled, not by whom and why. For most staff members progress to every higher post has become a personal odyssey, draining idealism and compromising convictions.

6. To better illustrate the impact of these problems, it may be pertinent at this point to place briefly in perspective source statistic and trends. The total number of staff in the secretariat in all categories, as of March 1999, was 11,101, a decrease of some 4,000 in comparison with a decade ago. The total number of Under-Secretaries-General and Assistant Secretaries-General decreased in 1997-98 from 53 to 48, but rose to 60 in March, 1999. During the same period, the number of Directors (D1-D2) decreased steadily from 389 to 354. Professionals (P2-P5) decreased steadily from 3,922 to 3,844. General Service and related posts increased slightly in 1997 and then decreased steadily to 6,843. If career development is introduced, the picture becomes disconcerting. At present, there are 35 D1s, 655 professionals and 2,364 General service who have remained at the same level for more than ten years. More extreme cases of staff members with over fifteen or even twenty years seniority in grade are not rare either.
7. This situation is comprehended by a rich variety of contractual arrangements without any ostensible structure or sense of purpose has given rise to anxiety since status differentiation among the contract holders. They range from probationary to permanent contacts and include secondment, fixed term, short term and special service agreements among staff at the Professional, General Service and project personnel. It is not always possible to know why a particular person has a certain type of contract and whose interests are served by one rather than another type of contracts.
8. The current system of job performance evaluation, is another area ripe for reversal and change it must be an integral component of career development. However, at present it does not provide the means for a

meaningful performance appraisal by the management or instill confidence with the staff.

9. As regards to recruitment at the P2 entry level through competitive examinations has proven to be expensive, tardy and cumbersome. It is not widely known, overly centralized and, calls for extraordinary effort. In 1998, over 8,500 applied to take the examination. Some 1,000 applicants were allowed to take the exam and about 60 to 70 were selected. How can a level playing field be offered to all applicants, irrespective of nationality and at the same time ensure that the UN Secretariat mirrors the outside world ? This will become increasingly crucial as a new design is put in place for the 21st century.
10. Work environment, conditions of service, pay scales, a lack of credible career system and management, all come into play at that stage. If the present situation continues, our Organization is increasingly in danger of losing the best and may have to settle for the second or third best.
11. The average age of a staff member is now approximately 49. The trend will accelerate in the next decade, which makes it rather difficult to conceive of a vibrant Organization. Retirement and agreed or induced separation packages may suit the UN now in terms of reducing the staff and cutting costs in accordance with the wishes of principal contributors. However, the time will come when we can no longer afford to absorb the hemorrhage without replenishment. By the year 2,005, many departments will face the reality of up to 50 per cent vacancies.
12. Another feature of a forward looking human resource policy is periodic training and interface of staff with peers outside. Right now, the Organization spends only 0.75 percent of staff cost on training and staff development, – a sobering figure for an institution that consider staff its most precious resource. This lack of exposure to new ideas and trends has bred both insulation and isolation opening up space for complacency and erosion of quality.
13. Under the present system, the point of entry determines the entire career. Non-availability of posts within a particular office or the inability to move laterally is stifling career paths. Recruitment system for two classes

of staff in the General Service and Professional categories, has become a demoralizing factor. The way to cross the barrier is to take the competitive examination from G to P: the prerequisite of 5 years experience and a bachelor's degree is required as the established standard of eligibility for these exams. In recent years, the legislative bodies have begun to erect additional barriers for the General Service category to cross the bridge. One such measure is the importance given to the role of nationality in career development. The latest GA resolution on personnel reform (53/221, para. 22) is an example. According to the charter, however the principle of equitable geographic representation should play only a secondary and supportive role to competence, integrity and efficiency. Although geographic representation may be an important element at the time of recruitment, it should certainly play no role at the time of promotion and more importantly should not constitute a barrier to career advancement of staff on board.

14. An other alarming and ominous trend in recent years is that there are more resignations at middle levels than retirements. For example, in the years 1996-1998 there were 182, 170 and 190 retirements, respectively; however, resignations accounted for 278, 218 and 323 premature departures from our Organization. The fact that most of the resignations are at the middle level, typically following ten to fifteen years of service, should be a matter of serious concern. To what extent are they due to lack of a comprehensive career development? And why is the UN unable to compete in the global market place? Or is it related to the work environment? As yet, there is no systematic attempt to identify the reasons for such premature resignations and to devise policy responses .

A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE-

Some ideas for a new design:

The task of getting the Secretariat ready to face next the decades is immense. It won't do to nibble at the edges and to fix the fringes. Therefore, in meeting the challenges posed, the development and design of a new dynamic and motivational system of human resources strategy and planning must become a top priority. In doing so, the basic realities have to be recognized. The UN is -and will remain so- a political intergovernmental organization subject to the will and wisdom of its member governments. There are some hopeful signs that Member States have come to recognize that a sound career development in the UN is essential for an effective

program delivery. This can be gagged by paragraph 5 and 6, section VI of General Assembly Resolution 53/748, which called for a comprehensive and systematic career development policy and system.

At this juncture it may be useful to encapsulate essential principles that should underline the contours and management of a renewed International Civil Service capable of shouldering the burdens of the future. First, the Organization has to be dynamic, flexible and capable of making rapid adjustments and managing contradictions. The Secretariat has to be unified while retaining its disparate character and discharging multitude of mandates. It has to operate in a political environment while upholding top professional standards. It has to balance continuity with flexibility. It needs to strive towards a widest possible representation at the point of entry, while not compromising competence and excellence.

At the heart of a reformed Secretariat should be a core, classless civil service that promises continuity, institutional memory and professional excellence. While the academic requirements should be raised to graduate degree, but a relaxation may be needed in cases of candidates who possess skills required by the Organization. The pay system should be reorganized in order to ensure that it can attract the best-qualified candidates, so as to retain a competitive edge and professional excellence for the Organization.

On the job, a comprehensive career policy should also be provided in order to ensure retention of skills and expertise on board. This may require a new system of career planning which departs from the traditional approach taken in this regard. In a “class-less” career personnel system, it is essential to map out the future needs of the Organization and to make an allowance for meeting the unforeseen challenges as may be required in serving the global community. In light of the present growing vacancies in the Secretariat, forecasting the future skill needs must be given top priority. While recruitment should continue through competitive examinations, its basic requirements for skills and qualifications of staff may be modified. The minimum requirement for recruitment could then be determined at the graduate degree, which calls for a certain degree of specialization in a discipline concerned. All candidates should be required to perform at the entry level a mix of administrative and substantive work. Periodic and systematic training both on- the- job and external (specialized) studies relevant to the needs of the Organization should be provided at the time of transfer or upward movements. This is essential in order to keep the

knowledge and skills of personnel of the Organization up-to-date, enabling them to face the new challenges. Mobility, both functional and geographic, should be considered as a means of career advancement and career planning. Facilities for staff to move between various disciplines in the Organization could reduce marginalization and help build a dynamic and motivated career personnel. Closer linkages between specialized training and mobility (upward or lateral) could foster skill development and enhanced productivity. As part of their overall career management, all newly recruited staff- within the first five years of their recruitment- should be expected to move at least once to other duty stations and/or to other disciplines. This will build a level of familiarity with the Organization.

While promotion should be considered a requirement rights for good performance, meritorious staff should be awarded additional cash or non-monetary awards for their performance. Such a system will encourage recognition of highly-motivated staff and the best performers.

By introducing such system, the two tier-system and the need for competitive exams (from G to P) and many other administrative problems will become absolute. Upward mobility will become part of the anticipated career of staff. After a certain length of service at a particular level, each staff member should be able to look forward to progress to the next level without his or her having to wedge the present world-wide battles! An international civil servant, as established by the Charter, should not be forced to search, strive and lobby for hierarchical progression. Very often the difference between the top levels of a post and the entry levels of the next higher post is insignificant in financial terms. But it makes a world of difference to the staff member to be recognized and appreciated and to enjoy the higher level status. A discontented and demoralized civil servant is a wasted resource. Conversely, creating the conditions and enabling orderly professional progress can be the highest cost effective measure.

Under these arrangements, a compact between the staff member and management should be established by which the staff member would perform his or her duties diligently and with excellence and management would create the conditions for steady and orderly advancement. At each stage or level, there has to be an objective competency assessment, in which the staff member should also be involved. As one rises in the Organization, the skills required might change and not every one who might be efficient at the lower level may have or may even be able to acquire the skills.

Sometimes a good manager may not be a good leader and a good technician may not be a good manager. Interpersonal skills and core competencies become more important at senior positions, particularly in the UN which draws its staff from different countries and varied cultures.

Performance evaluation which is now more of a post-mortem than a forward-looking input into career development should be used not to build a record for denial but to correct any deficiencies through orientation and needed training. It should be the task of management to monitor the skill profiles of the core civil service through competency assessments and to help equip the staff with the qualities and skills required for higher level responsibilities. Presumably, the United Nations Competency Development Project seeks to address some of these issues. Its contours and methodology are still unclear.

Grounds for disqualification or denial of promotion should be made known. Evaluation and assessment should be a two-way process. The subordinate should also be entitled to assess the supervisor on aspects that relate to management and communication.

Interactive peer exchanges, sustained training and constant surveillance of what is happening in respective fields should be part of career development.

If need for new skills and expertise arises, the future career system should provide for recruitment of experts at the middle level and if need be at the senior levels

Mr. Chairman,

My statement today should be but a small contribution on behalf of the staff to the discussions of this session. At the eve of the new millennium, our hope and desire is to witness the prosperity and excellence of our Organization for decades to come. The staff do not see themselves an element apart. Their aspirations to participate actively in achieving the noble objectives of this Organization should be fully taken into account. We want to be the change not only part of the change. It is certain that the needs of the global community will change more rapidly in the coming years than any other centuries before. This rapid change will call for our Organization and its staff to be ready and prepared to face effectively the new challenges of the future. The proper response to the challenges ahead requires careful

thinking. Their depth and magnitude call for fundamental reforms to restore the Secretariat to the prestige and role assigned to it in the Charter. Our hope is that through establishing a true and a more collaborative environment between staff and management and through introduction of the principles of a good governance namely, team work, participation in decision making and democratic practices, the staff could work in partnership with the management in advancing the noble objectives of our Organization.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

**Statement by the President of CCISUA, Ms Mehri Madarshahi,
to the Fifth Committee of the 55th General Assembly
on Agenda item 123: Human Resources Management Reform
2 November 2000**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

As President of the Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA), I wish to express our gratitude for the opportunity today to address the Committee on a number of issues of concern to staff.

At the outset, let me draw your attention to two position papers submitted by CCISUA in connexion with the items under consideration. Conference room paper 1 contains CCISUA's comments on the report of the Secretary-General on human resources reform (A/C.5/55/253). Conference room paper 2 addresses the report on the reform of internal justice system and offers a comprehensive proposal by CCISUA for establishment of a proper system of justice. This paper very well complements the JIU report on this issue. We wish to thank Inspector Fatih Bouayad Agha for his comments and observations which we fully share.

As regards the security and safety of staff, we would appreciate addressing the Fifth Committee separately when it takes up the item and the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/55/494.

Mr. Chairman,

Freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility have been highlighted at the Millennium Summit as fundamental values to govern international relations in the new century. Let me assure you that the staff of the United Nations and its system is firmly committed to these values and will spare no effort to ensure their advancement.

In the quest for realizing these noble goals, change will be inevitable. The staff of the United Nations will support such change through reforms, not only of procedures but more importantly of structures and policies so as to create a more effective, credible and relevant Organization capable of serving the peoples of the world. If the Member States constituting this Organisation decide to transform it into a more modern entity, it is incumbent upon us, the staff, to help make this

possible and towards that end to make every effort to revisit traditional values in meeting the needs and demands of those we serve.

But this cannot be a one-sided effort. The flip side of the coin is that the staff needs not only the verbal commitment but the demonstrated assurance and concrete action by the architects of reform that this is a joint endeavour. Indeed, as our SG declared reform is a process and not merely an event. Those of us who have served this institution long enough know full well that in the course of the past few decades we have been engaged in several reform campaigns. Most of these reforms became subject of further reforms before even being consummated or seen through. Reform must not only be announced and launched but it must be carried through, nurtured and built in honest cooperation with those, who are entrusted with its implementation and ownership. In that regard, the time-honored precept of “pacta sunt servanda” must not only apply to inter-state relations but also to staff-management agreements.

We must move from a “stunt” mentality to a framework ensuring a solid, transparent and accountable process. At the end of this exercise our institution must emerge stronger, more effective, better equipped and more agile to face the ever changing and increasingly complex world surrounding us. The world which we may call the “unknown” world XXI (twenty-one).

Our vision of the move towards “world XXI” presupposes that staff be empowered and given an opportunity to work with the management in parity, harmony and with open-mindedness. Ownership of and partnership for excellence could become a symbol of a new experimentation in the administration of this Organization.

We hold that staff involvement in reform must be based on three pillars: communication, participation and agreement. To that end, the ILO has led the way by entering into formal agreement with its staff. If governments can countenance this approach in one international organization, we find it hard to understand why it shouldn't be emulated by other organizations, formed by the very same governments. What makes the ILO so different from the United Nations?

In the past twelve months, our experience with respect to staff-management relations within the United Nations has been rather sobering. Consultation in the true sense of the word became a foreign term as the staff and its views were labeled “the least common denominator” in the process of change. At the end we

were told “to jump on the bandwagon, or the wagon will leave without you”! In our contacts with management, we have disagreed with:

- The proposed abolition of the permanent contracts - which we consider the bedrock of the independence of the international civil service;
- The delegation of authority to programme managers unless a verifiable system or some mechanism of accountability is put in place;
- The lack of a reliable and transparent system of justice which at present is suffering from inexcusable problems and bottlenecks;
- The restructuring of the appointment and promotion machinery, doing away with some meager safeguards negotiated by the staff over the past few years;

and we called for:

- A more conducive arrangement for staff mobility and training;
- A more equitable system of negotiations and consultations with the staff, including a review of the present unsatisfactory and inefficient staff-management machinery;
- A transparent approach to resolving the environmental problems besetting this building.

Conference room paper A/C.5/55/CRP.1 highlights the staff positions concerning the proposed human resources reform. The staff supports the position taken by the GA in the context of its two resolutions 51/226 and 53/221 on the imperative of establishing a well-designed mechanism of accountability, including the necessity for internal monitoring and control procedures before proceeding to a delegation of authority to programme managers. The staff proposals are reflected in paragraphs 4 to 7 of the conference room paper before you. In particular, the staff does not believe that there is an added value in creating the proposed Accountability Panel, given the fact that it will in essence operate within a convivial framework and rules.

On contractual arrangements, the staff firmly advocates the retention of the institution of the permanent appointment. This has always been recognized as key component in safeguarding the independence of the international civil service, as recognized by the Charter and in the Staff Regulations. This contractual

arrangement has also served as a principal pillar in securing equitable geographic representation, equal representation of women, and retention of a modicum of institutional memory, multilateral skills and professional loyalty to the Organization.

Even if we were to accept for a moment the argument that the existence of permanent contracts inhibits the versatility, competency needs and agility of the Organisation, a closer look at reality invalidates such an argument. If the UN is to continue as a caring employer, it surely cannot only rely on the term “competence”, which in any case is open to interpretation. To be a truly global and representative organization, we must ensure the retention of a mixture of competence, institutional memory, skills, track record, experience, adaptability and expertise to satisfy the demands of our unique multilateral setting. Above all, we should never discount the value of loyalty and commitment to the Organisation and the international civil service as a whole.

We can only live up to this set of challenges if the institution of the permanent appointment will be preserved. It is at the very foundation of a career system in the Organisation. In that connexion, we firmly support the General Assembly’s call for a ratio of 70 per cent permanent contracts and 30 per cent temporary contracts (including indefinite appointments), as contained in GA resolutions 51/226 and 53/221.

The new system of appointment and promotion as proposed by the SG does not set out a clear-cut system of accountability. OHRM would no longer have a central function in setting policy directives, recruitment, placement, determining entitlements, ensuring equitable geographic representation and monitoring of the implementation of rules and regulations. Under the proposed decentralized system, all this would be carried out by programme managers and there would be no room for aggrieved staff to challenge the decision of a programme manager. For our part, we are worried that this might give rise to a new type of cronyism.

The SG also proposes to abolish the joint machinery governing appointments and promotions and instead to create a process-oriented Central Review Body with little authority vis-à-vis the programme managers who will be vested with the final say on all matters ranging from recruitment of staff to their dismissal. Our recommendations in that regard are included in paragraphs. 12 to 14 of conference room paper 1.

We acknowledge that mobility is an important factor in the employment and career development of an international civil servant. We feel, however, that the present proposals lack a compelling analysis and reasoning. The proper model for mobility in a multi-national Organization must be viewed against the background of the foreign service model. In the first instance, we believe creation of a conducive environment is critical for staff movements. Promotion alone may not always compensate for predicaments of displacement, if families need to be left behind or financial burden increases as a result of the need to maintain dual households. In order to serve this noble Organization, the members of the international civil service have already left their home country, moved to the duty station and thus experienced uprooting from cultural and family bonds and ties. Hence, we advocate that any reassignment throughout a career must be accompanied by adequate preparatory work, including family care, training and counselling for staff members.

The basic principle underlying proposed mobility is that “staff do not own their post”. Combined with the recent practice of not granting permanent appointments, this has given rise to a feeling of dwindling job security. Many among our colleagues are concerned that the new proposals, once implemented, will merely lead to the elimination of individuals considered “undesirable” by programme managers. This, in light of the *carte blanche* given to programme managers will give rise to more problems.

Above all, the most disheartening aspect of the proposed mobility scheme is the inherent lack of respect for institutional knowledge and memory, which is hard to maintain and passed on under a system of constant rotation. The unqualified call for fresh blood cannot substitute this prime asset of the Organisation, in which the Organisation has invested. It might even run counter to the precept of the Charter that the UN should only retain staff meeting the highest standards of competence and integrity.

In many countries, the United Nations is viewed as a beacon of best practice and a benchmark for moral attitudes. Yet, when it comes to labor practice, the United Nations is strangely absent as regards best practices for conciliation, mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms as well as in the area of internal appeals procedures and administrative justice on labor-related cases. In CRP. 2 CCISUA has presented a proposal for a new system of justice in the Secretariat. The basic features of the proposed system are:

- To ensure prompt and fair consideration of all cases of an administrative or disciplinary nature;
- To provide the parties with competent, impartial and timely decisions;
- To create a cost-effective and simplified justice system, eliminating hidden costs and redundant advisory bodies within the Secretariat; and
- To establish minimum qualifications for the membership in all bodies of the internal justice system.

It is our hope that the Fifth Committee will find it possible at this session to review this issue thoroughly and decide to establish the long overdue new system of justice. This matter becomes even more urgent in the light of the intensifying process of delegation of authority to Programme managers.

Let me also add that the present arrangements regarding staff-management relations are in urgent need of review. We feel that such an examination and its results should be handled with the model in mind set by the Pension Board, ICSC and ILO.

Finally, Mr. Chairman,

The immediate attention of the members of the Fifth Committee must turn to the dangerous issue of the working environment in this Headquarters building and facilities in other cities such as Vienna and Jerusalem. There is proof of asbestos in the building. Any renovation or physical disturbance releases airborne asbestos and gravely endangers the life and well-being of staff. We can no longer proceed on a non-transparent and piecemeal basis with regard to asbestos abatement. We also must address systematically the problems and health hazards caused for too long by electromagnetic fields in this building, which are the direct result of outrageously outdated equipment.

Fire hazards are another potentially deadly issue in this building. There are no sprinklers anywhere and fires on the 28th floor over the past few days were handled in a very haphazard and secretive manner. It is hard to imagine that fire trucks cannot even access close to the building as the ground allegedly cannot support the weight of fire trucks. I submit that in any member state such situations endangering their citizens are unfathomable. Public opinion, parliaments and courts would force governments to take remedial action and governments would be exposed to serious liability claims. Why should the United Nations be different? We therefore urge you, as a matter of utmost priority, to approve at this session a comprehensive remedial programme and action addressing all environmental

hazards, including asbestos abatement and reduction of electromagnetic fields, as well as an upgrading of the fire safety measures.

I thank you very sincerely for your attention and once again for the opportunity to be with you today.

Opening Session of the 52nd Session of ICSC

Mr. Chairman, Honorable Commissioners, dear colleagues,

I am pleased to participate in the 52nd session of ICSC which has on its agenda a number of critical issues concerning the future of the international civil service. These issues include: review of the pay and benefit system, conditions of service of the professional and general service staff, draft standards of conduct, post adjustment for the professional categories and salary survey for the General Service category of staff. I will present to you the staff perspective on each of these items at the time of their consideration.

At this point, let me, however, emphasize the utmost need to preserve the key planks of the international civil service, which should be protected throughout. I refer to Article 101 of the Charter, which states “The paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity”. Para. 2 of the same Article states: “appropriate staffs shall be permanently assigned to the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council and, as required, to other organs of the United Nations. These staff shall form a part of the Secretariat.” It is clear from these provisions that the Charter links intricately the independence of the international civil service with the granting of permanent contracts. This relation was further reinforced by the establishment of the Noblemaire and Flemming Principles by which staff should receive emoluments in line with the highest paying comparator national civil service.

Recently, the institution of permanent contracts seems to have come under attack from a variety of sources. One element of the human resources reform at the Secretariat seems to propose the elimination of the permanent contracts in favor of a “continuing contract” which according to Staff Regulations 4.5 is of a temporary nature. In the view of staff this is a misguided development. It is not only against the provisions of the Charter, which I quoted earlier, but it also against Staff Regulations. Beyond, we doubt that the abolition of the permanent contract will enhance the efficiency and agility of the international organizations. Too frequent turn-over in an Organization may lead to a feeble commitment to the cause of the international civil service and may very well deprive the multilateral organization concerned of an invaluable source of institutional memory and,

hence, stability. It is hard to see how efficiency can be enhanced in a situation where institutional memory and knowledge of a working organization will have to be reinvented and reestablished cyclically. We therefore look to the Commission to preserve the granting of permanent contracts as a central feature of an independent international civil service in the 21st century.

Another issue of considerable interest to CCISUA, Mr. Chairman, is staff-management relations. We wish to draw it to your special attention at this session. Staff-management relations cannot only be created on paper. They must be lived, nurtured and consummated. The building of mutual trust and faithful implementation of agreements reached, require an engaging and transparent process. CCISUA hope to write a new chapter in the relatively new modality of participatory decision-making on all issues having a direct or indirect implication for the conditions of service and the well being of staff at large in the context of the redrafted standards of conduct. We believe this principle is part and parcel of the Staff Rules and Regulations and has frequently been invoked by various General Assembly resolutions. For its part, the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), at its latest round of discussions, recognized the importance of “good governance” in staff-management relations and its impact on the staff well being and human rights.

The experience of staff-management relations in the UN has not been unequivocally positive. I will revert to this issue when ICSC takes up the item on the new Standards of Conduct.

Let me conclude by wishing you well in your deliberations. CCISUA looks forward to a continued and fruitful cooperation with the Commission.

**Statement by the President of CCISUA, Ms. Mehri Madarshahi,
On item 12 of the agenda
52nd session of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC)
New York, 17 July 2000**

Mr. Chairman,

Since over a decade, the financial crisis and its immediate impact on the budget of the Organization have brought about a stagnation in jobs and salaries, promotion and recruitment and - above all - a deterioration in conditions of service of the international civil service. In the late 1990s, more people left the Organization than were recruited and among them were a good number of staff with expertise, skills and knowledge whose input could continue to have enhanced the performance of our Organization.

Today we stand at a crossroads where the Organization can hardly compete in the world market and attract highly qualified individuals - as prescribed by the Charter - to serve the global community.

Desperate to maintain the edge in the world of competition and to keep the Organization afloat, our reformers are now ready to experiment with any idea, new or old, to reshape our pay packages, to nibble around the edges of our entitlements or even to rewrite the basic principles and rules of our employment in order.

One experimentation pertains to the broadbanding approach, which advocates the collapsing of a great number of jobs into one band and a pay scheme which is based on the market value for these jobs. No job evaluation, no comparison, an increased flexibility in job assignments and de-emphasizing the job hierarchy are the main features of this new approach. It is expected that broadbanding will open the door to a very different way of managing salaries and that it will, inter alia:

- (a) Reduce the importance of personnel in salary management;
- (b) Change the role of managers, requiring them to make decisions concerning pay and benefit of their staff; and
- (c) Eliminate the need for job classification and job-to-job comparison.

What our reformers are still pondering, however, is how extensive and expensive this new experiment would be for the staff, the managers and the Organization.

How could our multicultural, multi-value and multi-function Organization revolve around “natural grouping of jobs” or “one size fit all” in a single band? Questions concerning how do we

develop career ladders, job titles and rules for comparison of various categories of jobs in a single band are among the large number of unknowns requiring further exploration.

Banding is bound to change an Organization. It will reduce opportunities for promotions and upward mobility. It will open the door to a mismanagement of salaries, given the inadequate knowledge and skills of most of our managers in that regard. It will open the door to manipulation, chaos and patronage. Above all, it will challenge the two basic principles of Noblemaire and Flemming on which this Organization has based its staff policies since its inception.

Mr. Chairman,

We can hardly compare the United Nations today to any national government system where the pay programmes have been managed with little or no concern with other employers’ pay policies. By following the road to broadbanding, we would have to abandon job evaluation and equal pay for equally defined work concepts. Since there will be no job-to-job comparison, we will have to live with the uncertainty of how to establish a new base for determining of our salaries. CCISUA believes this could be a big risk and challenge to the foundation of our pay system. To be successful, we have to maintain an edge, not only in our noble mission and objectives, but also in the way we determine our total compensation packages and our salary structure.

Mr. Chairman,

CCISUA supports the necessity for a new focus in our pay system and advocates the idea of basing pay and promotion on performance and merits. But we are not convinced that a drastic shift in paradigm is either feasible or practical. CCISUA, as in the past, rather advocates change in what is today a rather stale system of recruitment and promotion. The present system - as elaborated in our conceptual paper on career development for the International Civil Service presented to the April session of the Commission - suffers from a number of deficiencies which have led not only to lack of competitiveness of the Organization in the labor market, but as well contributed to a low morale and low productivity among staff.

In the context of this paper CCISUA presented a new approach for a pay and career system, which is based on merit, performance, knowledge and expertise. It promotes training as a main principle for moving between grades and as a prerequisite for upward mobility. It will not only facilitate mobility, but it will create a class of international civil service career personnel who could work in a conducive environment for growth and enjoy a high morale and productivity. Furthermore, our proposal would eliminate the present two-class system in recruitment and provide for geographic mobility. However, it would not challenge the basic principle of the pay system based on the Noblemaire and Flemming principles.

Additional copies of this paper will be provided to the Secretariat for redistribution, if need be. CCISUA wishes to reserve the right to return to the specifics of the broadbanding proposals placed before this meeting in the course of upcoming discussions.

Thank you Mr. Chairman

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THE EFFECTS OF LOCAL CURRENCY DEVALUATION ON THE LIVING CONDITION OF THE GENERAL SERVICE AND NATIONAL OFFICER STAFF IN ADDIS ABABA

Position Paper of ECA Staff Union at the 52nd Session of the ICSC held in New York, 17 July – 4 August 2000

A. Background

1. In 1992, the Host Country undertook currency devaluation of the order of 141 percent: from 1US\$ to Birr 2.07 in 1991 to 1 US\$ to Birr 5.0 in 1992. Since then, there were several other devaluations. Currently the official UN exchange rate is US\$ to Birr 8.218 The consequences of these repetitive devaluation, in the midst of unfavorable socio-economic situation brought about undesirable consequences of multifaceted nature.

B. Effects

I. Living Condition

2. Living condition in Addis Ababa has become harsher as can be supported by the following indicators.

a. Consumer Price Index: Prices of imported goods and domestic products increased drastically as a result of the devaluation of the local currency, the Birr. Analysis of the surveys on the Addis Ababa Retail Price Index during the 1992-1998 period indicates that prices for domestic goods have increased by 400-500 percent! Currently, when the exchange rate is US\$ 1 to Birr 8.218, the price rise for such items has reached over 500 percent! Worse than this is the still continuing monotonic increase of the trend. Soon after the devaluation, that is when the exchange rate was US\$1 to Birr 5, price rise was as high as 248 percent for some imported items. Nowadays, prices for such items including prices of fuel and pharmaceuticals have simply skyrocketed as a direct consequence of the devaluation.

b. Proportion of income spent on food:- Economists use the proportion of a nation's income spent on food as a good indicator of peoples welfare. The lower the proportion, the higher the welfare, as is the case in industrialized countries. In Addis Ababa, food accounts about 60 percent of household total expenditure, showing the poor standard of living in the city. Furthermore, food is basic necessity and hence households make little reductions in their purchases of food in the face of price escalation. This suggests that under conditions of income stagnation, households tend to switch their expenditures from non-food items (e.g. education and health) to food for survival. As a result, investment in human capital is neglected. This is exactly the experience of the population of Addis Ababa during the last seven to eight years.

c. Purchasing Power:- The purchasing power of the Birr has declined from Birr 1 in 1992 to less than 40 cents in 1999. This means, real monthly wage has decreased by about 60 percent. Or a pensioner who retired with 100 Birr in 1992 would get in real terms, only Birr 40 in 1999. All these have a direct bearing on the quantity and quality of food purchased, the main household expenditure.

II. PENSION

3. Perhaps, the most devastating effect of the devaluation on the General Service staff is the fact that their pension benefits have diminished to a point where any of the staff retiring now will only receive about 40 percent of the benefits they would have received had they retired in December 1991. A study on the impact of devaluation of the Birr on the pension benefits revealed the following:

Because of the decline in contribution to the pension fund in terms of US Dollars, pension benefit in 1999 dropped to only about 57 percent of the 1991 level. Moreover, between 1991 and 1999 survivor's benefit dropped 44 percent, The drop in children's allowance was also equally severe. All indicators show that the longer the staff serve the UN Organization, the less pension benefits they would receive on retirement.

III. SALARIES

4. From October 1992 to August 1999, the Birr depreciated by over 400 percent while the salary of staff increased by about 80 percent. It is

clear that the successive salary surveys have failed to arrest the negative effects of the devaluation on General Service staff salaries. This has led to a net loss of salaries and hence the incidence of poverty. The great paradox here that, on one hand, the United Nations is an Organization that preaches for the elimination of poverty from the world, and on the other hand, it is the same Organization that allows its staff members to suffer poverty in its own hands.

C. Requests and decisions so far made

5. The devastating impact of devaluation of the Birr on the living conditions, salaries and pension benefits of the General Service and National Officer staff in Addis Ababa has been well appreciated by many UN authorities based in Addis Ababa. These authorities include Mr Layashi Yaker, USG and former Executive Secretary of ECA, Mr K.Y. Amoako, USG and current Executive Secretary of ECA, Mr Rafeuddin Ahmed, USG, UNDP and Chiefs of the ECA Human Resources and Systems Management Division. These authorities have vehemently expressed their wish to the Secretary-General and the Chief Executive Officer of the Pension Board to find a remedial solution to the problem.
6. The Twenty-Fourth Meeting of the Conference of Ministers/Seventh Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance held in Addis Ababa in May 1999 also appreciated our cause. As a result, the Conference has given us motion of support as can be evidenced from its report (see attachment 1).
7. In another front, the burning issue was discussed at length at the SMCC XXII, SMCC XXIII, and SMCC XXIV as well as in CCISUA Meetings. As a result, in paragraph 109 (a) of the report of SMCC XXII, it was agreed that ICSC and UNJSP Board would closely monitor the impact on salaries and pension of currency devaluations and come up with "effective remedy in such situations requiring measures". The report was approved by the Secretary General on 16 October 1998. To date, the ECA Staff are not aware of any course of action that the ICSC and the Pension Board have taken or intend to take with respect to the agreement made at SMCC XXII.
8. Furthermore, CCISUA XIV and CCISUA XV urged, among others,

- (i) the ICSC to consider special measures for those duty stations affected by devaluations of their currencies including in particular the denomination of the salary of the General Service staff and the National Officer staff in Addis Ababa in US Dollars, or periodic adjustment to US Dollars so as to protect the purchasing power of local currency benefits from erosion due to devaluation; and
- (ii) in the event that no remedial action is taken by the Pension Board and ICSC, the Secretary-General to urgently submit the matter to the General Assembly.

D. Staff frustration and demoralization

9. Despite the calls, requests, agreements and urge made at the different forums, no solution has come out yet from the Secretary General, the Pension Board, and the ICSC. As a result of the lack of any corrective measure from anywhere, the General Service staff and the National Officer staff in Addis Ababa have already started showing sense of frustration, morale damage and lack of faith on their employers. Consequently, staff members are leaving their organizations in search for better places. They have realized that the UN system in Addis Ababa is no more the best payer to attract the best and most skilled manpower available locally. And those staff members who could not find jobs elsewhere are forced to live in absolute poverty. It is very shocking to learn that some UN staff members in Addis Ababa are living in absolute poverty, i.e. below one US Dollar per day (see Attachment 2). In addition, many staff members are forced by the grave situation to take, at an unprecedented scale, early retirement before their pension benefits are affected by further devaluation.
10. **In light of the above description and justification, we request the ICSC to take an action that would effectively remedy the grave situation of the General Service and National Officer staff of the UN System in Addis Ababa.**

**Joint Statement by the President of CCISUA, Ms. Mehri Madarshahi,
And the President of FICSA, Mr. Bernard Grandjean,
To the Second Regular Session of the
Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC)
New York, 27 October 2000**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of ACC,

We, the President of CCISUA and the President of FICSA, are conscious of the privilege you are according us to address this important meeting representing the leadership of the United Nations system. Our two Federations represent over 55 thousands staff around the globe and deal with all issues related to conditions of work and well-being of all our colleagues we represent.

In our joint address today, we will mainly concentrate on issues related to safety and security, but we will also touch upon HIV/AIDS, the reform of human resources management, the justice system and its administration as well as new trends in staff management relations.

Clearly, the security and safety of personnel of the UN continues to be a matter of paramount importance and concern to you, Mr. Secretary-General, to the executive heads of UN agencies, programmes and funds and to US – the UN staff who are in the frontline of every mission assignments entrusted to the Organisation. In many areas where the United Nations operates, killings, illegal arrests, detentions, rapes, harassment and theft of personal belonging are daily occurrences. We do not want to repeat the statistics in that regard which are well known to all of you. One life lost, is one life that can no longer be restored, one friend and colleague missing, and one family deprived of comfort. Brutality has become a recurrent feature of the tasks of many humanitarian workers and makes us painfully aware that often times the impartial work of UN staff is not recognised, respected or even appreciated. For us all, it has been a painful awakening to realise and accept that the flag of the UN and the blue helmets no longer provide an automatic shield against threats and assaults. In a way, we have become moving targets.

Mr. Secretary-General, we wish to take this opportunity and welcome your report on the Safety and Security of United Nations Personnel, contained in document A/55/494. We have read it with keen interest and anticipation. The number of officially reported detentions, in particular as regards our unfortunate colleagues who are rotting in jails in Rwanda for five years now, is sobering and saddening. We were relieved to see that specific attention is directed towards locally recruited personnel, although we

know the continuing difficulty to implement certain security measures in their case. We were dismayed to realize that owing to the inability of the Organization or its Member States to legally pursue perpetrators, only 3 out of the 177 cases involving the violent death of personnel of the United Nations system have been brought to justice (para.72).

In essence, the report presents an overview of the current inadequacies and problems and it calls for a number of remedies ranging from improvements in internal procedures, ensuring accountability for the security management teams, developing minimum safety standards, directing and providing immediate assistance to families. At the field level, the report refers to the need to sensitize local authorities and parties to conflict, to disseminate information and to provide secure access for humanitarian organizations.

It also contains a number of recommendations which the staff considers modest and not to the point. Chief among them is the appointment of a high-level post as a focal point with additional staff resources for the Office of the Security Coordinator. It is also proposed that these staff to be ‘recruited centrally’ and assigned where they are required most in an expeditious manner. The report proposes that the funding for these initiatives (US\$30 million), including training, communications and logistics should be incorporated into the “regular budget” of the Organisation.

Mr. Chairman,

As we stated at the outset, CCISUA and FICSA welcome this report and consider it a first step in a right direction. We believe one of the shortcomings of the present system is the lack of sustained and predictable funding. We are convinced that additional resources, - although still modest at the proposed level - are essential to enable the Organisation to carry its important functions in the area of peace and security with confidence and credibility. Nevertheless, we believe that this report should not be the end of our organisational concerns to this entirely new set of challenges. We hope that complacency will not set in, once these proposals will hopefully have been approved by the General Assembly. We must continuously be seized with the various dimensions of the problem, which in many respects is a moving and evolving situation, by undertaking a deeper analysis of the prevailing problems, a diagnosis of the symptoms and strategies of response.

To raise global awareness of this problem, to rally support and to express outrage at the crimes committed in East Timor and elsewhere – these were the three main objective of our global march on 21 September 2000, in which thousands of our

colleagues protested world-wide. We are all gratified, Mr. Secretary-General that you and many of your senior colleagues joined in this expression of collective solidarity and outrage. Yesterday, we presented to you, Mr. Secretary-General, CCISUA's and FICSA's joint petition to the President of the Security Council which was signed by 12,332 staff of all the agencies of the UN system. By all accounts, this figure is unprecedented and attests to the degree of staff anxiety and concern.

Mr. Chairman,

We are confronted with a situation of manifold deficiencies and shortcomings, involving the lack of financial, physical, logistical, and psychological support, as your report to the GA so crisply diagnosed. Beyond the situation where staff members have died in the line of duty, there are cases of trauma/injury/death of staff having suffered from abuse and other crimes. Currently, support is lacking for proper grief and stress management for both families and colleagues of staff members. Clearly, Member States have a solemn responsibility to safeguard the lives and safety of those who are assigned – by their decision - to other countries to serve the humanitarian purposes. But equally, the UN organizations must assume their responsibility by undertaking appropriate measures to ensure the safety and security of their personnel by providing satisfactory counselling and advice.

CCISUA and FICSA want to take this opportunity and bring to your attention a series of issues and problems which we consider of high priority for staff at large. Some of these issues have been raised already in a different context, and some represent new lessons learnt:

- The necessity for proper mission preparedness and planning. This includes not only an accurate assessment of the requirements of a mission, but also assembling of timely and relevant information and data as well as an exchange of views with all parties concerned;
- The need for further and concerted security measures on the ground and especially in remote locations;
- Advocacy for ratification of the Convention on Safety of the UN Personnel and the Rome Statute as well as a “campaign” among Member States for accepting the proposals in your recent report;
- Provision of alternatives to humanitarian assistance in situations where the situation on the ground eludes any control;
- Review of the current criteria for security phases, especially for cases where the staff is operating in war zones;
- Decisions on how to deal with the non-state actors who are not recognized as legal Governments. This is crucial for humanitarian workers, especially

UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF staff and may require the elaboration of a new framework beyond the scope of Governments alone;

- Locally recruited staff should become an integral part of all safety measures undertaken by the UN system. More than 70 per cent of our workforce consists of locally recruited staff, without whom it would be virtually impossible to implement any mandate in the field.
- Concerns of the frontline agencies such as UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP should be addressed in the selection of the security management teams. Most actions are implemented and carried out away from capitals and these officers should not be seen or mistaken as “political representatives” of the SG;
- A systematic and comprehensive training packages on security procedures should be developed prior to deployment of staff to field missions. The training package should address the possibility of sudden evacuations and coping with unknown dangers in delicate situations;
- A whole set of mission and emergency guidelines should be made available to staff;
- The Organizations should arrange to provide necessary medical, financial and humanitarian assistance to the families of staff killed or seriously injured in the performance of their duties ;
- Funds should be made available in order to provide travel and other emergency assistance to both staff and their families;
- Adequate training on local languages as well as training on how to use various equipment, namely, radios, satellite telephones, flak jackets, should be provided;
- Hierarchical and centralized decision-making on issues of life and death should be discouraged and staff should be empowered and authorised to take the best possible decisions as situations allow or dictate.
- A number of Focal Points should be appointed by the various agencies to maintain contacts with the family of deceased and injured, by providing not only consoling but also preliminary financial assistance. CCISUA’s initiative in establishing a Scholarship Fund for Children of deceased colleagues deserves much wider advocacy and financial support.
- Institutionalization of the inter-agency meeting on security is essential for closer coordination and exchange of information among various actors.

Finally, let us draw your attention also to some additional proposals which were already presented to ACC earlier and have again been made available to this meeting.

HIV/AIDS

The other life and death issue of utmost concern to staff is HIV/AIDS. The medical costs of this pandemic are compounded by a sense of shame and the fear of discrimination. There are consistent reports of dispensaries not being used and pilot projects that are unsuccessful. The reasons are clear: people do not come forward to seek help either out of lack of knowledge about the gravity of their situation or out of fear of discrimination.

According to the latest figures, UN staff and their dependants affected by HIV/AIDS numbers about 3000. Knowing the speed of spread of the pandemic, we have every reason to fear a major impact on the delivery of programs in some regions of the world. The situation is tragic enough as it is and we should not let our colleagues suffer additional stress and concern due to their state of health and isolation. We cannot allow silence to kill our colleagues. It is high time for Administrations to take a proactive stand and remind staff that they cannot be denied employment or be terminated because of HIV/AIDS and that they still enjoy insurance coverage. They should also be totally convinced of confidentiality and clearly informed that treatment does exist, in particular antiretroviral medications, which could alleviate their condition. Here too, as in the area of security, we would advocate that a group of staff across the organisations should be trained as focal points to help and assist our afflicted colleagues. As a starting point, we feel that Administrations should widely publicize and disseminate the UNAIDS booklet “Information for UN Employees and their Families”.

REFORM

Taking stock of past efforts, we are absolutely convinced that the reform - as you, Mr. Chairman, put it - “is a process and not an event”. Hence, we want to raise this item as an ongoing concern having profound consequences for the professional and personal lives of all staff. Often times, it is felt that it is sufficient to invite staff to contribute to a reform endeavour by soliciting their views rather than involving them in the full process of all stages of reform. In this regard, the record of the UN system is varied. Some organizations have sought to involve staff representatives through Task Forces or other staff-management machinery, some others through formal procedural agreements. We hold that staff involvement in reform should be based on three pillars: communication, participation and agreement. Of course, formal agreement as pioneered by ILO is our preferred choice and we are convinced would be broadly supported by staff of the common system.

Today, one of the most important issues in the minds of many staff is the future of permanent contracts. We consider that contracts concluded between the Organization and the staff under the Staff Regulations are an integral component of a career system. Staff Regulation 4.5 specifies that staff, other than USGs and ASGs,

should be granted either permanent or temporary appointments. Article 101.2 of the Charter requires that “appropriate staffs shall be permanently assigned to the ECOSOC, the Trusteeship Council and, as required, to other organs of the UN”. The institution of the permanent appointment has always been recognized as key component to ensure the independence of the international civil service, as recognized by the Charter and the Staff Regulations.

We are gravely concerned at the recent trend in many organisations to do away with permanent appointments and to replace them with a plethora of shorter-term employment arrangements. Why is there such a rush to such a drastic change. Surely, it can't be the quest for new blood and competence, as we should be able to retrain staff to meet new challenges, if there were a functioning staff development system. Member States, who after all are our benchmark, are not known to undergo such a drastic change in the make-up of their civil service. It is not only purported competence that counts, it must be a mixture of competence, track record, expertise to operate in the unique multilateral setting, institutional memory, adaptability – and above loyalty and commitment to the precepts of the international civil service.

We firmly support the General Assembly's call for a balance, in the United Nations of 70 per cent permanent contract and 30 per cent temporary contracts (including indefinite appointments), as contained in General Assembly resolutions 51/226 and 53/221.

Given the new trend to decentralize authority and decision making to the line and programme managers, it is of utmost importance to the staff to ensure that a proper system of accountability and recourse procedures are in place. CCISUA will present a new set of proposals to this effect to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly at its present session. A copy of these documents could be made available to ACC Secretariat next week.

We all should concentrate on harmonising and making compatible the various reform initiatives, such as the Secretary-General's paper on Human Resources Management Reform (A/55/253), with other basic documents such as the Standards of Conduct. Or let us adduce another variance, where the same provisions in the ICSC's Human Resources Framework do not tally with comparable provisions in the Standards or with the Reform proposals of the Secretary-General for human resources .

Having said that, let me add that the Standards of Conduct are themselves at present the subject of reform. If reform must be made, a real effort is needed to incorporate the most dynamic developments in labour legislation and to avoid

compliance-based language. The process by which the Standards were reviewed was troubling. The input of a Working group established by ICSC was rejected by the Commission, and a second-tier working group was never convened. These are part of the reasons for which we concluded that there is a requirement for reform of ICSC and we wish to reiterate that call again here today.

In all reform initiatives the staff must have a role, which cannot be a la carte as the occasion might suggest. The agreement which was recently signed by the ILO Administration and the ILO Staff Union is a model we embrace and strongly commend for your review and adoption. Full participation of staff in all matters regarding their conditions of service, far from being a hindrance, should be seen as a guarantee and precondition for sound and sustainable reform. Such is the foundation upon which staff/management relations must be based. Good governance as advocated by you, Mr. Secretary-General, in the Global Compact and by other Executive Heads within the ambit of their mandates- must begin at home and we believe it should be based on equitable roles in negotiations and respect for staff. Fundamental labour rights must be recognized and upheld for international civil servants as well and should ideally be reflected in updated Staff Regulations and Rules.

Reform is afoot at the inter-agency level as well. We note that CCAQ will be discontinued and replaced by a High-level Committee on Management. Of course, we all have become familiar and comfortable with CCAQ and the opportunity to partake in ACC sessions like this one.

We would request that the reform of ACC will not only safeguard but increase the participation and input by staff representatives and that the new High-level Committee replacing CCAQ can equally serve as an open forum where staff and administrators are able to share views candidly, with the aim of improving and strengthening the common system. In accordance with ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, we would submit that this should be a negotiating body. We also trust that the direct access to ACC will be preserved as a rule, and not as an exception.

On that understanding, we look forward to working constructively with the new group. we would like to discuss our proposals for staff participation in the new committee

Finally, let us turn to the touchy issue of the pay system and its reform. Rumours of the introduction of broadbanding abound. Let us state here that CCISUA and FICSA cannot support broadbanding for a number of reasons. It has been shown

to discriminate against women and minorities; it opens the door to favouritism and patronage; it increases staff costs; it has not been shown to improve either efficiency or performance; it does not respect the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and it is a threat to institutional memory which is of critical importance for the efficient delivery of programs. In the private sector, broadbanding has been used only in companies that had an inordinate number of pay levels, say 32, which were reduced to six. The common system already has only five Professional level pay bands. Apart from this technical observation, let us point out that broadbanding is basically incompatible with the time-tested Noblemaire principle. Why should the common system shift to broadbanding when the comparator civil service has not done so, despite the adoption in 1997 of the Model Performance-Based Organization (PBO) Bill. What's more, the PBO specified explicitly that broadbanding not be implemented for the Foreign Service. Why would the United Nations system consider such dysfunctional model? We firmly believe that our Organization should maintain its global lead as a caring multicultural and multinational employer. Any reform – particularly in pay system- should, therefore, provide an enabling environment for attracting the best and most qualified candidates and enable the Organizaton to maintain its global edge.

Thank you very much for your attention.

**Statement by the President of CCISUA, Ms Mehri Madarshahi,
to the Fifth Committee of the 55th General Assembly
on Agenda item 123: Human Resources Management Reform
2 November 2000**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

As President of the Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA), I wish to express our gratitude for the opportunity today to address the Committee on a number of issues of concern to staff.

At the outset, let me draw your attention to two position papers submitted by CCISUA in connexion with the items under consideration. Conference room paper 1 contains CCISUA's comments on the report of the Secretary-General on human resources reform (A/C.5/55/253). Conference room paper 2 addresses the report on the reform of internal justice system and offers a comprehensive proposal by CCISUA for establishment of a proper system of justice. This paper very well complements the JIU report on this issue. We wish to thank Inspector Fatih Bouayad Agha for his comments and observations which we fully share.

As regards the security and safety of staff, we would appreciate addressing the Fifth Committee separately when it takes up the item and the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/55/494.

Mr. Chairman,

Freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility have been highlighted at the Millennium Summit as fundamental values to govern international relations in the new century. Let me assure you that the staff of the United Nations and its system is firmly committed to these values and will spare no effort to ensure their advancement.

In the quest for realizing these noble goals, change will be inevitable. The staff of the United Nations will support such change through reforms, not only of procedures but more importantly of structures and policies so as to create a more effective, credible and relevant Organization capable of serving the peoples of the world. If the Member States constituting this Organisation decide to transform it into a more modern entity, it is incumbent upon us, the staff, to help make this

possible and towards that end to make every effort to revisit traditional values in meeting the needs and demands of those we serve.

But this cannot be a one-sided effort. The flip side of the coin is that the staff needs not only the verbal commitment but the demonstrated assurance and concrete action by the architects of reform that this is a joint endeavour. Indeed, as our SG declared reform is a process and not merely an event. Those of us who have served this institution long enough know full well that in the course of the past few decades we have been engaged in several reform campaigns. Most of these reforms became subject of further reforms before even being consummated or seen through. Reform must not only be announced and launched but it must be carried through, nurtured and built in honest cooperation with those, who are entrusted with its implementation and ownership. In that regard, the time-honored precept of “pacta sunt servanda” must not only apply to inter-state relations but also to staff-management agreements.

We must move from a “stunt” mentality to a framework ensuring a solid, transparent and accountable process. At the end of this exercise our institution must emerge stronger, more effective, better equipped and more agile to face the ever changing and increasingly complex world surrounding us. The world which we may call the “unknown” world XXI (twenty-one).

Our vision of the move towards “world XXI” presupposes that staff be empowered and given an opportunity to work with the management in parity, harmony and with open-mindedness. Ownership of and partnership for excellence could become a symbol of a new experimentation in the administration of this Organization.

We hold that staff involvement in reform must be based on three pillars: communication, participation and agreement. To that end, the ILO has led the way by entering into formal agreement with its staff. If governments can countenance this approach in one international organization, we find it hard to understand why it shouldn't be emulated by other organizations, formed by the very same governments. What makes the ILO so different from the United Nations?

In the past twelve months, our experience with respect to staff-management relations within the United Nations has been rather sobering. Consultation in the true sense of the word became a foreign term as the staff and its views were labeled “the least common denominator” in the process of change. At the end we

were told “to jump on the bandwagon, or the wagon will leave without you”! In our contacts with management, we have disagreed with:

- The proposed abolition of the permanent contracts - which we consider the bedrock of the independence of the international civil service;
- The delegation of authority to programme managers unless a verifiable system or some mechanism of accountability is put in place;
- The lack of a reliable and transparent system of justice which at present is suffering from inexcusable problems and bottlenecks;
- The restructuring of the appointment and promotion machinery, doing away with some meager safeguards negotiated by the staff over the past few years;

and we called for:

- A more conducive arrangement for staff mobility and training;
- A more equitable system of negotiations and consultations with the staff, including a review of the present unsatisfactory and inefficient staff-management machinery;
- A transparent approach to resolving the environmental problems besetting this building.

Conference room paper A/C.5/55/CRP.1 highlights the staff positions concerning the proposed human resources reform. The staff supports the position taken by the GA in the context of its two resolutions 51/226 and 53/221 on the imperative of establishing a well-designed mechanism of accountability, including the necessity for internal monitoring and control procedures before proceeding to a delegation of authority to programme managers. The staff proposals are reflected in paragraphs 4 to 7 of the conference room paper before you. In particular, the staff does not believe that there is an added value in creating the proposed Accountability Panel, given the fact that it will in essence operate within a convivial framework and rules.

On contractual arrangements, the staff firmly advocates the retention of the institution of the permanent appointment. This has always been recognized as key component in safeguarding the independence of the international civil service, as recognized by the Charter and in the Staff Regulations. This contractual

arrangement has also served as a principal pillar in securing equitable geographic representation, equal representation of women, and retention of a modicum of institutional memory, multilateral skills and professional loyalty to the Organization.

Even if we were to accept for a moment the argument that the existence of permanent contracts inhibits the versatility, competency needs and agility of the Organisation, a closer look at reality invalidates such an argument. If the UN is to continue as a caring employer, it surely cannot only rely on the term “competence”, which in any case is open to interpretation. To be a truly global and representative organization, we must ensure the retention of a mixture of competence, institutional memory, skills, track record, experience, adaptability and expertise to satisfy the demands of our unique multilateral setting. Above all, we should never discount the value of loyalty and commitment to the Organisation and the international civil service as a whole.

We can only live up to this set of challenges if the institution of the permanent appointment will be preserved. It is at the very foundation of a career system in the Organisation. In that connexion, we firmly support the General Assembly’s call for a ratio of 70 per cent permanent contracts and 30 per cent temporary contracts (including indefinite appointments), as contained in GA resolutions 51/226 and 53/221.

The new system of appointment and promotion as proposed by the SG does not set out a clear-cut system of accountability. OHRM would no longer have a central function in setting policy directives, recruitment, placement, determining entitlements, ensuring equitable geographic representation and monitoring of the implementation of rules and regulations. Under the proposed decentralized system, all this would be carried out by programme managers and there would be no room for aggrieved staff to challenge the decision of a programme manager. For our part, we are worried that this might give rise to a new type of cronyism.

The SG also proposes to abolish the joint machinery governing appointments and promotions and instead to create a process-oriented Central Review Body with little authority vis-à-vis the programme managers who will be vested with the final say on all matters ranging from recruitment of staff to their dismissal. Our recommendations in that regard are included in paragraphs. 12 to 14 of conference room paper 1.

We acknowledge that mobility is an important factor in the employment and career development of an international civil servant. We feel, however, that the present proposals lack a compelling analysis and reasoning. The proper model for mobility in a multi-national Organization must be viewed against the background of the foreign service model. In the first instance, we believe creation of a conducive environment is critical for staff movements. Promotion alone may not always compensate for predicaments of displacement, if families need to be left behind or financial burden increases as a result of the need to maintain dual households. In order to serve this noble Organization, the members of the international civil service have already left their home country, moved to the duty station and thus experienced uprooting from cultural and family bonds and ties. Hence, we advocate that any reassignment throughout a career must be accompanied by adequate preparatory work, including family care, training and counselling for staff members.

The basic principle underlying proposed mobility is that “staff do not own their post”. Combined with the recent practice of not granting permanent appointments, this has given rise to a feeling of dwindling job security. Many among our colleagues are concerned that the new proposals, once implemented, will merely lead to the elimination of individuals considered “undesirable” by programme managers. This, in light of the *carte blanche* given to programme managers will give rise to more problems.

Above all, the most disheartening aspect of the proposed mobility scheme is the inherent lack of respect for institutional knowledge and memory, which is hard to maintain and passed on under a system of constant rotation. The unqualified call for fresh blood cannot substitute this prime asset of the Organisation, in which the Organisation has invested. It might even run counter to the precept of the Charter that the UN should only retain staff meeting the highest standards of competence and integrity.

In many countries, the United Nations is viewed as a beacon of best practice and a benchmark for moral attitudes. Yet, when it comes to labor practice, the United Nations is strangely absent as regards best practices for conciliation, mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms as well as in the area of internal appeals procedures and administrative justice on labor-related cases. In CRP. 2 CCISUA has presented a proposal for a new system of justice in the Secretariat. The basic features of the proposed system are:

- To ensure prompt and fair consideration of all cases of an administrative or disciplinary nature;
- To provide the parties with competent, impartial and timely decisions;
- To create a cost-effective and simplified justice system, eliminating hidden costs and redundant advisory bodies within the Secretariat; and
- To establish minimum qualifications for the membership in all bodies of the internal justice system.

It is our hope that the Fifth Committee will find it possible at this session to review this issue thoroughly and decide to establish the long overdue new system of justice. This matter becomes even more urgent in the light of the intensifying process of delegation of authority to Programme managers.

Let me also add that the present arrangements regarding staff-management relations are in urgent need of review. We feel that such an examination and its results should be handled with the model in mind set by the Pension Board, ICSC and ILO.

Finally, Mr. Chairman,

The immediate attention of the members of the Fifth Committee must turn to the dangerous issue of the working environment in this Headquarters building and facilities in other cities such as Vienna and Jerusalem. There is proof of asbestos in the building. Any renovation or physical disturbance releases airborne asbestos and gravely endangers the life and well-being of staff. We can no longer proceed on a non-transparent and piecemeal basis with regard to asbestos abatement. We also must address systematically the problems and health hazards caused for too long by electromagnetic fields in this building, which are the direct result of outrageously outdated equipment.

Fire hazards are another potentially deadly issue in this building. There are no sprinklers anywhere and fires on the 28th floor over the past few days were handled in a very haphazard and secretive manner. It is hard to imagine that fire trucks cannot even access close to the building as the ground allegedly cannot support the weight of fire trucks. I submit that in any member state such situations endangering their citizens are unfathomable. Public opinion, parliaments and courts would force governments to take remedial action and governments would be exposed to serious liability claims. Why should the United Nations be different? We therefore urge you, as a matter of utmost priority, to approve at this session a comprehensive remedial programme and action addressing all environmental

hazards, including asbestos abatement and reduction of electromagnetic fields, as well as an upgrading of the fire safety measures.

I thank you very sincerely for your attention and once again for the opportunity to be with you today.

Statement by Mehri Madarshahi,
President of
The Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and
Associations of the United Nations System (CISSUA)
To the 55th session of the Fifth Committee
On

Agenda Item 124 (Common system)
Friday, 10 November 2000

Mr. Chairman, honorable delegates,

On behalf of CCISUA, let me express my appreciation to you and through you to the membership of the Fifth Committee for granting us the privilege of addressing you today. We have grown to appreciate these rare moments enabling us to raise our concerns and solicit your attention and support for problems. We have experienced how swiftly this valuable channel of communication and interaction can be blocked, be it by seemingly innocuous arrangements or deliberate action. Such a situation had arisen a few days ago, when the Fifth Committee celebrated the 25th anniversary of the ICSC. To signify the particular relevance and value of the Commission, this occasion should ideally have involved all three parties, namely the member states, the management of the Organizations and the staff.

However, as we believe that “it is never too late to celebrate”, let me therefore take this opportunity to express belatedly our words of congratulation. I do so on behalf of a constituency of some 25,000 staff members and wish to address this message, through you, to the Commission and its able Chairman Mr. Bel-Haj Amor. The ICSC is at the heart of the international civil service which we as staff espouse and embrace. The ICSC is conceived as the guardian, the observatory, the sign-post and the unifier for all the staff’s interests affecting conditions of service across the world. We salute the ICSC for their efforts and their dedication to the cause of staff rights and equitable policies.

Mr. Chairman,

Upon resumption of our participation in the meetings of the Commission in April 1999, CCISUA took part –fully and with dedication- in the work and deliberations of this body. Our participations in its working Group on Human Resources Reform proved to be satisfactory and the report submitted to the General Assembly on this issue meets our concerns. However, we feel the need to call on member Organizations of ICSC to observe and properly adhere to the guidelines and principles established by the Commission.

Owing to the importance CCISUA attaches to the Standards of Conduct for international civil servants, we also fully participated in a tripartite Working Group established by the Commission in 1999 for revisiting the 1954 text of the Standards. CCISUA believes that Standards of Conduct should give expression to an ideal parameters of behavior, attitudes and conduct for members of the international civil service, guiding them in their mission to work for global peace, justice, development and prosperity. Despite the considerable efforts by all parties participating in the Working Group, the final text submitted to the Commission is insufficient from our point of view. In a way, the final version of the document, as amended, meets the requirements of neither party. The staff finds it difficult to accept that the standards are subjugated to internal rules and policies of each and every member organization, rather than representing an overarching and unifying document for all organizations subscribing to the international civil service. The Standards are to be guiding principles and incorporate the values for the entire system. As is, however, they neither serves as inspirational guidelines nor will they engender individual wisdom and loyalty. They are a set of dry and bureaucratic rules which are strong of instructions and prohibitions but short of inspirational language and vision. In the same vein, the poetic language of the 1950's is replaced by a rather factual and functional wording.

Review of the Pay system:

Since over a decade, the financial crisis and its immediate impact on the budget of the Organisation have brought about a stagnation in jobs and salaries, promotion and recruitment and - above all - a deterioration in conditions of service of the international civil service. Since 1997, more people have left the Organization than were recruited and among them were a good number of staff with expertise, skills and knowledge whose input could continue to have enhanced the performance of our Organization.

Today we stand at a crossroads where the Organization can hardly compete in the world market and attract highly qualified individuals - as prescribed by the Charter - to serve the global community.

Desperate to maintain the edge in the world of competition and to keep the Organisation afloat, our reformers are now ready to experiment with any idea, new or old, to reshape our pay packages, to nibble around the edges of our entitlements or even to rewrite the basic principles and rules of our employment.

A new experiment is being launched by ICSC as early as next month concerning the review of pay system. The basic objectives are as follows: rewrite the history of past achievements and performance and call all ingredients of the present system - such as job classification, career development, promotion, contracts, mobility - into question. Three Focus Groups are being established to undertake a quick and cursory review of all these important issues and they will meet in Vienna, Geneva and New York in the course of next two months. The final report on a new scheme for pay system is to be considered by the Commission at its session in June 2001. Among the ideas floated – and supported by a number of Administration representatives - is the system of “broadbanding”. It has been tested and applied in certain countries, where it proved to give rise to a lack of accountability of managers and give rise to cronyism. Out of some 430 private sector organizations applying this system, only 70 reported some positive results.

Broadbanding advocates the collapsing of a great number of jobs into one band and a pay scheme which is based on the market value for these jobs. The main features of this system are that they do not require any job evaluation or comparison and that they allow an increased flexibility in job assignments while de-emphasizing job hierarchies. It is expected that broadbanding will open the door to a very different way of managing salaries.

By following the road to broadbanding, we would have to abandon job evaluation and equal pay for equally defined work concepts. Since there will be no job-to-job comparison, we will have to live with the uncertainty of how to establish a new base for determining of our salaries. CCISUA

believes this could be a big risk and challenge to the foundation of our pay system.

In launching this concept, the Chairman of CCAQ at the 52nd session of the Commission in July 2000 summarized the objectives to be pursued. Let me draw your attention to para. 33 of the report and I quote: “the current system was based on work practices and assumptions that were no longer valid. In particular, a system featuring lifelong careers did not meet the needs of all organizations (referring to permanent appointments); more and more organizations were opting for more limited, non-career appointments. The current system did not serve managers who were increasingly held accountable for the effective management of human resources, nor did it allow for team-based approaches”. Yet, we wonder why we should shift to a new system which is merely based on promises and assumptions, but which is not supported by any convincing proof, even from the private sector. How then can such a system deal with the much more complex and demanding multilateral system and its multicultural setting?

We do believe that the United Nations is a unique multilateral entity with its 189 constituent members, indeed it is THE world organization. No comparable organizations exists anywhere. Hence, we are not convinced that we should follow the untested path of commercial companies and run the risk of uprooting and unsettling time-tested practices and mechanisms of our Organization.

Mr. Chairman, we the staff of the United Nations cannot subscribe to an approach whereby we need to emulate practices from the private sector, only because we are mired in a financial crisis. There is and must be more to this Organisation than market-based solutions alone. We believe in the application of the basic laws of employment and in ensuring the basic human rights of our co-workers to professional advancement and prosperity.

Mr. Chairman,

Having shared with you our reservation vis-à-vis broadbanding, let me nevertheless state that CCISUA supports the necessity for a new focus in our pay system. We would be comfortable with the idea of basing pay and promotion on performance and merits. But we are not convinced that a drastic and overnight shift in paradigm is either feasible or practical.

CCISUA, as in the past, rather advocates a deliberate process of change in what is today a rather stale system of recruitment and promotion. The present system - as elaborated in our concept paper on career development presented to the April 2000 session of ICSC - suffers from a number of deficiencies which have led not only to lack of competitiveness of the Organization in the labor market, but as well contributed to a low morale and low productivity among staff.

Mr. Chairman,

As regards recognition of language knowledge, CCISUA is pleased that the Commission has accepted this benefit as part of the “acquired rights of the staff” and has decided not to establish a dual system of pay, even on a transitional basis. CCISUA has advocated the equal right of the General Service staff to an education grant and has supported a more streamlined and harmonized practice in this regard. The Commission has taken note of the differences in the eligibility criteria for the grant as a whole and we certainly hope that the idea of overly drastic streamlining of this benefit will not lead to inequality among duty stations, as well as among staff of the same duty station. We are also pleased that the Commission has agreed to continue use of the current common scale of staff assessment and welcome a review of the use of tax deductions related to retirees for the construction of staff assessment rates. Let us also express our appreciation for the cooperative spirit prevailing in the Commission concerning the approval of the results of salary surveys for our local personnel. We certainly hope that the present methodologies, which pose many difficulties in application, could be reviewed with a view to streamlining, simplifying and adjusting them for the next round of surveys.

The calculation of the margin between the net remuneration of the US civil service and that of the UN system continues to be of concern to CCISUA. The Organization has lost its edge in attracting and retaining the most qualified staff mainly due to the uncompetitive salaries and low levels of the margin for the staff at mid-career and senior levels. As the comparator has regularly increased its base salaries - and another increase of 5% is forecast for January 2001 -, the margin is increasingly widening between the UN and the US. The average figures for the real remuneration base in 1999 was 113.8 and for this year will be lower yet. If, however, the methodology for averaging became more transparent, much more drastic differences could be observed. The adjusted ratio for P-4 staff was 112.1 instead of 115, for P-

5 111.2 and for D-1 103.5 per cent. Even an average of 3.7 per cent pay increase as proposed by the Commission will not restore the application of a proper scale and margin. The basic methodology applied by the Commission concerning the calculation of the margin and the best paid civil servants is far from adequate. The new pay system proposals will not address this basic problem. Eliminating social benefits for “Paul” and offering a merit gift to “Peter” will neither restore a balance nor provide effective incentives. Rather, it will undermine the basic principle of equal pay for equal work and may affect the principle of equitable geographic representation on the staff.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, let me again emphasize the paramount importance of providing a conducive environment so as to attract and retain the best qualified individuals and of caring for these individuals while in the service of global community. To be successful, we have to maintain an edge, not only in our noble mission and objectives, but also in the way we determine our total compensation packages and our salary structure.

I thank you for your attention.

**Statement by the President of CCISUA to the
Fifty-second session of the International Civil Service Commission on
Agenda Item No.4 (a): Evolution of the UN/US net remuneration
margin (Conditions of service of the Professional and higher categories)
(ICSC/52/R.2)**

Mr. Chairman,

In the course of the past few days, issues related to the lack of compatibility of the Organization with outside market and the rigidity of pay and benefit scale have been discussed in great detail. The prevailing consensus is that the Organization, given its present predicament, is unable to attract more skilled workers and is unable to retain them while recruited. This could be partly attributed to uncompetitive salaries and low levels of margin particularly at the senior level namely P-5, D-1 and D-2s. The upward adjustment of the base/floor salary scale on a “no loss/no gain” basis last year, despite being a time-consuming exercise, ended in some losses or gains by staff members receiving salaries at the single rate.

The comparison average net remuneration of United Nations officials in New York and United States in Washington shows marginal changes in the ratio adjusted for a cost of living differential of nearly half per cent for the D-2 slight reduction for D-1s, 0.6 per cent reduction for P-5 and close to 6 per cent for P-2 and some 14 per cent for P-1 levels. Having heard this morning from the Chairman of the CCAQ on the upcoming raise of some 5% in our comparator’s remunerations, Mr. Chairman, we are wondering how far more the gap between the professional salaries in New York and that of Washington will increase in the near future? With a 2.9 per cent increase foreseen in post adjustment in New York, for November, CCISUA predicts a much larger gap between the two comparators.

Mr. Chairman, CCISUA believes part of this problem emanates from the fact that margin forecast and reporting are mainly based on average grade of P-1 to P-2. This has distorted the real impact of changes on the real remuneration base. Today, while it is predicted in the context of the document R.2 that the net remuneration of the UN staff in grades P-1 to D-2 for the period from January to December 2000 is estimated at the overall of 113.8 on the basis of the approved methodology, which by the way is lower than the 1999 figures, we are actually facing the reality that the adjusted

ratio for P-4s is 112.1, for P-5 is 111.5 and for D-1 is 103.5. These discrepancies will become obvious, if only the present methodology for presentation of these data to the General Assembly change and the true picture could be provided and as a result decision could be made for some upward margin adjustments.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

**Intervention by the President of CCISUA to the
Fifty-second session of the International Civil Service Commission on
Agenda Item No.4 (d): Establishment of grade equivalencies between
the US federal civil service and the UN system
(Conditions of service of the Professional and higher categories)
(ICSC/52/R.5)**

CCISUA appreciates the report's conclusion that there was no appreciable change in the comparison of grade equivalencies between jobs on the United Nations Common System side and those of the comparator.

However, we are somewhat concerned that nearly 20 per cent of the comparator agencies (9 out of 48) contacted did not respond. Does that throw some doubt on the results?

In paragraph 18, the paper indicates that the comparator is increasingly using the rank-in-person approach to determine remuneration. We need to take a closer look at this approach in our review of the United Nations remuneration system.

CCISUA supports the stand by the ICSC Secretariat in paragraph 25 that thought should be given to including the United States Foreign Service and the private sector in the comparison since some common system jobs like representation, coordination, liaison and information technology can be found in these two areas and not in the federal civil service. One would go even further and suggest that since federal civil service employees overseas are often doing jobs similar to those of common system staff, United States jobs overseas should be included in the comparison.

**Statement by the President of CCISUA to the
Fifty-second session of the International Civil Service Commission on
Agenda Item No.6 (a): Education Grant
(ICSC/52/R.8)**

A review of document ICSC/52/R.8 reveals that the purpose and use of the education grant as approved by the General Assembly has expanded over the years. The grant process itself has become more complex and time consuming for both its administrators and beneficiaries. It is, therefore, a welcome idea to review the methodology including a lump sum payment approach. We suggest that such a payment should be separate from a home leave payment as practiced by the World Bank. The lump sum should be related to fees in the country of the duty station and adjustments may be made into account movements in these fees.

With regard to the harmonization of education grant practices, it may be mentioned that the acquired rights of staff in organizations where all internationally recruited staff qualify for the grant should not be taken away. Thus, in order to be fair the United Nations and other organizations should allow all internationally recruited staff to qualify for the grant. It is a fact that many staff claims are well below the maximum grant allowed. It should also be remembered that at the elementary and high school levels many staff do not avail themselves of the grant.

Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, CCISUA maintains its originally stated position that an effort should be made towards removing the present two-class systems in the Organization. Although for reasons such as financial implication, a group of staff are deprived from receiving education grant, but this does not remove the legitimate expectation of 50% or more of the staff that under the present system are not entitled to benefit from this grant.

Finally, we agree with the statement made by CCAQ on expatriate staff and re-merged the two US\$ areas and that the education grant should be considered as a reimbursement up to 75% of the actual expenses upon presentation of bills.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

ICSC/51/R.9 and R.10

(Pay System and Human Resource Reform)

Statement by the President of CCISUA

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Let me start with a renewed call for a revitalized and independent international civil service which is considered a cornerstone for an effective UN and a more just and enduring international order. In a world in flux, the independence and integrity of the international civil service is even more critical and integral to the evolution of the UN into the next century. The task of getting the Secretariat ready to face the challenges ahead is immense. At this juncture it is therefore essential to capture and codify clearly the principles that must be at the core of the management of a revitalised international civil service. One of these principles is a more stable, more transparent and more predictable pay system. Another, closely related to it, is a proper career development mechanism. CCISUA wishes to emphasize the importance of both principles.

Recognizing the importance of the well-being of the international civil service, the General Assembly in many resolutions - including in paras. 5 and 6, section VI of resolution 53/748- called for a comprehensive and systematic career development policy. The haste with which many organizations of the system have sought to respond to this call, compounded by the absence of forward-looking strategies for human resource development, has led to a no-win situation for the staff.

The ICSC, in the context of its document 51/R.10, has made an attempt to address this and other pressing issues, such as the vanishing competitiveness of organizations in attracting and retaining high quality staff; the lack of flexibility in job assignments; the establishment of performance awards and the creation of systems to recognize individual merits. While CCISUA appreciates the efforts made to seek compensation for the prevailing predicaments, we, however, have considerable doubts if the ICSC proposals- as put forward in this document - provide an adequate solution to the

problems at hand. CCISUA therefore considers that the proposals put forward in document R-10 require further elaboration.

The ICSC proposal is based on a 'no loss, no gain' concept applicable to all new initiatives seeking to advance the objectives of the Organization. Proceeding from this premise unfortunately imposes constraints which may prevent a real solution to emerge. By necessity, the proposal take into account the restrictive nature of the Noblemaire and Fleming principles. But foregoing the principle of 'equal pay for equal work', the proposal suggest a system of differentiated pay for equal work. It links the already established system of allowances and benefits to extraneous factors tied to merits and performance of an individual. While this approach may be acceptable in the private sector where clear yardsticks may exist to measure the performance and productivity of employees, their application may be more difficult, if not impossible when it comes to measuring the productivity of public sector employees, including the staff of the United Nations. As we agreed implicitly in the past, the majority of functions performed in the Organization, by their very nature, do not lend themselves to such precision. Given the multi-cultural nature of our Organization, and its diverse value system, any attempt to truly measure the merits and performance of an individual may yield little, if doubtful results. Therefore, establishing a direct link between granting allowances and benefits to that of individual performance may lead to a deterioration of staff morale and the gradual emergence of a professional caste system. In addition, and contrary to the intent of the proposals, taking away allowances and benefit from some and offering it to others does not necessarily enhance the competitiveness of the pay system and the Organization.

The main question, however, remains as to how and on what base the administrators could judge the suitability of a candidate at the time of recruitment for granting payment of these benefits? The selective application of this policy to a few does not automatically lead to a better overall career development. The ICSC proposals on broadbanding might be able to fix the fringes of a crumbling system, but it stops short of providing an adequate response to the shortcomings of our classification and career bottlenecks.

CCISUA believes that in order to tackle the problems posed by the present practice, it may be required to depart completely from the customary quick fix and move towards a more profound and integrated reform of human resources management as a whole. The outcome of the deliberations

of the ICSC Working Group on human resources management reform are contained in document R9 before the Commission. CCISUA has participated diligently in this working group and fully supports the proposals before you. While at the beginning, tackling human resources management related issues may have posed new challenges for ICSC, the overall holistic approach towards an integrated human resources framework as put forward in this document is welcome.

To supplement this effort, CCISUA decided to present to the Commission a concept paper on a proposed new system of career development for the international civil service. CCISUA understands that the present dispersed - and often individualized career management - is not promoting a culture of creativity or an environment in which staff can feel the satisfaction of working for a higher purpose. It is our hope that the new and visionary approach contained in this document could also be considered in conjunction with the consideration of documents R9 and R10 before the Commission. The main thrust of our paper is on forecasting the actual needs of the Organization and on proper planning for the selection and recruitment of future staff. CCISUA believes that the UN must build on its aura as a global body with a noble calling and the notion of public service. Idealism still draws many young men and women to the organization. What is, however, essential is improvement in the work environment, conditions of service, pay scales, credible career management, etc. as part of a comprehensive and integrated human resources policy in need of development and implementation by the system's Organization.

- .
 - . Therefore, in meeting the challenges posed, there is an immediate need to reinforce the noble objectives and intent of our founding fathers. We must ensure that the established principles of Noblemaire and Flemming continue to govern the conditions of service of staff and are fully respected and maintained.

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Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank you for giving me the floor and I hope you and the distinguished commissioners will consider CCISUA's proposal to open up new avenues to benefit the staff of our Organization.

Codes

There is an obvious contradiction between the thrust of the arguments presented in paras 24 and 25. Para 24 invites the staff in case of disagreement with the decision made by the supervisor to go through the following motion: to provide all facts to their supervisors and to abide by the decisions as taken and to defend it even if it is considered inappropriate decision.

Para 25 prescribes to follow the instructions even if they doubt the integrity of these instructions, consult with supervisors, if disagreed ask for written instruction, challenge it through established mechanisms. Then the last para. clearly,....

Para. 27, Harassment should be defined more clearly. The second para of ICSC up to unwelcome should be added to the definition

Statement by the President of CCISUA

On document ICSC/52/R.13

Document ICSC/52/R.13 on the standards of conduct for ICS, reflects a great departure from an agreed text of revised standards prepared by the Tripartite Working Group in which CCISUA participated fully. CCISUA was not invited to submit any written comments on the contents of this document due to the fact that the ICSC Secretariat circulated the document and invited comments from those entities that had problem of inconsistency with their legal instruments and legislative framework. As we have mentioned in the past, ICSC Standards of conduct is to reflect the overarching ideal of behavior and conduct for the international civil service who is committed to serve the global peace and prosperity. In that light it is difficult to see the new intent and how the standards are subjugated to the internal rules and policies of one or more member organizations. As could be seen from the comments before us, while organizations such as PAHO, and WHO have no legal problems with the redrafted standards, others like the UN has raised a number of incompatibilities with their rules. Thus, Mr. Chairman CCISUA considers this rather a backward approach to the upcoming decade where a new set of guidelines should govern the administration of our global community.

Since participation in the second round of comments of the draft was not open to CCISUA, with your permission, Mr. Chairman we wish to take this opportunity and make the following comments.

- ❖ CCISUA believes that the general tone and approach of the present document is not inspirational, but rather dictatorial and induces prohibitions. In the same vein, the poetic language of the 50's is replaced by something of a more pragmatic and retrospective nature;
- ❖ There is a degree of overlap between what appears as core values and guiding principles on issues related to integrity and competence in particular;
- ❖ Terms such as gender equality and harassment are too general and leave great latitude for interpretation. We agree with the ILO comments that

this formulation does not reflect the principle of equality between men and women as enunciated in the Beijing Platform for Action;

- ❖ On staff management relations, CCISUA considers the proposed changes in the text of the Working Group somewhat puzzling. This in particular should be seen in light of the fact that the new trend in ICSC advocacy is rather on participatory management and teamwork. The text of the WG as presented to the Commission was a result of a great compromise between the staff and management representatives. However, the subsequent changes in the text of the WG by the Commission have rendered the text somewhat weak. We are at loss, why the term ‘elected staff representatives play an essential role in the consideration of issues relating to terms and conditions of employment and work’ should be replaced by ‘play a role of special importance in the consideration of,..’ Or, why the sentence reflecting ‘staff should be fully involved in and consulted on matters affecting staff, and they should actively contribute to decisions on such issues’ was replaced by a half-hearted sentence dropping ‘staff active contribution to decisions on staff well-being’!
- ❖ The role of staff representative has been restricted to ‘matters relating to personnel/human resources policies and practices,’ rather than to all matters affecting staff.
- ❖ The notion of ‘good governance’, which was introduced to the framework for HR reform, has been omitted from this text. No reference to the requirement of partnership between staff and management on issues affecting staff has been made.

This prudent approach to such important issue coincided with the recognition of an equal partnership under a collective bargaining agreement at ILO between staff and management. This agreement entered into force on 1 April 2000. To our envy we were told that this is only a first step, substantive agreements on issues such as grievances, career development, harassment at work, recruitment, etc.

Mr. Chairman, while this revolution is in the making at our sister Organization, the CCISUA members in the Organization suffer from a

backward and unmotivational pattern of managerial behavior that is tainted by a traditional approach to management of the Organization. ICSC not only should ensure a common system approach to issues related to staff-management, but it should also provide a set of guiding principles for all Organizaton to follow.

Item ICSC/52/R.15

Common Scale of Staff Assessment

1. Remuneration for professional and general service staff have had different methodologies for deriving the levels and staff assessment for grossing up net salaries have been different until 1997.
2. Para four and five of R.15 enumerate the factors that have led to income inversion, that is the phenomenon that pensionable remuneration levels of the General Service were significantly higher than those for Professional staff with the same or even higher net remuneration levels.
3. Methodology changes have been introduced to tackle the income inversion problem. A common scale of staff assessment has been one of them. We support the continued use of the common scale and the other recommendations of the ICSC Secretariat.

Mr. Chairman, the honorable Commissioners, dear colleagues,

I am pleased to participate in the 52nd session of ICSC, which has on its agenda a number of critical issues concerning the future of the international civil service. These issues include: review of the pay and benefit system, condition of service of the professional and general service staff, draft standards of conduct, post adjustment for the professional categories and salary survey for the General Service category of staff. I will present to you the staff perspective on each of these items at the time of their consideration.

At this point, let me however, emphasize the utmost need to preserve the key planks of the international civil service, which should be preserved and protected throughout. I refer to Article 101 of the Charter, which states “the paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity. In para. 2 of the same Article, it states, “appropriate staffs shall be permanently assigned to the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council and, as required, to other organs of the United Nations. These staff shall form a part of the Secretariat.” It is clear from these provisions that the Charter links intricately the independence of the international civil service with the granting of permanent contracts. This relation was further reinforced by the establishment of the Noblemaire and Felemming Principles by which staff should receive emoluments in line with the highest paying comparator national civil service.

Recently, the institution of permanent contracts seems to have come under attack from a variety of sources. One element of the human resources reform at the Secretariat seems to propose for elimination of the permanent contracts in favor of a “continuing contract” which is according to Staff Regulations 4.5 is of a temporary nature. In the view of staff this is a misguided development. It is not only against the provision of the Charter, which I quoted earlier, but it also against staff Regulations. Beyond, we doubt that the abolition of the permanent contract will enhance the efficiency and agility of the international organization. Too frequent turn-over in an Organization may lead to a feeble commitment to the cause of the international civil service and may very well deprive the multilateral organization concerned of an invaluable source of institutional memory and hence stability. It is hard to see how efficiency can be enhanced in a situation where institutional memory and knowledge of a working

organization will have to be reinvented and reestablished cyclically. We therefore look to the Commission to preserve the granting of permanent contracts as a central feature of an independent international civil service in the 21st century.

Another issues of a great interest to CCISUA, Mr. Chairman is the staff management relations that we wish to draw to your special attention at this session. This important issue cannot only be created on paper, but it must be lived, nurtured, build and consummated. The building of mutual trust and faithful implementation of agreement reached, require an engaging process. CCISUA hoped to write a new chapter in the relatively new modality of participatory decision making on all issues having a direct or indirect implication for the conditions of service and the well being of staff at large in the context of the redrafted standards of conduct. We believe this principle is part and parcel of the Staff Rules and Regulations and has frequently been invoked by various General Assembly resolutions. For its part, the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), at its latest round of discussions, recognized the importance of “good governance” in staff-management relation. And its impact on the staff well being and human rights.

The experience of staff-management relations in the UN has not been unequivocally positive. I will revert to this issue when ICSC takes up the item on the new Standards of Conduct.

Let me conclude by wishing you well in your deliberations. CCISUA look forward to a continued and fruitful cooperation with you and the Commission.

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UN STAFF AND ABSOLUTE POVERTY IN ADDIS ABABA

In his presentation on a new global vision for the 21st century, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan indicated that earnings of less than one dollar a day per person constitute an unbearable level of absolute poverty. He stated that the world has to take urgent action to remedy this situation, which affects 22 percent of the world's population.

Less than one dollar a day per person happens to be the income of a large number of staff members of the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa and their dependants. As an example, general service (GS) staff at the G1 and G2 level, who represent already over 20 percent of ECA's human resources, live on US\$2,000 and US\$2,600 a year respectively. This amounts to less than \$7 a day per family. Most of these families consist of more than seven people; some consist of as many as twelve. The average income per day of these UN families is therefore below the absolute level of poverty. The UN children's allowance of \$0.52 per day contributes little to these families' earnings; it is barely enough to buy bread. To add insult to injury, General Service staff members in Addis Ababa are required to contribute a staff assessment payment, which amounts to 20 percent of their income.

What applies to salaries also applies to pensions. Since the 1992 devaluation of the Ethiopian Birr from 2.07 to 8.30 per one US dollar now, ECA's and other UN agencies' GS staff members have tried to save at least the part of their pensions that was contributed at the rate of 2.07 Birr to a dollar. For some staff members, such contributions spanned over 25 years. But their efforts have been unsuccessful, as this would have meant amending the UNJSPF rules and there was no political will to do it. At the present rate, the highest pension at the highest GS level [G7], after 25 years of employment is in the range of US\$5,000 per year or 13 dollars a day. The entitlement is cut by two upon the death of the pensioner, who incidentally in Addis Ababa has a lower life expectancy than pensioners in many other duty stations, due to the cost and lack of medical facilities. This estimate is the best-case scenario as this amount is drastically reduced in relation to lesser levels and lengths of contributions made by the staff member.

What went wrong in the wonderful UN system of best prevailing conditions?

In Addis Ababa, the local market is saturated with unemployed or underpaid employees, who are often university graduates. It is an employer's market and there is little regulation of working conditions. Globalisation and the economic situation in one of the poorest countries in the world give no bargaining power to employees. They have to accept any salary and as a result, one finds a large number of BA and MBA graduates as poorly paid GS staff. They cannot object

because they know that other people are at the front door, waiting for their jobs to become vacant.

For the past thirty years, mutual comparisons in salary allocations have been made with the Organisation of African Unity, some of the best-paying embassies and international employers in Addis Ababa. However, these same employers also use UNECA as a benchmark. The present situation can therefore be perpetuated forever.

One of the mottoes of gender equality is “equal salary for equal work.” This aim should be applied to geographic location as well. If we compare the work produced by a secretary, accountant, driver, security officer, or electronic / computer technician in Addis Ababa with his/her counterpart in New York, Geneva, or Vienna, we find that it is of similar value to the UN. The UN classification system applies to all posts. Why therefore maintain this huge discrepancy between duty stations? The present system, which was developed over fifty years ago, has not yet been adjusted to the realities of the developing world.

The thinking that shaped past adjustments of Professional salaries and pension entitlements has stopped at the door of the Poor. Not long ago there were duty stations with negative post adjustments and pensions that were paid only in US dollars. A double tracking system and rate of exchange adjustments were implemented to alleviate the effect of the past weaknesses of the US dollar based Professional pensions. It is time now that the UN reviews the way it is treating its local staff members.

A system similar to the one implemented by ICSC [International Civil Service Commission] for its Professional staff could be established for GS staff. A UN-wide base salary for each GS level could be developed. It could be linked to the amount required for a decent living in one of the poorest countries in the world; Ethiopia for example as it is the headquarter of ECA and OAU. The UN should be able to determine this benchmark easily, as it did for the level of absolute poverty. Similarly to what applies to Professional staff members, a post adjustment, which in this case could be pensionable, would be calculated in order to attract the best potential staff from countries with a higher cost of living.

As a first step to redress this unbearable situation, the staff assessment scale should be reviewed and the lowest salaries should not be subjected to any deductions.

Only then will the UN abide by the standards in working conditions and income that it has set out for others.

S-P Eder